

OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM DRAFT- 2022

LOCATION

Building(s): OBMS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 6th ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: Zora & Me, by Victoria Bond and T.B. Simon

Genre: fiction/mystery/historical fiction

Lexile Reading Level: 860L

Total number of pages: 171

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)

Whether she's telling the truth or stretching it, Zora Neale Hurston is a riveting storyteller. Her latest creation is a shape-shifting gator man who lurks in the marshes, waiting to steal human souls. But when boastful Sonny Wrapped loses a wrestling match with an elusive alligator named Ghost — and a man is found murdered by the railroad tracks soon after — young Zora's tales of a mythical evil creature take on an ominous and far more complicated complexion, jeopardizing the peace and security of an entire town and forcing three children to come to terms with the dual-edged power of pretending. Zora's best friend, Carrie, narrates this coming-of-age story set in the Eden-like town of Eatonville, Florida, where justice isn't merely an exercise in retribution, but a testimony to the power of community, love, and pride. A fictionalization of the early years of a literary giant, this astonishing novel is the first project ever to be endorsed by the Zora Neale Hurston Trust that was not authored by Hurston herself.

Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)

Drinking/smoking: Mentions of adults drinking and smoking.

Sex: None present.

Language: Use of the "N" word (page 97). The "N" word is used by a white man. A woman who is biracial uses the "N" word to describe the reason why a boy was beaten: The boy was beaten for being an "uppity" "N" word (page 142-144).

Violence: A man is murdered and it's a mystery of who did it, talks of his head missing (page 58). An elderly woman falls off a cliff and is bruised (page 39), a child runs off the same cliff and breaks her arm (page 119). A man is mauled by an alligator. A story is related where a black boy is beaten very badly by a group of white children, later recovering from his injuries. A man almost strikes his daughter in anger.

**Should be noted the story takes place in a Southern town at the turn of the 20th Century. The story details tales of magic and folklore, deals with issues of abandonment, poverty, and race relations.



Book Reviews (2-3 links) Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links
<https://www.common sense media.org/book-reviews/zora-and-me>
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/victoria-bond/zora-and-me/>

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)

This book will be used for a genre study of mystery in which students will practice skills such as analyzing how the plot unfolds and how characters respond as the plot moves toward a resolution. (RL 6.3). Additionally, students will compare the text to several mystery short stories in terms of how the texts address the mystery topic. (RL 6.9)

The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only* and abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards) [Link to Ohio's ELA Standards](#)

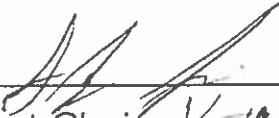



1. RL 6.3 Students will analyze how plot elements are connected and how the characters change or develop based on the episodes.
2. RL 6.9 Students will examine how texts in the mystery genre are similar in structure. Students will examine the similarities and differences in how the author chooses to develop the mystery.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (Title/author)

1. The Parker Inheritance, by Varian Johnson
2. The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle, by Avi

SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher:  Date: 3/14/22
Department Chair:  Date: 3/14/22
Building Principal:  Date: 3/14/22
District Curriculum Administrator:  Date: 3/14/22