

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

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| Teacher: | OHS English Department | School: | OHS |
| Book Title: | The Johnstown Flood | Genre: | non-fiction |
| Author: | David McCullough | Pages: | 304 |
| Publisher: | Simon & Schuster | Copyright: | 1987 |

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.)

At the end of the last century, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was a booming coal-and-steel town filled with hardworking families striving for a piece of the nation's burgeoning industrial prosperity. In the mountains above Johnstown, an old earth dam had been hastily rebuilt to create a lake for an exclusive summer resort patronized by the tycoons of that same industrial prosperity, among them Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and Andrew Mellon. Despite repeated warnings of possible danger, nothing was done about the dam. Then came May 31, 1889, when the dam burst, sending a wall of water thundering down the mountain, smashing through Johnstown, and killing more than 2,000 people. It was a tragedy that became a national scandal.

Graced by David McCullough's remarkable gift for writing richly textured, sympathetic social history, *The Johnstown Flood* is an absorbing, classic portrait of life in nineteenth-century America, of overweening confidence, of energy, and of tragedy. It also offers a powerful historical lesson for our century and all times: the danger of assuming that because people are in positions of responsibility they are necessarily behaving responsibly.

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?tab=1&pid=403816&er=9780671207144>

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 5. Author's Voice and Method

a. Use organization or structure of text (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution) and writer's techniques (e.g., repetition of ideas, syntax, word choice) to aid comprehension of increasingly challenging texts

Reading 6. Persuasive Language and Logic

b. Summarize and paraphrase information in increasingly challenging texts, identifying key ideas, supporting details, inconsistencies, and ambiguities

c. Locate important details and facts that support ideas, arguments, or inferences in increasingly challenging texts, and substantiate analyses with textual examples that may be in widely separated sections of the text or in other 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

Amazon.com Review

The history of civil engineering may sound boring, but in David McCullough's hands it is, well, riveting. His award-winning histories of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Panama Canal were preceded by this account of the disastrous dam failure that drowned Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1889. Written while the last survivors of the flood were still alive, McCullough's narrative weaves the stories of the town, the wealthy men who owned the dam, and the forces of nature into a seamless whole. His account is unforgettable: "The wave kept on coming straight toward him, heading for the very heart of the city. Stores, houses, trees, everything was going down in front of it, and the closer it came, the bigger it seemed to grow.... The height of the wall of water was at least thirty-six feet at the center.... The drowning and devastation of the city took just about ten minutes." A powerful, definitive book, and a tribute to the thousands who died in America's worst inland flood. --Mary Ellen Curtin

Review #2

From AudioFile

One of the United States' most highly regarded popular historians, David McCullough, and one of the best narrators of audiobooks, Edward Herrmann-- an AUDIOFILE Golden Voice--together create an excellent production. The story told by McCullough and brought to life in Herrmann's sonorous voice is a gripping tale. In May 1889, Johnstown, nestled in the mountains of central Pennsylvania, was ravaged by a terrible flood, which killed over 2,200 people. The flood was not simply a product of nature. The primary culprit was a dam then owned by an association whose members included some great American industrialists, including Andrew Carnegie. The dam broke, and a wave of unimagined destruction passed through the valley. M.L.C. © AudioFile 2005, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

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

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| <u>Title:</u> In Sunlight in a Beautiful Garden | <u>Author:</u> Kathleen Cambor |
| <u>Title:</u> The Johnstown Flood | <u>Author:</u> Jim Gallagher |
| <u>Title:</u> | <u>Author:</u> |

Document any potentially controversial content:

n/a

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