

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

**Teacher:** 7<sup>th</sup> grade IELA

**School:** OOMS

**Book Title:** Scorpions

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Author:** Walter Dean Myers

**Pages:** 216

**Publisher:** Harper Collins

**Copyright:** 1988

### **Book summary and summary citation:**

#### **From School Library Journal**

Jamal, who is pressured to become leader of the Scorpions gang, worries about school, family, and the rough kids on the street. When a fellow gang member gives him a gun, Jamal suddenly gains a new level of respect from his enemies. A realistic look at a boy who wants to do the right thing but gets caught up in the culture of violence. A Newbery Honor selection.

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### **Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific references to the OLSD curriculum maps.**

- Identify the author's purpose for writing/explain an author's perspective
- Examine character development: conflict, how interactions affect plot
- Analyze setting and its importance to the text
- Infer theme, pattern, symbols from all different genres and cultures
- Identify differences and similarities between genres
- Examine an author's style and ID the literal vs. implied content
- Respond to literature by interpreting, critiquing, reflecting, and judging with specific references
- Compare and contrast different sources of info to draw conclusions about a topic
- Identify and examine the POV in a text, and whether it is objective or subjective

### **Include two professional reviews of this title:**

#### **Awards**

- 2000 Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Literature for Young Adults
- Jane Addams Children's Book Award
- Margaret A. Edwards Award for his contribution to young adult literature
- Two-time Newbery Honor recipient
- Five-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Award
- Four-time recipient of the Coretta Scott King Honor
- Two-time National Book Award Finalist

"Myers is arguably one of the most important writers of children's books of our age..."

-Kirkus Reviews

### **From Children's Literature**

This Newbery Honor book tells of the predicaments and moral crises encountered by twelve-year-old Jamal. His tenuous home and hood life brings into play many choices about joining a gang and using a gun, while struggling to fight the tensions of inner city life and to be seen for who he really is.

### **From Robert E. Unsworth, Scarsdale Junior High School, N.Y.**

Twelve-year-old Jamal's brother, who is in prison, wants him to take over the local Harlem street gang, the Scorpions, until he finishes his prison term. But Jamal isn't certain that he wants to be a leader, especially when he is challenged by the older, more experienced and violent boys, Indian and Angel. Jamal would rather continue his quiet friendship with the gentle Tito. It is Tito who eventually saves Jamal's life by shooting Indian and Angel, but who does so at great emotional damage to himself by doing so. Impressively, Myers has packed many issues into this short, easy-to-read novel. There is the black child about to be sucked inevitably into the world of gang violence; there is his weary mother desperately trying to hold her family together; there is the smell of the streets, where Jamal and Tito can be innocents no longer. And there is the gun, the equalizer, frightening but too fascinating to be thrown away before it is used to throw lives away. But there is even humor, and all will recognize the constant bickering that goes on between Jamal and his younger sister. Once more readers have Myers to thank for giving them a greater understanding of the difficulty of life in today's inner city.

What alternative texts could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: That Was Then, This is Now

Author: S.E. Hinton

Title: Rumblefish

Author: S.E. Hinton

Title: Tears of a Tiger

Author: Sharon Draper

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

Issues of class, gangs/street life, occasional language, selling drugs, prison system, death

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 LEVELS: 6 \_\_ 7 X 8 X 9 X 10 X 11 X 12 X

Reading level of this title: (if applicable) ages 11 and up

Date submitted to department chair: May 2012

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin for 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