

**Olentangy Local School District  
Literature Selection Review**

Teacher:	Jennifer Bickley	School:	Olentangy Orange Middle School
Book Title:	Hero	Genre:	realistic ficiton
Author:	S.L. Rottman	Pages:	221
Publisher:	Peachtree Publishers	Copyright:	1997

*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.)

Heroes are hard to find, especially for Sean, an angry and confused fifteen year old who has never had it easy. He's estranged from his father and abused by his mother - Sean feels he has nowhere to turn. Suspended from school and with a mounting police record, he is one step away from serious trouble.

Sentenced to community service for violating curfew, Sean is sent to Mr. Hassler's farm, where he's forced to confront his fears and take charge of his own life. When Sean is faced with a dangerous situation that tests his true character, he learns just what it means to be a hero.

In an age where it seems that few heroes exist, S. L. Rottman has written a compelling and realistic portrayal of the conflicts that drive a young man toward his destiny.

from Rakuten Overdrive: <https://www.overdrive.com/media/1361967/hero>

**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)

Hero, by S.L. Rottman, provides many opportunities for the students to dive into and study a variety of literary elements covered in the Common Core standards, including changes in setting, characterization (dynamic, round, flat, static, and stock characters), examples of foreshadowing and flashbacks, etc. This novel allows students to use a high-interest piece of YAL for the students to cite and discuss. Students can monitor their own reading comporehension throughout and respond to comprehension questions after each chapter. There is also new vocabulary introduced throughout the book that allows for work with that acquisition of vocabulary standard too.

**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

Publisher's Weekly states: Rottman makes a promising debut with this YA novel about an abused teenager who gradually comes to trust another human being. Sean has been let down by people his whole life, especially by his abusive alcoholic mother and his evasive father. So when he has to write an essay about a ""hero"" for a school assignment, the 15-year-old comes up blank. Then, when a fight lands him a sentence of community service on Mr. Hassler's ranch, he comes to know heroism firsthand. Sean is a likable loner--tough as nails--with a survivor's sense of humor ("Today, rumor had it that Rick would be kicking my butt. It's always fun to find out a thing like

that from other people""). He meets his match in stalwart Mr. Hassler, a WWII veteran who won't put up with Sean's smart mouth (he even washes it out with soap). In their relationship lies the strength of the novel (other characters, such as Sean's mother, father, and archrival Rick come off as stereotypes). Mr. Hassler gains his trust by fostering Sean's self-confidence (e.g., he teaches Sean to cook and makes Sean assist him in the delivery of a premature colt). Two scenes edge toward melodrama: Mr. Hassler's fist fight with Sean's father, and Rick holding Sean at gunpoint in the denouement. However, the book concludes credibly--there are no easy answers. Sean has discovered the heroism in everyday acts of courage--and his message is a powerful one for adolescents. Ages 12-16. (Sept.) <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-1-56145-159-3>

#### Review #2

Kirkus Review states: Rottman's first novel pits a bitter teenager against some caring adults and levels his defenses with the prospect of a secure future. Sean, nine years after his parents' divorce, has never recovered from their separation, which left him in the care of his alcoholic, abusive mother. His father sends support payments but, according to Sean's first-person narration, takes no other interest in his son. When Sean, after misbehaving at school, is assigned to perform community service at a ranch, he is confronted by the outwardly gruff Dave Hassler, a veteran of WW II and all-around old-timer. Called upon to help deliver a foal, muck out stalls, and spread manure over gardens and fields left fallow for the winter, Sean finds himself enjoying the hard work, sense of accomplishment, and security of Dave's environment. When a former best friend, Rick, comes to settle an old score, Sean strikes back, definitively. Convenient encounters (a teacher, Mrs. Walker, shows up at the oddest times), information-laden incidents of eavesdropping, and over-extended parallels between a mare who rejects its foal and Sean's home life mar this debut. A homework assignment about heroes forms an awkward bracket around the main story, in which Sean's surly, snarling mother is a caricature cast among other more realistically drawn adults, and Dave's shining heroism is a transplant from another era entirely. (Fiction. 12-16)  
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/sl-rottman/hero/>

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

Title: Hero

Author: Mike Lupica

Title: Crash

Author: Jerry Spinelli

Title: Loser

Author: Jerry Spinelli

Title: Homecoming

Author: Voigt

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

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

Divorce, physical abuse, alcohol abuse by a parent, mild profanity, gang issues and violence

**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):** grades 6-8; 12 years old+

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 9/21/17

**Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):**

**Suggested Professional Literacy 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

**Signatures:**

Teacher:	<u>Jennifer Bickley</u>	Date:	<u>9-22-17</u>
Department Head:	<u>Kenea Bragg</u>	Date:	<u>9-25-17</u>
Building Administrator:	<u>Angie A. [Signature]</u>	Date:	<u>9/25/17</u>
Curriculum Supervisor:	<u>Vnt B [Signature]</u>	Date:	<u>9/27/17</u>