

# Secondary Novel Review Committee

Welcome!  
The sign in sheet will be coming around shortly.

March 23, 2023  
5:00-7:00 PM

# AGENDA



1. Introductions
2. Review purpose, norms
3. Review of February 16 Minutes
4. Small group presentations and recommendations of books followed by whole group discussion
5. Individual recommendations
6. Round 6 book assignment and small group meeting

# Introductions:



**Me!**

**If you had to describe  
yourself using three words, it  
would be. . .**

# 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 judgments 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

### Small group meeting:

Book #1 discussion: Week of September 26

Book #2 discussion: Week of November 7

Book #3 discussion: Week of December 12

Book #4 discussion: Week of February 6

Book #5 discussion: Week of March 6

★ Book #6 discussion: Week of April 17

### Whole group meeting:

Meeting #1: August 25

Book #1 discussion: October 6

Book #2 discussion: November 17

Book #3 discussion: January 5

Book #4 discussion: February 16

★ Book #5 discussion: March 23

Book #6 discussion: April 27

### Completion of rubric:

Book #1: September 26

Book #2: November 7

Book #3 December 12

Book #4: February 6

Book #5: March 6

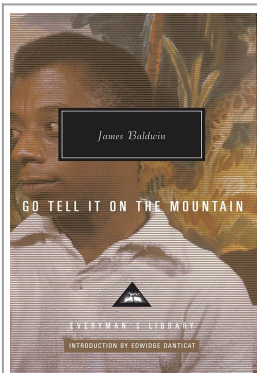
★ Book #6: April 17

# February 16th Minutes

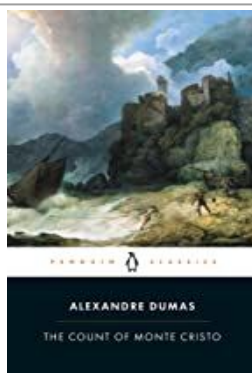
\*Discussion

\*Approval

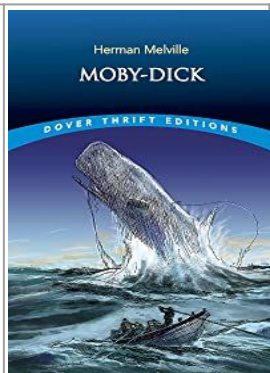
# Small Group Novels



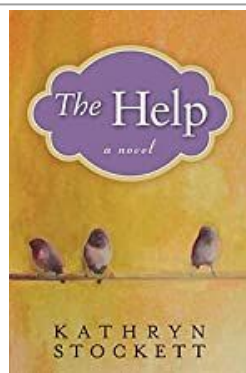
Grade 9:  
*Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin



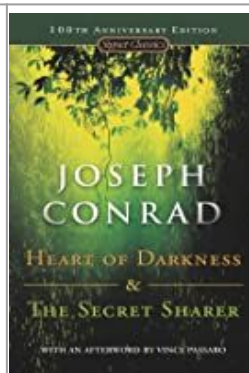
Grade 10: *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas



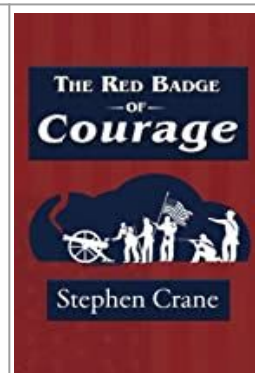
Grade 10: *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville



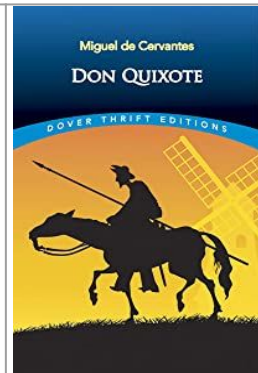
Grade 11: *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett



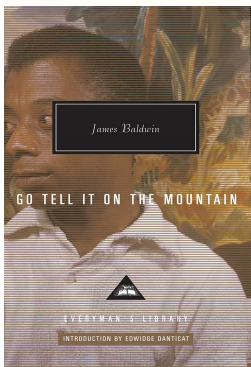
Grade 11: *Heart of Darkness and the Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad



Grade 11: *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane



Grade 12: *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes



Grade 9:

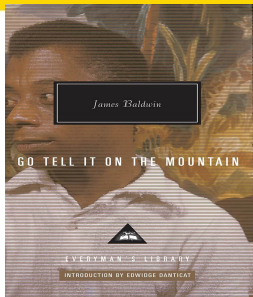
## ***Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 3 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 3 is “The Literature of Civil Rights,” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “How can words inspire change?”

### Summary

It tells the story of John Grimes, an intelligent teenager in 1930s Harlem, and his relationship with his family and his church. The novel also reveals the back stories of John's mother, his biological father, and his violent, fanatically religious stepfather, Gabriel Grimes.

As *Go Tell It on the Mountain* focuses on God and religion, it also examines sin and morality, and sex and sin go hand in hand in Baldwin's novel. The Old Testament identifies “fornication,” or sex outside of marriage, as a direct sin against God, and this belief is reflected throughout the book.



Grade 9:

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### **Positives**

- Well written
- Meets English Standards
- Content - makes for great conversations
- Literary merit
- Important lesson - the world may never understand
- Fits lexile

### **Concerns**

- Not explicit sex - comes up to the line
- Get to the point
- Backlash - religious stance
- Not mature enough to handle content
- Doesn't answer essential question

**Recommendation:** Yellow - administration approval - thoughtful lesson planning - parent permission



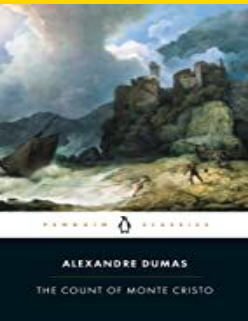
## Grade 10:

### ***The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 5 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 5 is “Virtue and Vengeance,” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What motivates us to forgive?”

## Summary

Thrown in prison for a crime he has not committed, Edmond Dantes is confined to the grim fortress of If. There he learns of a great hoard of treasure hidden on the Isle of Monte Cristo and he becomes determined not only to escape, but also to unearth the treasure and use it to plot the destruction of the three men responsible for his incarceration. Dumas’ epic tale of suffering and retribution, inspired by a real-life case of wrongful imprisonment, was a huge popular success when it was first serialized in the 1840s.



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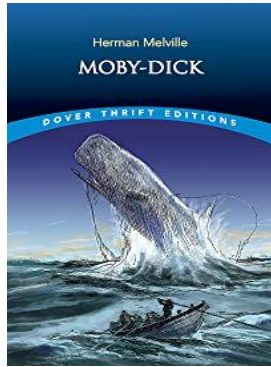
#### Positives

- Classic story
- Compelling story - romance, revenge, intrigue
- Rich vocabulary - great for college entrance
- List of characters and explanations available in text
- Lots of descriptive writing, paints a picture - you feel immersed in the story
- Great fit for theme and essential question

#### Concerns

- Teacher led, students may struggle with content/language (titles in French, Italian)
- Word “niggardly” appears in text- no connection to slur
- Characters contemplate suicide- father starves himself willfully, character shoots self off page, mom took son when she left (but also explanation why some carried on instead)

**Recommendation:** Yes (if it's a good fit for your class)



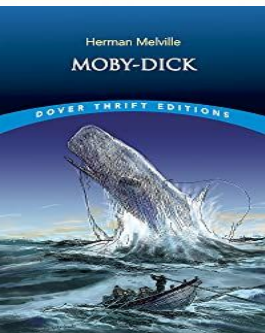
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### ***Moby Dick* by Herman Melville**

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## Summary

Based on the real life events depicted in the “Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex” and the legend of “Mocha Dick”, an albino sperm whale whose killing is described in the May 1839 issue of “The Knickerbocker” magazine, it is the story of a wandering sailor by the name of Ishmael and his voyage aboard the whaling ship the “Pequod.” Commanded by the monomaniacal Captain Ahab, a man who is obsessed with revenge against a white whale of enormous size and ferocity, the “Pequod” and its crew are tasked with the singular goal of the capture and killing of the whale, whatever the cost.



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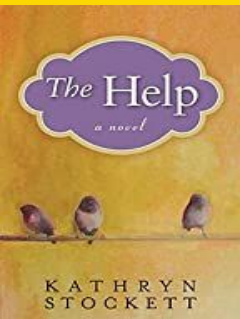
#### Positives

- Available on Project Gutenberg
- Rich language with text complexity
- Rigorous
- Students can, with proper scaffolding, acknowledge the prejudices evident in the novel and repudiate them while benefiting from the literary and historical significance of the story

#### Concerns

- Entirety for a 10th grade student could be a lot
- Some derogatory terms are used that would be considered culturally and racially insensitive
- The relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg will warrant significant explanation by the teacher

**Recommendation: yes**

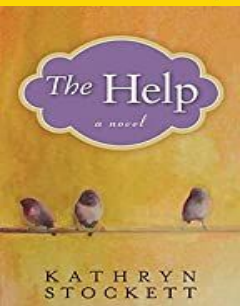
**Grade 11:*****The Help* by Kathryn Stockett**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 6 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 6 is “Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Tales,” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What do stories reveal about the human condition?”

## Summary

Aibileen is a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, raising her 17th white child. She’s always taken orders quietly, but lately it leaves her with a bitterness she can no longer bite back. Her friend Minny has certainly never held her tongue, or held on to a job for very long, but now she’s working for a newcomer with secrets that leave her speechless. And white socialite Skeeter has just returned from college with ambition and a degree, but to her mother’s lament, no husband. Normally Skeeter would find solace in Constantine, the beloved maid who raised her, but Constantine inexplicably disappeared.

Together, these seemingly different women join to work on a project that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town- to write, in secret, a tell-all book about what it’s really like to work as a black maid in the white homes of the South. Despite the terrible risks they will have to take, and the sometimes humorous boundaries they will have to cross, these women unite with one intention: hope for a better day.



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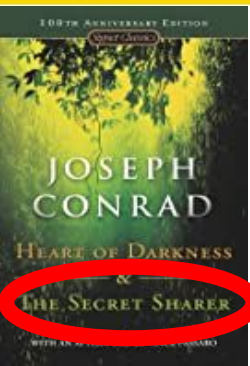
#### **Positives**

- Highly engaging story that depicts a historical experience.
- Stories presented from different character perspectives
- Has the potential for cross-curricular connections.
- The text is a model for the unit writing assignment.

#### **Concerns**

- Use of the ‘N’ word.
- Descriptions of domestic violence.
- One scene describing naked man, sexualized content.
- Received criticism for not centering the story on the maids which the author acknowledges.
- Would require a yellow designation and parent permission form.

**Recommendation:** Recommended with yellow restriction and parent permission.



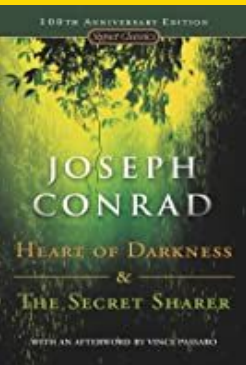
## Grade 11:

### ~~Heart of Darkness and~~ *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad

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

*The Secret Sharer* is a story about a young man who sets out on his first voyage as captain on a ship and crew in which he is unfamiliar. A mysterious man (Leggatt) climbs aboard his ship late at night and the captain chooses to keep the presence of this man a secret from his crew. Through an exchange of whispered conversations, the captain hears the story of how Leggatt killed a man and escaped a nearby ship to avoid imprisonment or the gallows. In keeping the presence of this fugitive a secret, the captain used numerous evasive tactics and deflections which risks both his command and the safety of his ship. After the ship sets sail, the captain takes some risky maneuvers to help the mysterious man escape to a nearby island. *The Secret Sharer* is considered to be both a psychological and semi-autobiographical piece based on true events, and is considered one of Conrad's finest short works.



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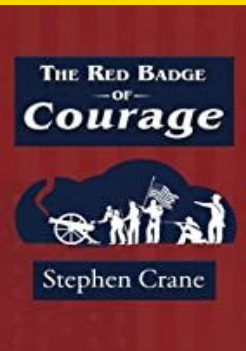
#### Positives

- Fast moving and engaging.
- The relationship between the captain and Leggatt enhanced the character arc of the captain.
- Students may enjoy the doppelgänger aspect of the two main characters.
- Great exploration of moral character development in intense situations.
- Aligns well with both the essential question and writing prompt.

#### Concerns

- It is attached to *Heart of Darkness* (review committee didn't care for *Heart of Darkness*).

**Recommendation:** The committee strongly approves of *The Secret Sharer*.



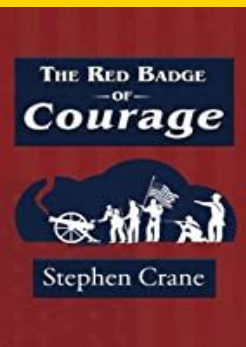
## Grade 11:

### ***The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane**

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## Summary

***The Red Badge of Courage*** is a war novel by American author **Stephen Crane** (1871–1900). Taking place during the American Civil War, the story is about a young private of the Union Army, Henry Fleming, who flees from the field of battle. Overcome with shame, he longs for a wound, a "red badge of courage," to counteract his cowardice. When his regiment once again faces the enemy, Henry acts as standard-bearer, who carries an American Flag.



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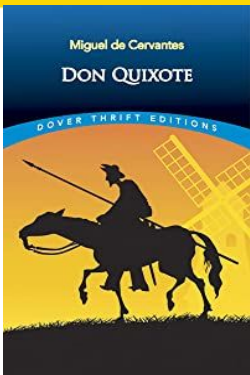
#### **Positives**

- Adapted several times for the screen, the novel became a bestseller.
- Never out of print, it is Crane's most important work and a major American text.
- perhaps the best representation of the growth of a soldier from a deserter to a courageous fighter

#### **Concerns**

- This is a very easy read for high school juniors. It might be better as a choice novel.
- Graphic depictions of war

**Recommendation:** Recommended for use in SUSD.



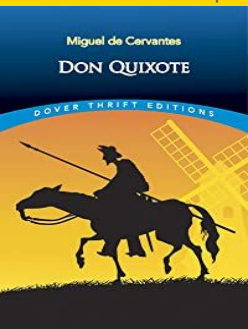
## Grade 12:

### ***Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes**

This novel is recommended for use in Unit 1 of the *myPerspectives* ELA curriculum. The theme of Unit 1 is “Forging a Hero,” and the Essential Question for this unit is: “What makes a hero?”

## SUMMARY

Don Quixote has become so entranced reading tales of chivalry that he decides to turn knight errant himself. In the company of his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, these exploits blossom in all sorts of wonderful ways. While Quixote's fancy often leads him astray—he tilts at windmills, imagining them to be giants—Sancho acquires cunning and a certain sagacity. Sane madman and wise fool, they roam the world together-and together they have haunted readers' imaginations for nearly four hundred years.



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#### Positives

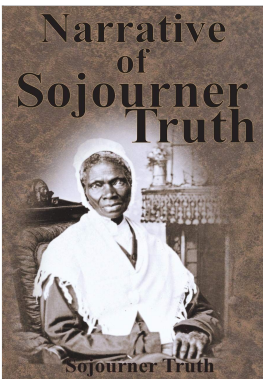
- This is one of the most translated books in the world and the best selling novel of all time.
- The character of Quixote became an archetype, and the word quixotic, used to mean the impractical pursuit of idealistic goals, entered common usage
- Often referred to as a “heavy” work of literature, but it’s packed with farce and slapstick comedy
- The text offers numerous arenas for discussion and parallels to the modern day. It also provides for a healthy discussion on what does it mean to be a hero and what defines a hero.

#### Concerns

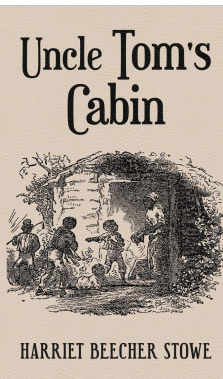
- This is a very tough read(especially in terms of length), and the concern is whether 12th graders would be able to stick with the entire novel.

**Recommendation:** We recommend this novel for use in SUSD.

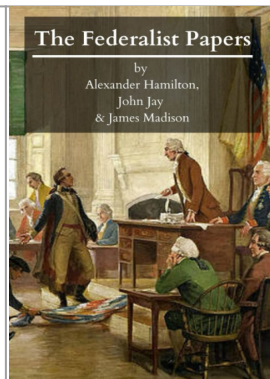
# Small Group Novels



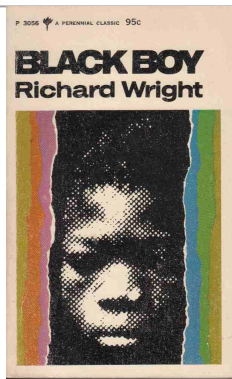
Grade 12:  
*Narrative of Sojourner Truth*  
by Sojourner Truth



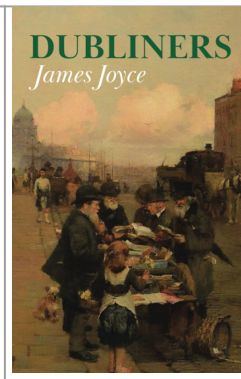
Grade 11: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe



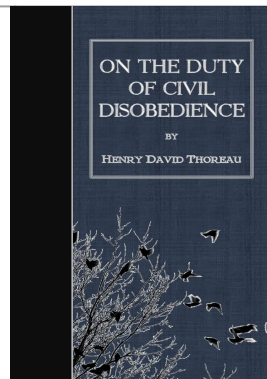
Grade 11: *The Federalist Papers* by James Madison



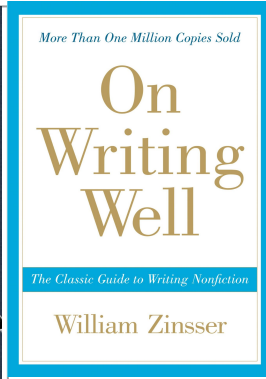
Grade 11: *Black Boy* by Richard Wright



Grade 11:  
*Dubliners* by James Joyce



Grade 11: *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau



Grade 12 and Dual Enrollment:  
*On Writing Well*  
by William Zinsser

*Thank  
you*

Next whole group meeting date:

**April 27, 2023**  
**5pm, MDA**

