

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Alessandra Zahran (CP 9 Team) School: Liberty High School
Book Title: *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* Genre: Realistic Fiction, YA
Author: Tahereh Mafi Pages: 320
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Copyright: 2018

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.)

It's 2002, a year after 9/11. It's an extremely turbulent time politically, but especially so for someone like Shirin, a sixteen-year-old Muslim girl who's tired of being stereotyped.

Shirin is never surprised by how horrible people can be. She's tired of the rude stares, the degrading comments - even the physical violence - she endures as a result of her race, her religion, and the hijab she wears every day. So she's built up protective walls and refuses to let anyone close enough to hurt her. Instead, she drowns her frustrations in music and spends her afternoons break-dancing with her brother.

But then she meets Ocean James. He's the first person in forever who really seems to want to get to know Shirin. It terrifies her - they seem to come from two irreconcilable worlds - and Shirin has had her guard up for so long that she's not sure she'll ever be able to let it down. (Goodreads)

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

A Very Large Expanse of Sea will serve as a supplemental text for instruction and assessment pertaining to Reading Literature and Writing (specifically, close reading). It will be included among a list of choice novels, and students will make selections based on prior research and conferring with their instructor.

Unit Title: Close Reading + Literary Analysis

1. How does my environment affect me?
2. What dictates the way I interact with my environment?
3. What parts of my identity are determined for me by members of society/my environment?

Priority Standards:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3](#)

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.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4](#)

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3](#)

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Include two professional review 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). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1 (Kirkus Review)

After attending three different high schools, Shirin’s used to finding her way in new places. Unlike her brother, Navid, she lies low, earbuds under her headscarf, ignoring all the racist comments thrown her way. Shirin doesn’t take all the bull of her white classmates and their racist ignorance. But two things make this new school different: break-dancing and Ocean, the white lab partner who seems to see beyond Iranian-American Shirin’s hijab. She can’t get Ocean off her mind: Although he annoys her with his constant questions and texts, which keep eating at her data limit, Ocean forces her to open up. She even takes him out to watch break-dance tournaments, the one diverse place in her life where she doesn’t feel alone in a crowd of whiteness. Shirin keeps waiting for Ocean to get bored or to realize that being with her could cost him his friends, his family, and potentially his basketball scholarship. But Ocean doesn’t seem to care about other people—what they think, how they act, or what they believe. Even so, their relationship threatens to upend the cultural norms of American suburbia. This gripping political romance takes readers into the life of a young Muslim woman trying to navigate high school with the entire world attacking her right to her body and her faith.

A moving coming-of-age narrative about the viciousness of Islamophobia and the unwavering power of love in post-9/11 America. (*Fiction. 12-18*)

Review #2

Hijabi Shirin, 16, starts at a new school in small-town America shortly after 9/11. She rages at those who assume that her religion and headscarf make her a terrorist, but instead of letting her anger “grip both sides of my mouth open and rip me in half,” she uses indifference as armor against the hostile stares of her peers. That is, until she meets Ocean James in her biology class. Against her better judgment, Shirin lets Ocean in and slowly begins to fall for him. But the new couple soon becomes targets of racism, xenophobia, and bigotry. Meanwhile, Shirin finds solace by starting a breakdancing crew with her brother and his friends. Mafi (the Shatter Me series) infuses a contemporary love story with a heartbreakingly realistic portrait of one post-9/11 Muslim life in the United States. Mafi openly addresses many common misconceptions about Islam and what it means to be a woman of color in the face of racism, showing how differences can be applauded, not feared. Ages 13–up. *Agent: Jodi Reamer, Writers House. (Oct.)* (Publisher’s Weekly)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?Title: *A Million Junes*

Author: Emily Henry

Title: *Pride*

Author: Ibi Zoboi

Title: *This Train is Being Held*

Author: Ismee Williams

Document any potentially controversial content:

“Parents need to know that *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*, by Iranian American author [Tahereh Mafi](#) (*Whichwood*), is a fiery, relatable, quasi-autobiographical novel of being a post-9/11 Muslim high school sophomore. Main character Shirin wears a hijab, swears like a sailor, loves breakdancing - - and against all odds, falls in love with the most popular, good-looking basketball player in her sports-crazy school. His name is Ocean (hence the title), and he feels the same about her. There's quite a bit about the harmful effects of prejudice and stereotyping -- and how to overcome your own bias and see things as someone else does, which forms a positive contrast to the barrage of hateful or clueless behavior from many teens and adults. There's lots about the experience of growing up as the child of [refugee immigrants](#) and the struggle to be and be seen as yourself without all the baggage others put on you. Frequent strong language includes "f--k," "s--t," "d--k," "goddamn," "Jesus Christ!" and more. There are numerous make-out sessions and sexual banter. Shirin and other Muslim kids suffer constant prejudice, bigotry, and threats of violence. Bullies attack her in freshman year, knock her down, and try to rip the hijab from her head.” (Common Sense Media)

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 RiskGRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 **Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):****Suggested Professional Literacy 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

Signatures:**Teacher: Alessandra Zahran, Sarah McCarty, Chris Talbert, Victoria Lewis Date: 11/9/2020****Department Head: _____ Date: _____**

Building Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____

Date: _____