

Secondary Novel Review Committee

December 14, 2023
5:00-7:00 PM

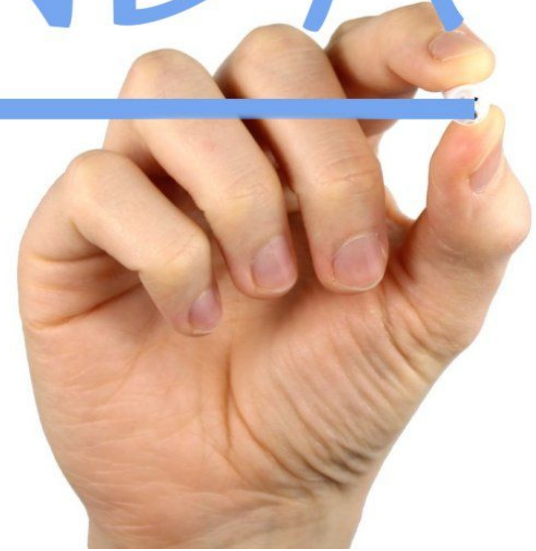
Welcome!
Find your name tag and have a seat.
The sign in sheet will be coming around shortly.



Scottsdale *Unified*
SCHOOL DISTRICT

AGENDA

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



Introductions



**If you could take a
class with any expert,
who would you
choose?**

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

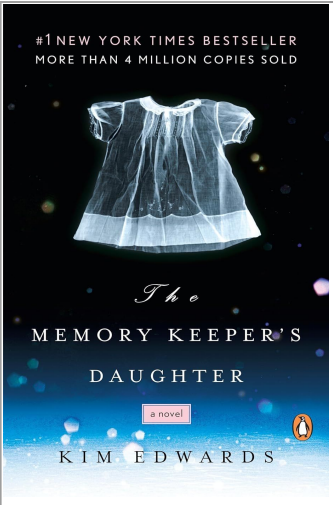
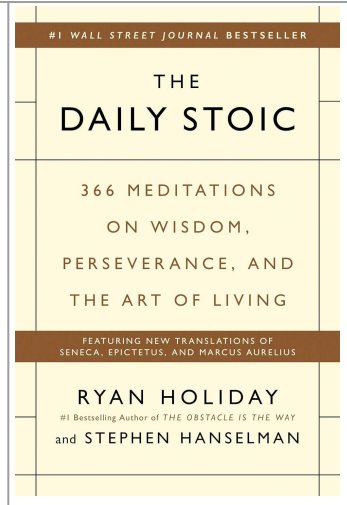
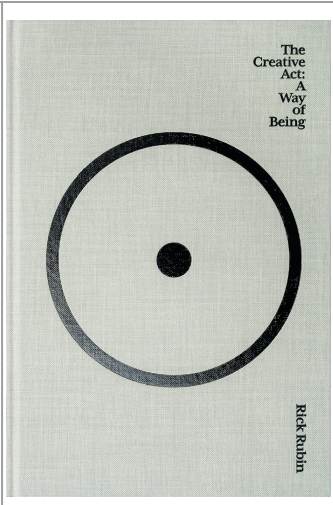
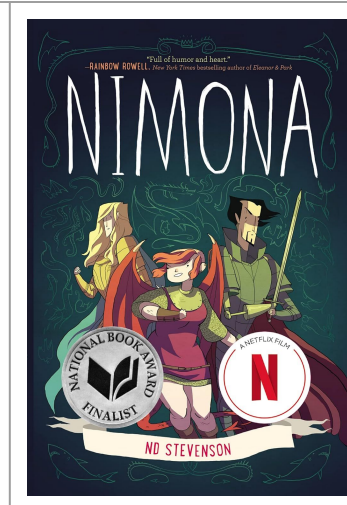
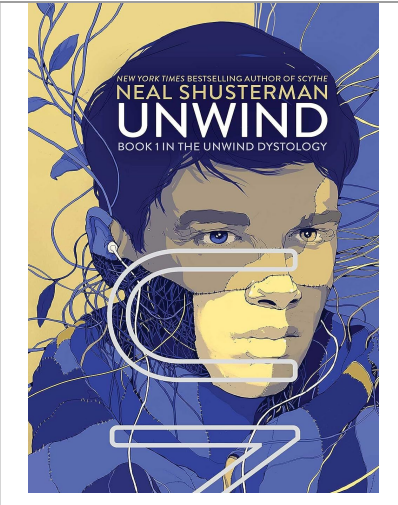
Whole group meeting:

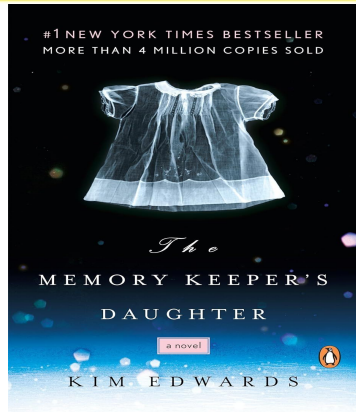
- Meeting #1: August 31
- Book #1 discussion: October 5
- Book #2 discussion: November 9
- ★ Book #3 discussion: December 14
- Book #4 discussion: January 18
- Book #5 discussion: February 22
- Book #6 discussion: April 4
- Book #7 discussion: May 2

Review of November Minutes



Small Group Novels

						
Grade 12 - AP Literature: <i>The Memory Keeper's Daughter</i> by Kim Edwards	Grade 12 - College English: <i>The Daily Stoic</i> by Ryan Holiday	Grade 12 - College English: <i>The Creative Act: A Way of Being</i> by Rick Rubin	Grade 7: <i>Nimona</i> by Noelle Stevenson	Grade 10-12 Holocaust/Genocide: <i>The Birds Sang Eulogies: A Memoir</i> by Mirla Raz	Grade 8: <i>Unwind</i> by Neal Shusterman	

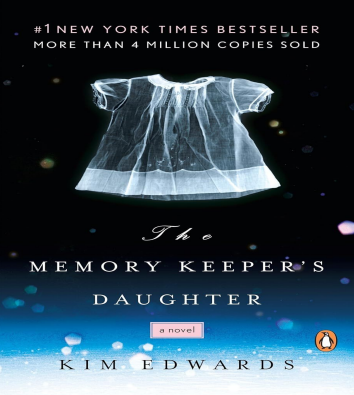


Grade 12 (AP Literature):

***The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards**

The highly engaging story pits the strategies of fear against the creativity and courage of love. Its complex characters living parallel lives and the use of poetic language invite rich literary analysis which is at the core of AP Literature and Composition objectives.

This novel explores the impact of a father's decision to give away his newborn daughter who has Down syndrome. The story follows the lives of David Henry, his wife Norah, their son Paul, and the nurse Caroline Gill, who raises the daughter, Phoebe, as her own. The novel spans over 25 years, from 1964 to 1989, and shows how the secret of Phoebe's existence affects the relationships, choices, and emotions of the main characters. The novel also examines the themes of family, identity, photography, and disability.



Grade 12 (AP Literature): *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards

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Positives

- Easy to read, fast moving and engaging story
- Holds reader's attention
- A variety of perspectives, viewpoints
- Grapples with big life issues and their unintended consequences
- Gives accurate portrayal of 20th century families and evolving roles of men & women at this time

Concerns

- Some explicit content - would require a letter

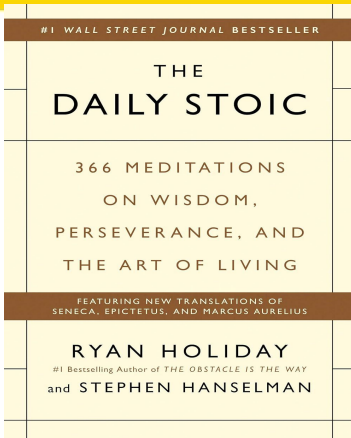
Recommendation: Yes, with consent letter (yellow)

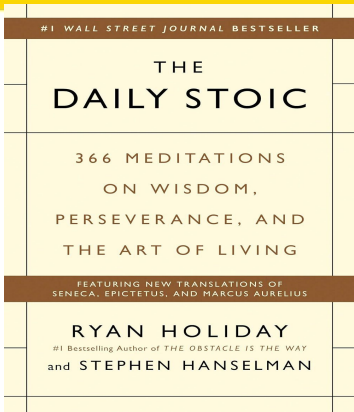
Grade 12 (College English):
***The Daily Stoic* by Ryan Holiday**

Examining/Reading/Writing about the ancient Greeks' life philosophy and the incredible relevance to today.

Summary

The Daily Stoic, is a daily reading that draws on the teachings of Stoic philosophers to help readers reflect on their life with thought provoking ideas based on Stoic philosophy. It is an anthology of quotes from notable Stoic philosophers including Seneca and Marcus Aurelius and provides the reader with an understanding of Stoicism and practical action steps for following the philosophy. Each daily reading begins with a quote from a leader in Stoicism followed by a modern-day interpretation of the Stoic thoughts by the authors of the book.





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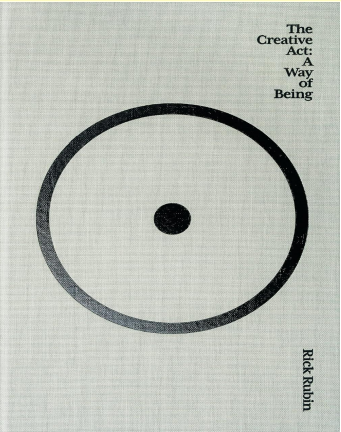
Positives

- Makes ancient texts accessible for the 21st century high schoolers.
- Insightful, thought provoking text.
- Combination of primary text quotes and real-life examples for modern day living.
- Applicable wisdom of Stoic philosophy to daily living.
- Integrates historical figures to illustrate the philosophy.

Concerns

- Author opinion is apparent in a few modern day examples. (confederacy, LBJ, etc.)
- Some of the philosophical quotes mention sex.

Recommendation: We recommendation this book.

The Creative Act:
A Way of Being

Rick Rubin

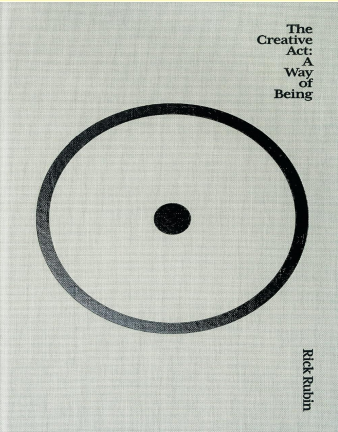
Grade 12 (College English):

***The Creative Act: A Way of Being* by Rick Rubin**

To develop comprehension and awareness of individual creative ability - as opposed to borrowing - self-reliance and understanding of one's creative abilities.

Summary

Many famed music producers are known for a particular sound that has its day. Rick Rubin is known for something else: creating a space where artists of all different genres and traditions can home in on who they really are and what they really offer. He has made a practice of helping people transcend their self-imposed expectations in order to reconnect with a state of innocence from which the surprising becomes inevitable. Over the years, as he has thought deeply about where creativity comes from and where it doesn't, he has learned that being an artist isn't about your specific output, it's about your relationship to the world. Creativity has a place in everyone's life, and everyone can make that place larger. In fact, there are few more important responsibilities.



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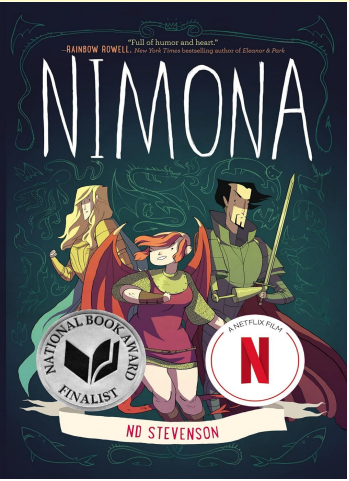
Positives

- No sensitive content
- Easy to read
- The contents of this book can apply to everyone

Concerns

- The contents of the book have very little to do with writing.
- Not much substance
- Seemed redundant in some areas - repetitive ideas

Recommendation: Yes



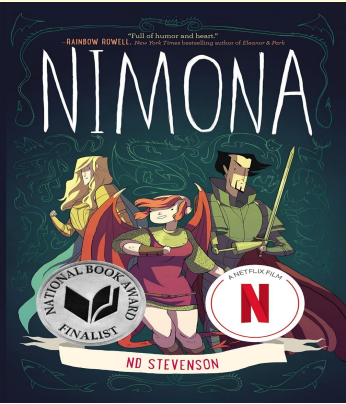
Grade 7: ***Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 1 of the StudySync ELA curriculum (This unit already includes an excerpt from this novel.) The theme of Unit 1 is "Conflicts and Clashes" and the Essential Question for this unit is: "When do differences become conflicts?"

Summary

Nimona takes place in a fantasy kingdom with subverted fairy tale tropes. The Institution of Law Enforcement and Heroics keeps order by training Heroes and Villains who keep balance in the world by going on quests and facing off in battle. Lord Ballister Blackheart is the designated villain in this story, and the Institution's champion Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin is Blackheart's former best friend turned nemesis. They trained together growing up until Goldenloin cheated at a joust, leading Blackheart to lose an arm, which Goldenloin claims was an accident. Goldenloin later reveals that the Director of the Institution fixed the joust with the intention of Goldenloin becoming the Institution's new champion.

At the beginning of the book, Blackheart is approached by a mysterious young girl named Nimona who convinces him to hire her as his sidekick. Nimona has an unusual ability to shapeshift and her carefree, enthusiastic attitude contrasts with Blackheart's more restrained personality. She is also impulsive, and Blackheart, who has a strong moral code, repeatedly reminds Nimona not to harm innocent civilians.



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Positives

- Don't be quick to judge something we don't understand
- Nimona has an opportunity to choose her own fate
- Don't have to act out for attention
- Just because you are "different" doesn't mean someone doesn't care for you
- Author's voice is clear and precise
- Unlikely group of companions as they wreak havoc and unlikely friendship of the two main characters
- Real emotions behind the actions of the characters
- Part past, part future, part fantasy, part science fiction
- Despite it being a graphic novel it has meaningful themes

Concerns

- Some violence

Recommendation: Yes, we recommend this book.



Grade 10-12 (Holocaust/Genocide):

***The Birds Sang Eulogies: A Memoir* by Mirla Raz**

The instructional purpose/rationale for use of this novel is as a memoir study in Holocaust/genocide. To give my students more options to read Holocaust memoirs.

Summary

In this poignant memoir, Anna and Danny Geslewitz's incredible stories of survival are told by them, their daughter, and their granddaughter, three generations affected by the Holocaust. Danny's harrowing story of survival begins in the ghetto where starvation and death are rampant. When the Germans liquidated the ghetto, Danny and his remaining family members were sent to Auschwitz. After witnessing two brothers perish, Danny is near death when suddenly the Germans disappear.

Living in the eastern Polish city of Lvov, Anna vividly describes life and death in the Lvov Ghetto. When it becomes clear that the Germans will kill every remaining Jew in the ghetto, she and her sister flee to Germany. There, she lives a life of constant terror fearing that her Jewish identity will be discovered.

The mayhem of liberation brings its own challenges to Anna and Danny. As Danny and Anna work to find their place in life, they meet in Germany. Together, they begin a memorable new chapter.



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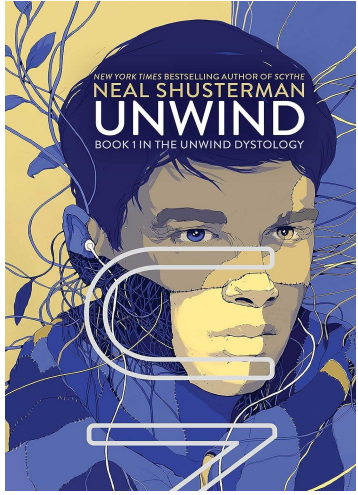
Positives

- Connections to Phoenix/Scottsdale
- Perspective from Daughter and commentary
- Struggle to “make sense” of it
- Captivating/Suspense built-in (creative nonfiction)
- Acknowledge that sometimes words are not enough
- Poetry when narrative was not enough
- Less graphic than some other Holocaust books

Concerns

- Switching narrator could cause struggle-may need some guidance with some readers
- Holocaust

Recommendation: Approve



Grade 8:

***Unwind* by Neal Shusterman**

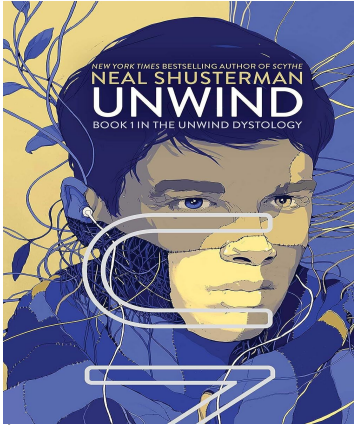
This novel is recommended for use in Unit 2 of the StudySync ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 2 is "Past and Present" and the Essential Question for this unit is: "What makes you, you?"

Summary

After America's Second Civil War, the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life armies came to an agreement. According to their Bill of Life, human life may not be terminated from the moment of conception until the age of thirteen. But between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, the child may be gotten rid of by their parent through a process called "unwinding."

By repurposing a teen's organs and other body parts in living recipients, the unwound child's life doesn't *technically* end. According to society's leaders, unwinding leads to a healthier and safer community, as troublesome and unwanted teens are used for the greater good.

Connor is a rebel whose unwinding was ordered by his parents. Risa, a ward of the state, has been slated for unwinding due to cost cutting. And Lev, his parents' tenth child, has been destined for unwinding since birth as a religious tithe. As their paths intersect, they start to fight for their own destinies. But do they stand a chance of escaping their fate or proving their lives are worth saving?



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Positives

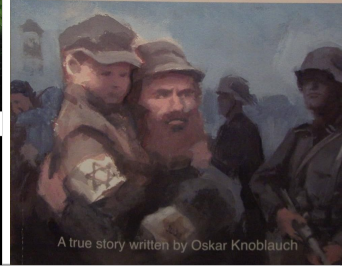
- This novel will definitely spark discussion and provide support for the curriculum questions for the unit.
- Well written and easily understood; engaging for students
- Hits the essential question and extended writing projects right on the nose

Concerns

- Sensitive content: describing an actual unwinding, but even then it doesn't give details for what the surgeons do, only what the unwind experiences (dismemberment)
- problematic topics: pro life/choice
- suicidal ideation

Recommendation: We recommend this book

Small Group Novels

 PENGUIN CLASSICS IVAN TURGENEV <i>First Love</i>	A Boy's Story A Man's Memory Surviving the Holocaust 1933-1945  A true story written by Oskar Knoblauch					
Grade 12 - AP Literature: <i>First Love</i> by Ivan Turgenev	Grade 7: <i>A Boy's Story, A Man's Memory: Remembering the Holocaust 1933-1945</i> by Oskar Knoblauch					

*Thank
you*

Next whole group meeting date:

January 18, 2024
5pm, MDA

