

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	OHS English Department	School:	OHS
Book Title:	World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War	Genre:	fiction
Author:	Max Brooks	Pages:	342
Publisher:	Crown Publishing Group	Copyright:	2007

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.)

The *Zombie War* came unthinkably close to eradicating humanity. Max Brooks, driven by the urgency of preserving the acid-etched first-hand experiences of the survivors from those apocalyptic years, traveled across the United States of America and throughout the world, from decimated cities that once teemed with upwards of thirty million souls to the most remote and inhospitable areas of the planet. He recorded the testimony of men, women, and sometimes children who came face-to-face with the living, or at least the undead, hell of that dreadful time. *World War Z* is the result. Never before have we had access to a document that so powerfully conveys the depth of fear and horror, and also the ineradicable spirit of resistance, that gripped human society through the plague years.

Ranging from the now infamous village of New Dachang in the United Federation of China, where the epidemiological trail began with the twelve-year-old Patient Zero, to the unnamed northern forests where untold numbers sought a terrible and temporary refuge in the cold, to the United States of Southern Africa, where the Redeker Plan provided hope for humanity at an unspeakable price, to the west-of-the-Rockies redoubt where the North American tide finally started to turn, this invaluable chronicle reflects the full scope and duration of the *Zombie War*.

Most of all, the book captures with haunting immediacy the human dimension of this epochal event. Facing the often raw and vivid nature of these personal accounts requires a degree of courage on the part of the reader, but the effort is invaluable because, as Mr. Brooks says in his introduction, "By excluding the human factor, aren't we risking the kind of personal detachment from history that may, heaven forbid, lead us one day to repeat it? And in the end, isn't the human factor the only true difference between us and the enemy we now refer to as 'the living dead'?"

- from barnesandnoble.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)

This book presents opportunities to hit on a wide range of standards; however, the following key indicators from the 10th grade English map will be explored:

Reading Applications 3b: Distinguish between author and narrator/speaker; explain how the choice of narrator shapes the meaning of the text.

Reading Applications 3e: Identify, analyze, and evaluate the choices an author makes to achieve specific effects and shape meaning.

Reading Applications 1b: Analyze how the choice of genre (fictional oral history) affects the presentation its theme or topic.

Reading Process 2e: Compare texts to previously read texts, past and present events, and/or other things you have learned elsewhere.

World War Z presents a unique opportunity for exploring literature and history together. The book is structured as an oral history, which allows us to explore many voices/narrators within one work and to analyze how the author creates these characters. The tone may change from chapter to chapter depending on who is being interviewed providing extensive material for exploring this difficult topic. Additionally, each interview provides a small piece of the whole story challenging students to put the pieces together to arrive at the relative truth of what happened in this fictional war as they sort out the facts and lies that each character may present.

The story lends itself to an interdisciplinary course because of the historical, sociopolitical, and military research the author utilizes in creating the story. Connections between the events of this story and true events of world history are clear and powerful creating opportunities for authentic discussions on humanity, human nature, and the choices individuals and nations make. World War Z is uniquely situated to review and enhance the teachings of the 10th grade interdisciplinary course.

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

From Library Journal:

As the author of the deadpan *Zombie Survival Guide*, Brooks (son of filmmaker Mel) is clearly qualified to write this globe-spanning "global history" of a war that will begin sometime soon. The book owes a debt to George Romero's *Living Dead* films, with their hordes of moaning ghouls, but that kind of monster-movie action is secondary to the individual stories of both major world players and front-line grunts in the war against the undead. Woven through the narrative are an undercurrent of social commentary and musings on the nature of fear and hope. This infectious and compelling book will have nervous readers watching the streets for zombies. Recommended for all public libraries. Karl G. Siewert, Tulsa City-Cty. Lib. Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

Review #2

From Publishers Weekly:

Brooks, the author of the determinedly straight-faced parody *The Zombie Survival Guide* (2003), returns in all seriousness to the zombie theme for his second outing, a future history in the style of Theodore Judson's *Fitzpatrick's War*. Brooks tells the story of the world's desperate battle against the zombie threat with a series of first-person accounts "as told to the author" by various characters around the world. A Chinese doctor encounters one of the earliest zombie cases at a time when the Chinese government is ruthlessly suppressing any information about the outbreak that will soon spread across the globe. The tale then follows the outbreak via testimony of smugglers, intelligence

officials, military personnel and many others who struggle to defeat the zombie menace. Despite its implausible premise and choppy delivery, the novel is surprisingly hard to put down. The subtle, and not so subtle, jabs at various contemporary politicians and policies are an added bonus. (Sept.)
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What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **The Poisonwood Bible (would provide most of the English requirements listed above)** Author: **Barbara Kingsolver**

Title: **Lord of the Flies (would provide some similar topical discussions)** Author: **William Golding**

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Strong language

Some instances of graphic scenes and comments

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