

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	7 <sup>th</sup> grade ILA	School:	Olentangy Liberty Middle School
Book Title:	The Martian Young Adult	Genre:	Science Fiction
Author:	Andy Weir	Pages:	400
Publisher:	Broadway Books	Copyright:	2016

*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.)

So you want to live on Mars. Perhaps it's the rugged terrain, beautiful scenery, or vast natural landscape that appeals to you. Or maybe you're just a lunatic who wants to survive in a lifeless barren wasteland. Whatever your reasons, there are a few things you should know:

1: You're going to need a pressure vessel.

Mars's atmospheric pressure is less than one percent of Earth's. So basically, it's nothing. Being on the surface of Mars is almost the same as being in deep space. You better bring a nice, sturdy container to hold air in. By the way, this will be your home forever. So try to make it as big as you can.

2: You're going to need oxygen.

You probably plan to breathe during your stay, so you'll need to have something in that pressure vessel. Fortunately, you can get this from Mars itself. The atmosphere is very thin, but it is present and it's almost entirely carbon dioxide. There are lots of ways to strip the carbon off carbon dioxide and liberate the oxygen. You could have complex mechanical oxygenators or you could just grow some plants.

3: You're going to need radiation shielding.

**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)

RL.7.10 This text is one of many choices for student interest selection and provides the connection between science and the human condition as noted in this common core standard. It also provides a text from a selected genre that includes "high quality contemporary works."

**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

Booklist- Remember Man Plus, Frederik Pohl's award-winning 1976 novel about a cyborg astronaut who's sent, alone, to Mars? Imagine, instead, that the astronaut was just a regular guy, part of a team sent to the red planet, and that, through a series of tragic events, he's left behind, stranded and facing certain death. That's the premise of this gripping and (given its subject matter) startlingly plausible novel. The story is told mostly through the log entries of astronaut Mark Watney, chronicling his efforts to survive: making the prefab habitat livable and finding a way to grow food, make water, and get himself off the planet. Interspersed among the log entries are

sections told from the point of view of the NASA specialists, back on Earth, who discover that Watney is not dead (as everyone assumed) and scramble together a rescue plan. There are some inevitable similarities between the book and the 1964 movie Robinson Crusoe on Mars, but where the movie was a broad sci-fi adventure, the novel is a tightly constructed and completely believable story of a man's ingenuity and strength in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Riveting.

Review #2

**KIRKUS REVIEW**

When a freak dust storm brings a manned mission to Mars to an unexpected close, an astronaut who is left behind fights to stay alive. This is the first novel from software engineer Weir.

One minute, astronaut Mark Watney was with his crew, struggling to make it out of a deadly Martian dust storm and back to the ship, currently in orbit over Mars. The next minute, he was gone, blown away, with an antenna sticking out of his side. The crew knew he'd lost pressure in his suit, and they'd seen his biosigns go flat. In grave danger themselves, they made an agonizing but logical decision: Figuring Mark was dead, they took off and headed back to Earth. As it happens, though, due to a bizarre chain of events, Mark is very much alive. He wakes up some time later to find himself stranded on Mars with a limited supply of food and no way to communicate with Earth or his fellow astronauts. Luckily, Mark is a botanist as well as an astronaut. So, armed with a few potatoes, he becomes Mars' first ever farmer. From there, Mark must overcome a series of increasingly tricky mental, physical and technical challenges just to stay alive, until finally, he realizes there is just a glimmer of hope that he may actually be rescued. Weir displays a virtuosic ability to write about highly technical situations without leaving readers far behind. The result is a story that is as plausible as it is compelling. The author imbues Mark with a sharp sense of humor, which cuts the tension, sometimes a little too much—some readers may be laughing when they should be on the edges of their seats. As for Mark's verbal style, the modern dialogue at times undermines the futuristic setting. In fact, people in the book seem not only to talk the way we do now, they also use the same technology (cellphones, computers with keyboards). This makes the story feel like it's set in an alternate present, where the only difference is that humans are sending manned flights to Mars. Still, the author's ingenuity in finding new scrapes to put Mark in, not to mention the ingenuity in finding ways out of said scrapes, is impressive.

Sharp, funny and thrilling, with just the right amount of geekery.

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

Title: **Life As We Knew It**

Author: **Susan Beth Pfeffer**

Title: **Unwind**

Author: **Neal Shusterman**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

none

**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):** 7

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 12/12/2016

**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