

OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OLMS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 6,7,8

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: **We Are Not Free / Traci Chee**

Genre: **Historical Fiction**

Lexile Reading Level: **925L**

Total number of pages: **365**

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

Fourteen teens who have grown up together in Japantown, San Francisco.

Fourteen teens who form a community and a family, as interconnected as they are conflicted.

Fourteen teens whose lives are turned upside down when over 100,000 people of Japanese ancestry are removed from their homes and forced into desolate incarceration camps.

In a world that seems determined to hate them, these young Nisei must rally together as racism and injustice threaten to pull them apart.

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

There are many racial slurs "Jap" and "Nip" (page 7), and several curse words like "a***" (page 101), "sh*t" (page 187).

There are depictions of violence: muggings, beatings, combat overseas, a character is shot and killed in the incarceration camps (160, Chapter 8).

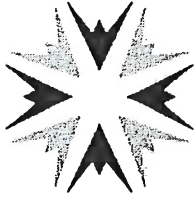
Character's kiss, but otherwise, there is no real explicit or mentioned romance (chapter 2).

Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) *Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links*

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/traci-chee/we-are-not-free/>

Young Japanese Americans tell of life during World War II.

In San Francisco's Japantown, a group of teens has grown up together and become like family. But life in America after the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor is dangerous for them. They and their families are taken to the Topaz incarceration camp in Utah,



where the harsh conditions and injustices they experience turn their worlds upside down. They draw some comfort in being together—however, a government questionnaire causes rifts: Loyalties are questioned, lines are drawn, and anger spills over, threatening to destroy the bonds that once held them together. The teens are forced apart, some enlisting in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team while the No-Nos (those who refuse to serve in the U.S. military and swear allegiance solely to the U.S. government) are relocated to the Tule Lake camp, and others, whose families passed background checks, are allowed to resettle in locations around the country. This is a compelling and transformative story of a tragic period in American history. Written from the 14 young people's intertwining points of view, each character fills in a segment of time between 1942 and 1945. The styles vary, including both first- and second-person narration as well as verse and letters. Each voice is powerful, evoking raw emotions of fear, anger, resentment, uncertainty, grief, pride, and love. Historical photographs and documents enhance the text.

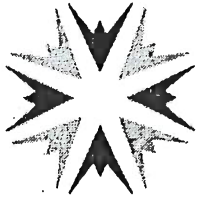
<https://www.booklistonline.com/We-Are-Not-Free/pid=9729502>

Chee is a master storyteller...Here, she uses her own San Francisco-based Japanese American family's history to inform a blazing and timely indictment of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Her passion and personal involvement combine with her storytelling talents to create a remarkable and deeply moving account of the incarceration...[We Are Not Free] should become required curriculum reading on a shameful and relevant chapter in U.S. history.

ABOUT THE CLASS

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

This book serves as a challenging, longer read that will give students practice noticing and identifying developing drama and characterization. The subject matter also helps educate students about WWII and the different challenges Americans faced during that time within their own country. It will serve as an exemplar for how to avoid stereotyping, while also teaching varying points of view.



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.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
2. RL.7.6 Analyze how an author uses the point of view to develop and contrast the perspectives of different characters or narrators in a text.
3. RL.7.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. b. Incorporate the development of a theme and other story details into an objective summary of the text.

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. The Outsiders
2. American Born Chinese

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

Teacher: Nath Bah Date: 08/16/2023
Department Chair: Glenn Bischoff Date: 8/16/2023
Building Principal: Bill P. Bah / Brian Bailey Date: 8/16/23
District Curriculum Administrator: [Signature] Date: 8/20/23