

## OLETANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

### LOCATION

Building(s): OOHS

Classes/Grade Level(s): Honors CP English 9

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds

Genre: Narrative Poetry (Contemporary Fiction)

Lexile Reading Level: 720L

Total number of pages: 320 (poetry layout)

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

In *Long Way Down*, Will has known about The Rules for a long time. No one he knows invented them, they've just always existed: No Crying, No Snitching, Get Revenge. When his big brother Shawn is killed, Will knows what he has to do -- he has to follow The Rules, right? The 60-second trip down the elevator from his apartment to the killer is among the longest of his life. When his past offers a different perspective on The Rules, Will has to make a tough decision: Will he go through with it?  
<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/long-way-down>

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

- Profanity
  - Infrequent strong language
  - Two explicit curse words total
  - For example, "I stood there/ Mouth clenched/ and looked at Shawn/ lying there like a piece/ of furniture left outside/draped in a gold chain/ them fuckers ain't even/ snatch it." (22)
- violence and/or abuse of any kind
  - Multiple incidents of shootings, death, and grief are recalled and described, some with very emotional language, for example "Gunshots like firecrackers/ Dani said her body burned/ and all she wanted to do was/ jump outside of herself." (131)
  - The central conflict of the story is centered on if Will will seek revenge for his brother's murder (33)
- descriptions of underage drinking alcohol, drugs, smoking, and/or vaping
  - Some implied references to adult drinking, for example his mother drinking and sobbing in the kitchen. "She sat in the kitchen, sobbing/ into her palms, which she peeled/ away only to lift glass to mouth." (29)
  - Many references to smoking by teens and ghost figures as almost every "floor" or chapter ends with one of the visiting ghost figures lighting a cigarette
- implicit and explicit sexual content and sexual innuendo,
  - Infrequent references to flirting and "checking out" others that are relatively mild. For example, "A girl



	<p><i>stepped in./ Stood beside me./ Around my age./ Fine as Hell." (110)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● other topics that elicit psychological traumas or re-traumas<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Main character relives many moments of loss and grief as with each new chapter he meets another person from his past killed by gun violence; for example, he recalls that "blood soaking into a/ T-shirt, blue jeans, and boots/ looks a lot like chocolate syrup." (23)</li></ul></li><li>● and language or actions that reflect bias, stereotypes, and prejudice<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Some references to community tension with law enforcement, for example when Will reflects about cops "You can always tell a newbie/ They always ask questions/ like they expect real answers." (18)</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Book Reviews (1-2 link(s))</b> Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#"><u>Kirkus Reviews</u></a></li><li>2. <a href="#"><u>Simon and Schuster Review</u></a></li></ol>	

## ABOUT THE CLASS

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

The Honors CP9 team at OOHS has selected *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds as part of the curriculum. During this quarter, students are focusing on rhetorical and stylistic elements of writing style, working to build a foundational understanding of how language can be organized to most effectively present an argument and message. These rhetorical and argumentation skills include but are not limited to: the effect of incorporating patterns and motifs throughout a text, analyzing the purpose of beautiful and emotional language (figurative language, imagery, etc.), and sequencing and organizing ideas in order to create a larger argument that appeals to an audience. *Long Way Down* will be paired with several other genres and styles to "round out" a quarter-long study of how rhetoric and communication operate in our world today.

*Long Way Down* allows the CP9H teachers to do all of these things with a very modern and unique text. Using a narrative poetry style, Reynolds, who just finished his time serving as the National Ambassador of Young People's Literature, is able to demonstrate how to play with the flow and wording of language to create emotionally charged writing. The text, while compact, demonstrates complexity and richness in both language and narrative structure. Because of its fictional approach, students are able to see the overlap of fictional stories and modern day issues. The creativity and originality of the writing allows students to practice their close reading



strategies. The text is significantly challenging for an honors CP9 class— not in Lexile but in the uniqueness of its content and craft.

*Long Way Down* also offers our particular group of freshmen an opportunity to see new experiences in literature. The main character is a young man and a person of color, and he grows up in a setting (urban D.C.) very different from our own, allowing some students the opportunity to learn about other cultures and socioeconomic classes as well as to see struggles beyond what they may have experienced.

**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.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.
2. 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, mood, and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place or an emotion; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
3. RL.9-10.5 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.
4. RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's perspective or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that perspective or purpose.

## ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

**What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (1-2 texts, title/author; Note: these texts must also have lit. reviews forms associated with their selection)**

1. Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
2. The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

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

Teacher:  Date: 12/12/22  
Department Chair:  Date: 12/16/22  
Building Principal:  Date: 12/16/22  
District Curriculum Administrator:  Date: 12/20/22