

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	J. Pulliam, D. Holibaugh, J. Thompson	School:	OHMS
Book Title:	Refugee	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	Alan Gratz	Pages:	352
Publisher:	Scholastic Press	Copyright:	2017

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.)

JOSEF is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world . . .

ISABEL is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America . . .

MAHMOUD is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe . . .

All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers -- from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections will tie their stories together in the end.

This action-packed novel tackles topics both timely and timeless: courage, survival, and the quest for home. --Amazon.com

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)

Read and comprehend complex literary text independently and proficiently.

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

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

School Library Journal: Gr 5–7—Gratz presents three interrelated stories about surviving. The tales center on children and their families who are driven from their homes by war, violence, and unrest. Josef must leave Nazi-controlled Germany with his mother, his sister, and his mentally broken father (just returned to them from Auschwitz). He sails across the Atlantic Ocean on the ill-fated St. Louis only to be turned away from Cuba and returned to Europe. Isabel and her family live in Cuba and escape on a makeshift raft during the exodus in the 1990s. They flee the repression and poverty of Fidel Castro's rule. Mahmoud, a Syrian boy, and his family seek refuge from the ongoing war and violence in their home city of Aleppo. They board a dinghy in order to cross the Aegean sea from Turkey to Greece. All the entries share elements of hardship, fear, and trauma and stress the power of love, family, and incredible sacrifice. Gratz, who is known for well-written and well-researched historical fiction, doesn't disappoint. His latest is timely and moving. VERDICT This compelling novel will help young people make sense of today's refugee crisis. Meant to be read, discussed, and shared widely. A first purchase.—Patricia Feriano, Montgomery County Public Schools, MD"

Review #2

Gratz accomplishes a feat that is nothing short of brilliant, offering a skillfully wrought narrative laced with global and intergenerational reverberations that signal hope for the future. . . . Poignant, respectful, and historically accurate while pulsating with emotional turmoil, adventure, and suspense."

-- Kirkus Reviews, starred review

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

Title: **Copper Sun**

Author: **Sharon Draper**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Refugee by Alan Gratz is a historical novel that braids the stories of three young refugees in three different time periods and settings: 1938 Berlin, 1994 Cuba, and 2015 Syria. The circumstances of all the kids and families are dire, and their journeys are fraught with imminent danger. The publisher recommends this book for kids starting at age 9, but due to the level of violence and peril, we recommend it for 11 and up. Only two of the three protagonists survive, and all lose family members. Also, Josef, the Berlin Jewish boy gets beat up, as does Cuban Isabel's father. Syrian Mahmoud's home is destroyed by a missile, and he sees a dead man floating in the sea, as well as a soldier with a bullet in his head. Some in the book almost drown. One character's leg is bitten by a shark and he bleeds to death. But the book isn't gratuitously violent. It paints a vivid picture of the plight of refugees, and the kids and families seem both real and relatable, making this a good book for sparking family discussion.

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): 5-7

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 11/26//18

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