

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Mary Bischoff	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	Divergent	Genre:	Fiction
Author:	Veronica Roth	Pages:	575
Publisher:	Harper Collins Publisher	Copyright:	2012

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

### Overview

Paperback features over fifty pages of bonus materials, including a sneak peek of *Insurgent*, an author Q&A, a discussion guide, a *Divergent* playlist, faction manifestos, and more!

In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue—Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is—she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself.

During the highly competitive initiation that follows, Beatrice renames herself Tris and struggles alongside her fellow initiates to live out the choice they have made. Together they must undergo extreme physical tests of endurance and intense psychological simulations, some with devastating consequences. As initiation transforms them all, Tris must determine who her friends really are—and where, exactly, a romance with a sometimes fascinating, sometimes exasperating boy fits into the life she's chosen. But Tris also has a secret, one she's kept hidden from everyone because she's been warned it can mean death. And as she discovers unrest and growing conflict that threaten to unravel her seemingly perfect society, she also learns that her secret might help her save those she loves . . . or it might destroy her.

Veronica Roth is the New York Times bestselling author of *Divergent*, the first in a trilogy of dystopian thrillers filled with electrifying decisions, heartbreaking betrayals, stunning consequences, and unexpected romance.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

RL. 1,2,3, and RL. 9

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

## Publishers Weekly

In this edgy debut (definitely not for the fainthearted), first in a trilogy, promising author Roth tells the riveting and complex story of a teenage girl forced to choose, at age 16, between her routinized, selfless family and the adventurous, unrestrained future she longs for. Beatrice "Tris" Prior lives in crumbling dystopian Chicago, where citizens are divided into five factions—Candor, Abnegation, Dauntless, Amity, and Erudite—depending on their beliefs, passions, and loyalties. When Tris forsakes her Abnegation family to become one of the wild, fearless Dauntless, she must confront her deepest fears, learn to trust her fellow initiates, and guard the ominous secret that she is actually a Divergent, with the strengths of multiple factions, and is therefore a target of dangerously controlling leaders. Roth's descriptions of Tris's initiation process are as spellbinding as they are violent, while the tremulous romance between Tris and her protective and demanding instructor, Four, unfurls with heart-stopping tenderness. For those who loved *The Hunger Games* and are willing to brave the sometimes sadistic tests of strength and courage Tris must endure, the reward is a memorable, unpredictable journey from which it is nearly impossible to turn away. Ages 14–up. (May)

## Review #2

### Kirkus Reviews

Cliques writ large take over in the first of a projected dystopian trilogy.

The remnant population of post-apocalyptic Chicago intended to cure civilization's failures by structuring society into five "factions," each dedicated to inculcating a specific virtue. When Tris, secretly a forbidden "Divergent," has to choose her official faction in her 16th year, she rejects her selfless Abnegation upbringing for the Dauntless, admiring their reckless bravery. But the vicious initiation process reveals that her new tribe has fallen from its original ideals, and that same rot seems to be spreading... Aside from the preposterous premise, this gritty, paranoid world is built with careful details and intriguing scope. The plot clips along at an addictive pace, with steady jolts of brutal violence and swoony romance. Despite the constant assurance that Tris is courageous, clever and kind, her own first-person narration displays a blank personality. No matter; all the "good" characters adore her and the "bad" are spiteful and jealous. Fans snared by the ratcheting suspense will be unable to resist speculating on their own factional allegiance; a few may go on to ponder the questions of loyalty and identity beneath the façade of thrilling adventure. Guaranteed to fly off the shelves. (Science fiction. 14 & up)

### **What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: **Unwind**

Author: **Neal Shusterman**

Title: **Hunger Games**

Author: **Suzanne Collins**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

### **Document any potentially controversial content:**

- Educational value

The author includes historical tidbits about real Chicago landmarks and challenges readers to think about what personal attributes are necessary for a cohesive society to succeed in peace.

- Positive messages

The lead characters deal with important issues about identity and controlling societies. They struggle with what it really means to be selfless, brave, smart, and kind.

- Positive role models

Tris doubts herself sometimes but taps into her bravery and ingrained selflessness to protect others even when she doesn't realize it. Calm Four encourages Tris to use her upbringing's focus on selflessness to be even more courageous. Tris and Four are a good role model for a teen relationship; they treat each other as equals, defend each other (not just him defending her), and work through their problems with open, honest conversations. They also take their time with the romance and don't play games with each other.

- Violence

Some Dauntless are sadistic and vicious. People routinely have to fight each other -- regardless of size or gender -- and every character is beaten and bloodied at least once. Several characters die: one commits suicide by throwing himself off a ledge into rapids; one falls by accident in the gap between a train and a roof; and others are shot dead during an armed ambush. Two characters are nearly choked to death, and during training, a few characters have to visit the Infirmary due to their injuries. During one physical assault, two guys start groping a girl's chest and make rude comments about her body. In a calculated move, three initiates stab the first-ranked competitor in the eye.

- Sex

Mostly lingering, intense looks, hand holding, and hugs, but toward the end of the book, there's kissing. Inexperienced Tris has a panic attack about Four's possible expectations for sex. In one scene, they kiss passionately (and in bed) after he removes his shirt. They admit they "want" each other, but vaguely agree to wait for "someday." Slightly disturbing jokes are made about Tris' petite size. A couple of guys ask her if she's 16 or really 12.

- Language

Insults like "idiot," "stupid," "loser," "jerk," "shut up," "freak," and the pejorative nickname for Abnegation members, "Stiff."

- Consumerism

- Drinking, drugs, & smoking

The Dauntless drink unspecified alcohol at parties, dinner, and in one scene Four is seen looking tipsy.

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6  7  8  9  10  11  12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 13 and up

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 12-19-13

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults