

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Cherubino	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	Watership Down	Genre:	Fantasy
Author:	Richard Adams	Pages:	476
Publisher:	Scribner (2005)	Copyright:	1972

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.)

A phenomenal worldwide bestseller for over thirty years, Richard Adams's *Watership Down* is a timeless classic and one of the most beloved novels of all time. Set in England's Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage and survival follows a band of very special creatures on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society. *Watership Down* has become a modern classic and won both the Carnegie Medal and the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize in 1972.

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)

LITERATURE

- CCR 1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (8)
- CCR 2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. (8)
- CCR 3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10)
- CCR 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings [symbolism]; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. (8)
- CCR 5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (9-10)
- CCR 9: Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new. (8)

LANGUAGE

- CCR 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies (including use of context, roots and affixes, and reference materials). (8)
- CCR 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (8)

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

Editorial Review - Kirkus Reviews

In this British tale (with impressive reviews as a juvenile over there) a pioneer group of wild rabbits reenact the rousing Exodus story/myth as the prophet Fiver senses disaster about to strike the home warren. (A signpost in human language announces a ""development"" of the field -- the remaining rabbits will be subsequently gassed.) Led by Hazel, more of a William Bradford than a Moses, the group eventually reaches the promised land, Watership Down. But only after racking hardships, narrow escapes and a bizarre sojourn at a sinister warren of welcoming fat rabbits who withhold their dreadful secret of inevitable execution. The major battles, however, are fought against the dictator rabbit General Woundwort and his secret police. Right and democracy finally triumph through supreme strategy and mighty sacrifice -- by the few to whom the many will owe so much. Adams' rabbits are fairly simple beings -- no lolling over picnic baskets or complex political maneuvers -- but there are appealing and even moving touches: inventive rabbit/folk stories of that arch-imp, the demi-god El-ahrairah (herein the mystic moments), poetry with echoes from Grahame, a gull with a French-Canadian accent, a mouse chattering in organ-grinder Italian, and anagram titles from rabbit law and tradition. Adams does manage to nudge the reader down the rabbit hole to accept his serious purpose -- but one finds the company nobly dull and the New Jerusalem not half so attractive as the flying fur of deadly combat. Very special, but who knows -- it might just hippity hop off to Jonathan Livingston's marsh-land. Carnegie Medal and Guardian Award winner.

The Carnegie Medal is awarded annually to the writer of an outstanding book for children. It was established by in 1936, in memory of the great Scottish-born philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). Carnegie was a self-made industrialist who made his fortune in steel in the USA. His experience of using a library as a child led him to resolve that "if ever wealth came to me that it should be used to establish free libraries."

Carnegie set up more than 2800 libraries across the English speaking world and, by the time of his death, over half the library authorities in Great Britain had Carnegie libraries.

First awarded to Arthur Ransome for 'Pigeon Post', the winner receives a golden medal and £500 worth of books to donate to a library of their choice.

The medal is awarded by CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Watership Down won in 1972. (www.carnegiegreenway.org.uk)

Review #2

From The Very Hungry Caterpillar to the gothic horror Dracula, the publisher Puffin has compiled a list of its 70 best books of all time for children.

The fantasy classics Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland, the pirate adventure Treasure Island, and the tear-jerking Watership Down also make the list for young people aged from babies to their teens, marking Puffin's 70th anniversary.

The books are split into categories including best mischief and mayhem, weird and wonderful, sugar and spice, best swashbucklers and derring-do, as well as books to cuddle up with. There is also a section on the "best alternatives" to Stephenie Meyer's massively successful Twilight books, which have been turned into a series of films starring Robert Pattinson.

Suggestions include Beautiful Creatures by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl and Vampire Academy by Richelle Mead.

Roald Dahl takes up the entire "phizzwhizzers" category on his own, with his classic tales The BFG, Matilda, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and Fantastic Mr Fox. Dahl sells more books every year than any other Penguin author in both the adults and children's categories – and his sales rocketed by 35% in 2009.

Watership Down and Charlotte's Web are among the best weepies, The Borrowers is included in best friends and family, and Alice In Wonderland and Peter Pan are in the best weird and wonderful books.

The poignant Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank is in the best war and conflict category.

Modern best-sellers are also featured, such as Diary Of A Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney among best mischief and mayhem, and Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan and Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer included in best heroes.

Charlie Higson's thriller The Enemy is also named among the best blood and guts - along with Bram Stoker's classic horror Dracula and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles. The best books to cuddle up with category includes The Very Hungry Caterpillar, which still sells one copy every 30 seconds somewhere in the world.

(www.guardian.co.uk)

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

<u>Title:</u> The Hobbit	<u>Author:</u> J.R.R. Tolkien
<u>Title:</u> The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe	<u>Author:</u> C.S. Lewis
<u>Title:</u> Alice in Wonderland	<u>Author:</u> Lewis Carroll
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

Some fantasy violence

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): 12-18

Date Submitted to Department Chair: December 28, 2011

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