

Secondary Novel Review Committee

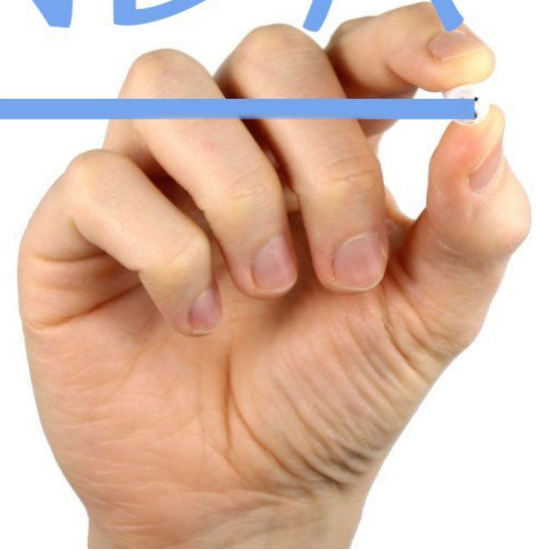
October 5, 2023
5:00-7:00 PM

Welcome!
Find your name tag and have a seat.
The sign in sheet will be coming around shortly.



Scottsdale *Unified*
SCHOOL DISTRICT

AGENDA



1. Introductions
2. Review purpose, norms
3. Schedule of meetings
4. Review of August minutes
5. Round 1 book presentations
6. Round 2 book assignments and small group meetings

Introductions



**What is your
favorite
experience/memory
from this past
summer?**

Purpose

- a) To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and Arizona Standards, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and maturity levels of the students.
- b) To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge and literary appreciation.
- c) To provide materials so that young people may have an opportunity to practice critical analysis and make informed judgements in their daily lives.
- d) To assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the school community.

*(adapted from American Library Association)

Norms

What is needed to be successful as a committee?

- Be genuine with each other about ideas, challenges, and feelings
- Listen to understand
- Practice being open minded
- Be mindful of how often and how long you speak in consideration of hearing all feedback
- Ask questions for clarification
- Support the group's recommendation after consensus is reached



Responsibilities and Expectations

Upcoming Meetings and Due dates

Completion of rubric:

- Book #1: September 25
- ★ Book #2: October 30
- Book #3: December 4
- Book #4: January 8
- Book #5: February 12
- Book #6: March 25
- Book #7: April 22



Small group meeting:

- Book #1 discussion: Week of September 25
- ★ Book #2 discussion: Week of October 30
- Book #3 discussion: Week of December 4
- Book #4 discussion: Week of January 8
- Book #5 discussion: Week of February 12
- Book #6 discussion: Week of March 25
- Book #7 discussion: Week of April 22

Whole group meeting:

- Meeting #1: August 31
- ★ Book #1 discussion: October 5
- Book #2 discussion: November 9
- Book #3 discussion: December 14
- Book #4 discussion: January 18
- Book #5 discussion: February 22
- Book #6 discussion: April 4
- Book #7 discussion: May 2

Review of August Minutes

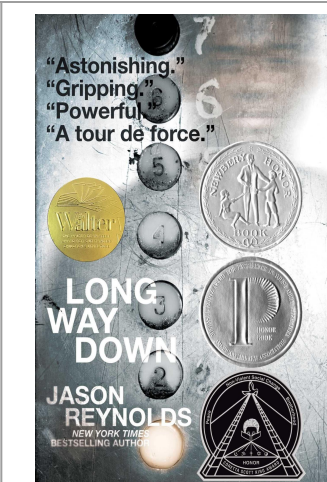
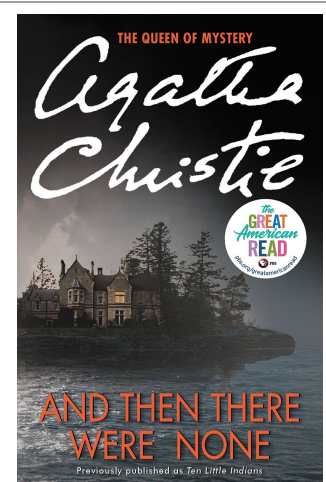
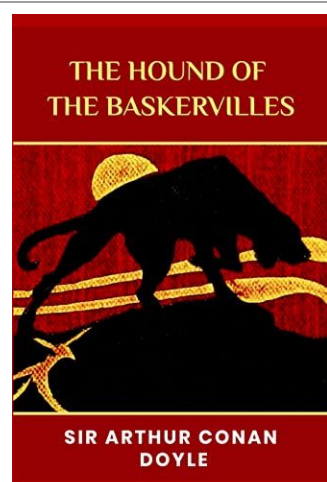
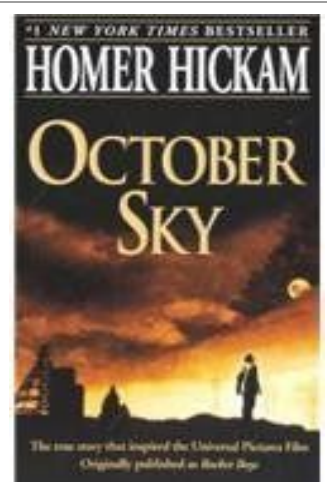
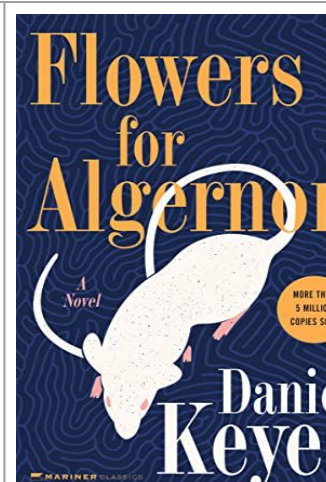


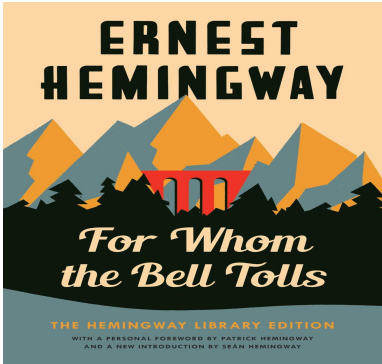
Question #6: Does this novel meet the provision of ARS 15-120.03?

1. Do you feel this novel contains sexually explicit content according to ARS 15-120.03?
2. Should this novel be excluded from use based on ARS 15-120.03?
3. Based on ARS 15-120.03, should this novel be required to have parents opt in for their students to read it?



Small Group Novels

						
Grade 10: <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> by Ernest Hemingway	Grade 11: <i>A Long Way Down</i> by Jason Reynolds	Grade 8: <i>And Then There Were None</i> by Agatha Christie	Grade 8: <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> by Arthur Conan Doyle	Grade 8: <i>October Sky</i> by Homer H. Hickam, Jr.	Grade 7: <i>Flowers for Algernon</i> by Daniel Keyes	Grade 10: <i>The Kite Runner</i> by Khaled Hosseini



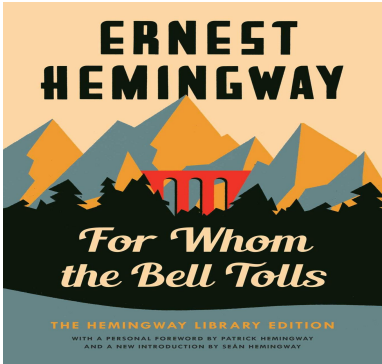
Grade 10:

***For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 3 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of 3 is “Extending Freedom’s Reach” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What is the relationship between power and freedom?”

Summary

This story is based on Hemingway’s experiences during the Spanish Civil War as a reporter for the North American Newspaper Alliance. It features an American, Robert Jordan, who fights alongside Spanish guerillas for the Republicans. The novel graphically describes the brutality of the war and is told primarily through the thoughts and experiences of the protagonist, Robert Jordan. As a dynamiter, he is assigned to blow up a bridge during an attack on the city of Segovia.



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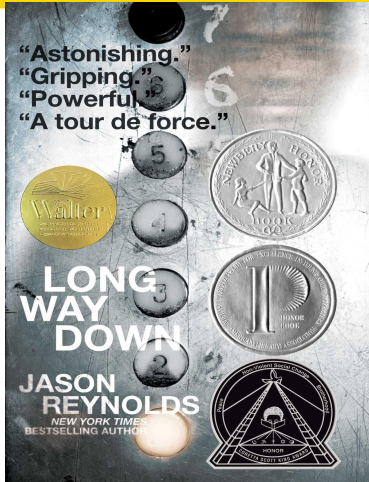
Positives

- strongly supports empathy and trust
- lots of detail
- highly acclaimed, classic novel by influential American author
- good use of analogies throughout
- crossover ties to social studies (e.g., different political factions)

Concerns

- too dense
- does have some sexual content
- the writing is tedious and students will lose interest very early.
- inferred sexual content

Recommendation: Yes, as a yellow novel.



Grade 11:

***A Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 5 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of unit 5 is “Facing Our Fears” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “How do we respond when challenged by fear?”

Summary

A Long Way Down is a young adult novel, written in prose, that tells the story of a teenage boy, Will, who is seeking revenge for the murder of his older brother. In their neighborhood, there are "street rules" which Will is expected to follow. So, he is expected to go after the murderer of his brother.

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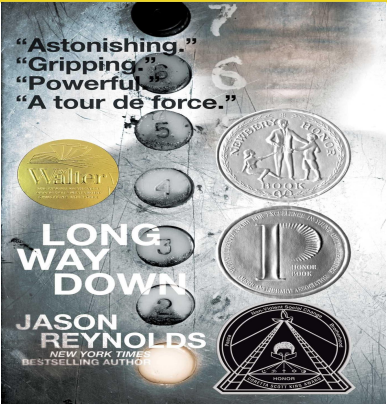
Positives

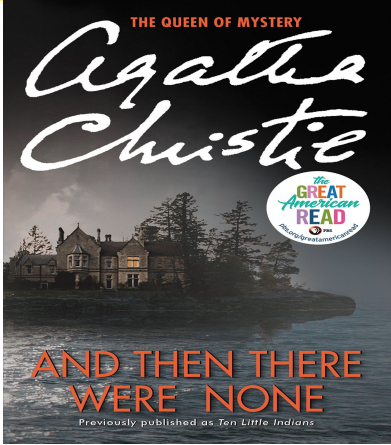
- Quick read - appealing to students
- Engaging text - authentic
- Difficult decision making - don't always follow norms - good exposure for students
- How to grapple with loss - relatable for all
- Overly simplistic to think - have a gun = bad guy
- Revenge vs Justice - great conversation

Concerns

- Might trigger - traumatic experience
- Poetry can be confusing
- Occasional curse word
- Touches on gun violence

Recommendation: Yes - 100% in agreement - answers the essential question.





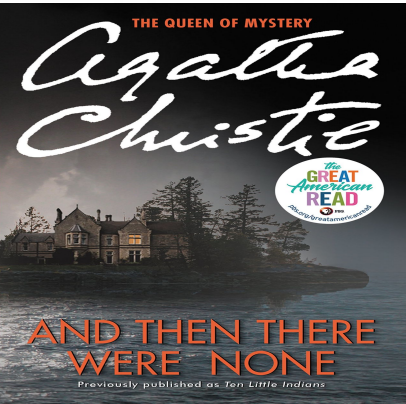
Grade 8:

***And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 1 of the StudySync ELA curriculum. The theme of unit 1 is “Everyone Loves a Mystery” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What attracts us to the mysterious?”

Summary

Ten people, each with something to hide and something to fear, are invited to an isolated mansion on Soldier Island by a host who, surprisingly, fails to appear. On the island they are cut off from everything but each other and the inescapable shadows of their own past lives. One by one, the guests share the darkest secrets of their wicked pasts. And one by one, they die...



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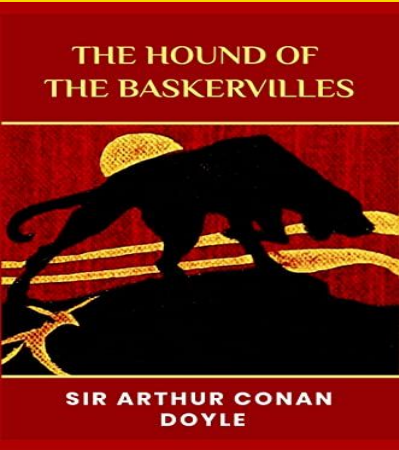
Positives

- Classic piece of literature - exposes students to high quality work
- Captivating read
- Meets the needs of the unit, answering the essential question and fitting the writing project
- Many surprises in storytelling (reader can guess, but are twists and turns)

Concerns

- Some mild anti-semitism (written in 1939) - can be addressed by teacher as pre-WWII Europe/world
- Murders (but they are also tame, not descriptive)

Recommendation: Yes “100%”



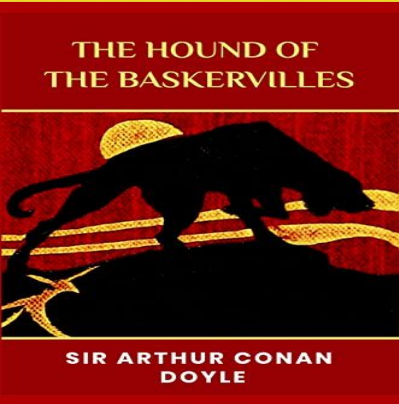
Grade 8:

***The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Arthur Conan Doyle**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 1 of the StudySync ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 1 is “Everyone Loves a Mystery” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What attracts us to the mysterious?”

Summary

The Hound of the Baskervilles is the third of the four crime novels written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle featuring the detective Sherlock Holmes. Originally serialised in *The Strand Magazine* from August 1901 to April 1902, it is set largely on Dartmoor in Devon in England's West Country and tells the story of an attempted murder inspired by the legend of a fearsome, diabolical hound of supernatural origin. Sherlock Holmes and his companion Dr. Watson investigate the case. This was the first appearance of Holmes since his intended death in "The Final Problem", and the success of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* led to the character's eventual revival.



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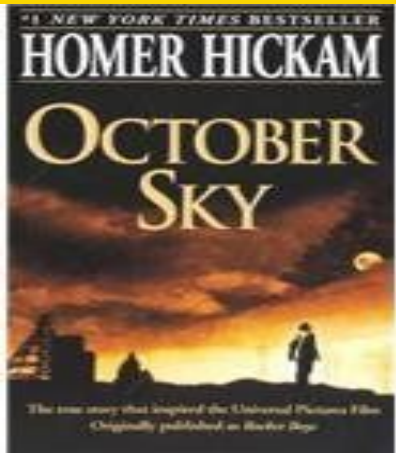
Positives

- Students would enjoy
- Rich vocabulary
- Classic
- Mysterious
- Suspenseful
- Age appropriate

Concerns

- Not a concern: Wonder direct connection with the writing prompt

Recommendation: *This novel is on the 10th grade reading list.*



Grade 8:

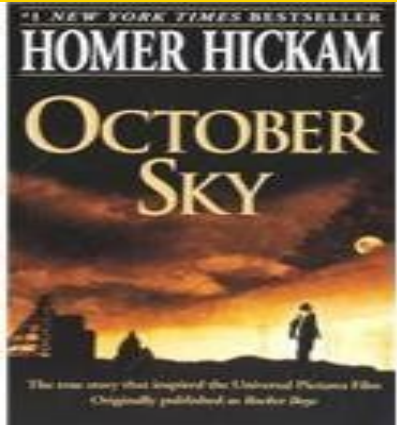
***October Sky* by Homer H. Hickam, Jr.**

This novel is recommended as a summer reading choice novel for incoming 8th grade students. Teachers decide what type of project will be completed in order for students to demonstrate their understanding of the novel.

Summary

“It was 1957, the year Sputnik raced across the Appalachian sky, and the small town of Coalwood, West Virginia, was slowly dying. Faced with an uncertain future, Homer Hickam nurtured a dream: to send rockets to outer space. The introspective son of the mine’s superintendent and a mother determined to get him out of Coalwood forever, Homer fell in with a group of misfits who learned not only how to turn scraps of metal into sophisticated rockets but how to sustain their hope in a town that swallowed its men alive. As the boys began to light up the skies with their flaming projectiles and dreams of glory, Coalwood, and the Hickams would never be the same.”

This is a memoir of Homer Hickam who went on to become an engineer with NASA and an author. It was originally published as “Rocket Boys” and made into the movie, “October Sky.” It was a New York Times #1 bestseller.



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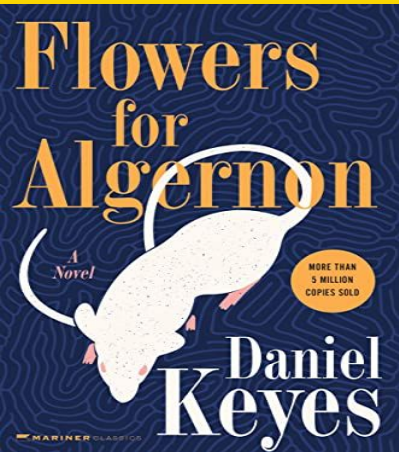
Positives

- Strong themes of perseverance
- Strong work ethic
- Creativity, problem solving
- Going against expectations to fulfill a dream
- Goal oriented
- Gives insight into an unfamiliar region, time, and lifestyle
- Community and willingness of people to help reach goals

Concerns

- Sexual content/innuendo (for 7th grade going into 8th grade)- Parent Permission
- Minor violence/aggression
- Some disregard for safety “Don’t blow yourself up”
- Would 7th to 8th grade students understand context (time, place, region, circumstances) without prior teacher guidance?
- Movie is available. Will students substitute movie for book reading?
- Given permission requirement, how does this fit with summer reading?

Recommendation: Recommended with Parent Permission (for sexual content).



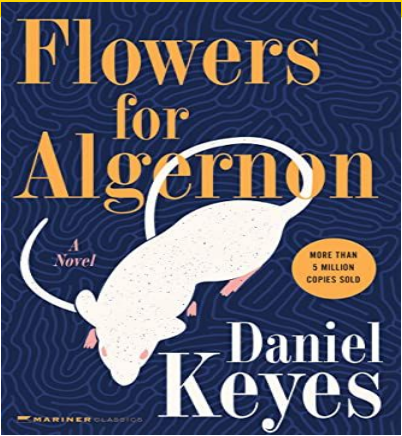
Grade 7:

***Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 4 of the StudySync ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 4 is “Moment of Truth” and the Essential Question is: “How can one event change everything?”

Summary

Flowers for Algernon is considered a science fiction book about a man named Charlie Gordon who has an IQ of 68, but experiences a brief period of greatly increased intelligence by undergoing an operation for artificial intelligence. The novel is a first-person narration that takes the form of a series of diary entries. The progress of the operation is revealed as Charlie’s spelling, grammar, and vocabulary improves and as he begins to understand the world around him. He remembers his past, falls in love, and goes on an intellectual adventure of reading, writing, and learning. Charlie’s experience challenges the reader to ask if humanity is measured by how smart we are, or by our kindness, love and interactions with others.



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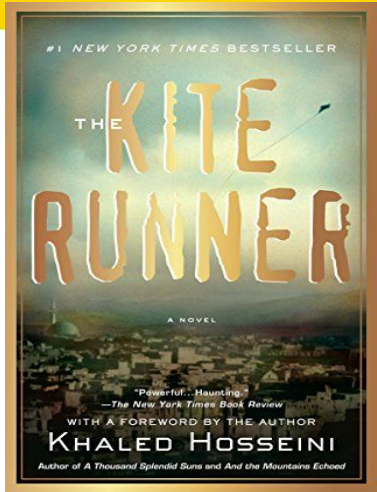
Positives

- Empathy for differences of others
- Historical context of vocabulary, medical process, academic review process, scientific method, views of disabilities
- Strong character arc
- Rich vocabulary
- Symbolism
- Moral dilemmas for rich discussion

Concerns

- Sexual awakening - not graphic or detailed
- Abuse - alcohol, physical, mental
- Antiquated language (retarded, moron)
- A few instances of inappropriate language
- Written for adults with adult themes

Recommendation: The committee does not recommend the book for 7th grade, but recommends it as a yellow high school text. The committee recommends exploring the original short story of the book for 7th grade.



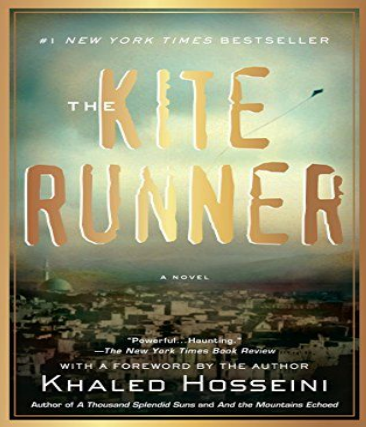
Grade 10:

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 2 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 2 is “Outsiders and Outcasts” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “Do people need to belong?”

Summary

The Kite Runner is the first novel by Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini. Published in 2003, it tells the unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father’s servant. Caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.



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Positives

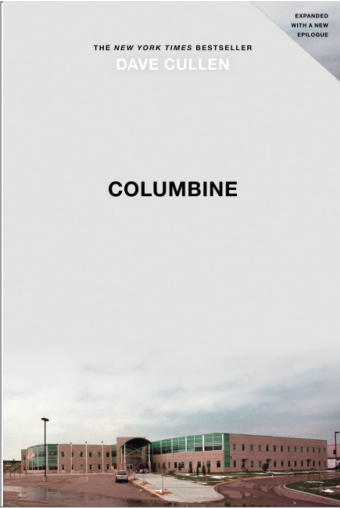
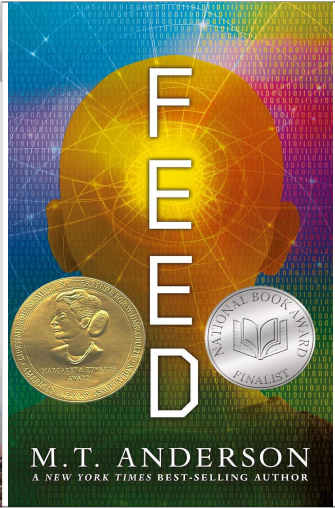
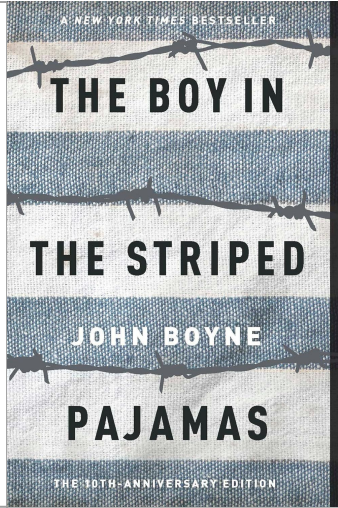
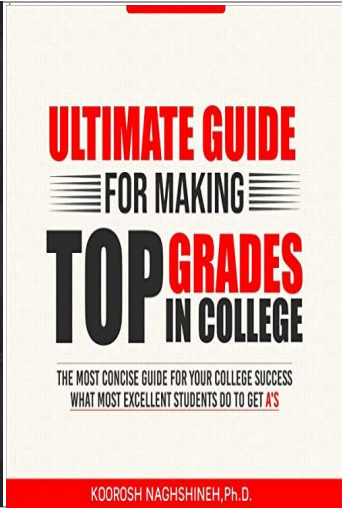
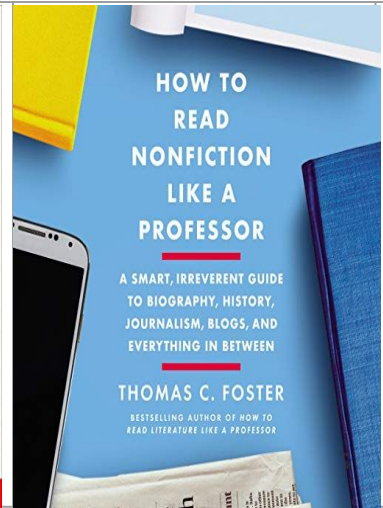
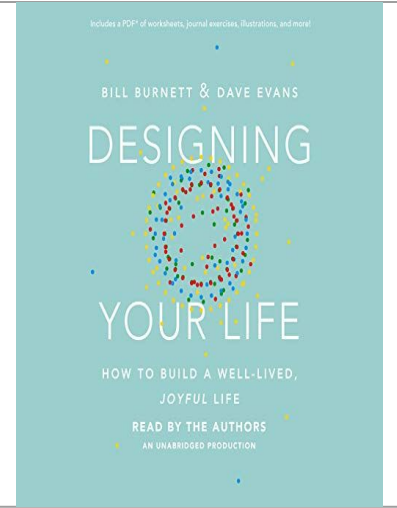
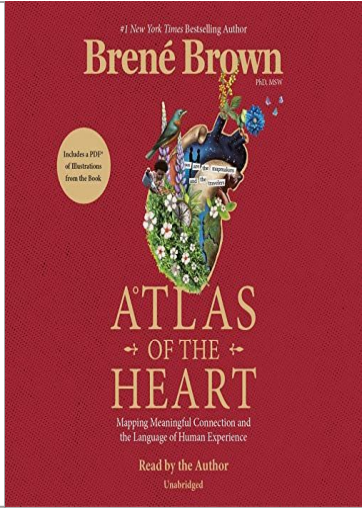
- This text effectively demonstrates the devices analyzed in the standards.
- Not easily won redemption

Concerns

- There is descriptive physical violence
- Implications of sex with a child
- A rape scene that is not graphic but is there
- These events could be triggering for some students

Recommendation: Yes, as a yellow novel.

Small Group Novels

 THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER DAVE CULLEN COLUMBINE	 EXPANDED WITH A NEW EPILOGUE FEED M.T. ANDERSON A NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR	 A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS JOHN BOYNE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION	 ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR MAKING TOP GRADES IN COLLEGE THE MOST CONCISE GUIDE FOR YOUR COLLEGE SUCCESS WHAT MOST EXCELLENT STUDENTS DO TO GET A'S KOOROSH NAGHSHINEH, Ph.D.	 HOW TO READ NONFICTION LIKE A PROFESSOR A SMART, IRREVERENT GUIDE TO BIOGRAPHY, HISTORY, JOURNALISM, BLOGS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN THOMAS C. FOSTER BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR	 Includes a PDF of worksheets, journal exercises, illustrations, and more! BILL BURNETT & DAVE EVANS DESIGNING YOUR LIFE HOW TO BUILD A WELL-LIVED, JOYFUL LIFE READ BY THE AUTHORS AN UNABRIDGED PRODUCTION	 #1 New York Times Bestselling Author Brené Brown Includes a PDF of illustrations from the book. ATLAS OF THE HEART Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience Read by the Author Unabridged
Grade 12 - College English: <i>Columbine</i> by Dave Cullen	Grade 8: <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson	Grade 8: <i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i> by John Boyne	Grade 12: <i>The Ultimate Guide for Making Top Grades in College</i> by Koorish Naghshineh, PhD	Grade 11: <i>How to Read Nonfiction Like a Professor</i> by Thomas C. Foster	Grade 12: <i>Designing Your Life, How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life</i> by Bill Burnett and David Evans	Grade 12: <i>Atlas of the Heart</i> by Brene Brown

*Thank
you*



Next whole group meeting date:

November 9, 2023
5pm, MDA