

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	OHS English Department	School:	OHS
Book Title:	The Jungle	Genre:	fiction
Author:	Upton Sinclair	Pages:	448
Publisher:	Barnes & Noble Classics	Copyright:	2003

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.)

Upton Sinclair's muckraking masterpiece *The Jungle* centers on Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant working in Chicago's infamous Packingtown. Instead of finding the American Dream, Rudkus and his family inhabit a brutal, soul-crushing urban jungle dominated by greedy bosses, pitiless con-men, and corrupt politicians.

While Sinclair's main target was the industry's appalling labor conditions, the reading public was most outraged by the disgusting filth and contamination in American food that his novel exposed. As a result, President Theodore Roosevelt demanded an official investigation, which quickly led to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug laws. For a work of fiction to have such an impact outside its literary context is extremely rare. (At the time of *The Jungle*'s publication in 1906, the only novel to have led to social change on a similar scale in America was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.)

Today, *The Jungle* remains a relevant portrait of capitalism at its worst and an impassioned account of the human spirit facing nearly insurmountable challenges. (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)

The following key indicators from the 10th grade map will be explored:

Reading 4. Influences on Texts a. Relate a literary work to the important ideas of the time and place in which it is set or in which it was written (e.g., the Great Migration as represented in Richard Wright's work *Black Boy* and Jacob Lawrence's paintings)

Reading 5. Author's Voice and Method

f. Analyze an author's implicit and explicit argument, perspective, or viewpoint in a text (e.g., Toni Cade Bambara's argument about social class in the U.S. in her short story "The Lesson")

Writing Process 2. Modes of Writing for Different Purposes and Audiences

c. Craft first and final drafts of persuasive papers that support arguments with detailed evidence, exclude irrelevant information, and correctly cite sources

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

The Jungle aims to provide an accurate report of the many ways that life in Packingtown crushes people, destroys their power of self-determination, even their humanness. Individual desire, typically the engine of fiction, is eradicated. If Sinclair's characters seem to lack agency or a certain kind of Rooseveltian pluck, if they seem unresponsive or passionless, well, that's the point. Readers may long for a tender conversation between Jurgis and Ona as they hold each other on a particularly cold night, but as Sinclair writes, "truly it was hard, in such a life, to keep any sentiment alive." http://www.motherjones.com/arts/books/2006/01/the_jungle_at_100.html

Review #2

Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" is an incredible book that is well known for its condemnation of the unsanitary conditions of meat packing plants, but many people today don't know that this book had a much wider, immense scope, and ambition. He also dealt with issues of racism, immigration, poverty, capitalism run rampant, and social injustice.

It's not out of line to say that Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" is arguably one of the best American books of the 20th century. This book is written like fiction while displaying the actual real conditions of America for immigrant Jurgis Rudkus, who comes looking for the American Dream in the early 20th century and finds nothing but pain, heartache, and terrible conditions for everyone in oppressive poverty.

Upton Sinclair shows that even as the immigrants struggle to survive, that they come to realize that it's a hopeless battle. They work in the packinghouses which take advantage of their slave-like labor while bringing poverty, disease, death, injury, injustice, rape, jail and hopelessness. With no other options and a thousand men clamoring at the gate for their job, they are held in their position with no chance at improvement or escape.

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Upton-Sinclairs-The-Jungle-Book-Review&id=1018255>

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

<u>Title:</u> Fast Food Nation	<u>Author:</u> Eric Schlosser
<u>Title:</u> Chew on This	<u>Author:</u> Eric Schlosser
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

somewhat disturbing portrayal of the early 20th century food industry

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):

Date Submitted to Department Chair:

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