

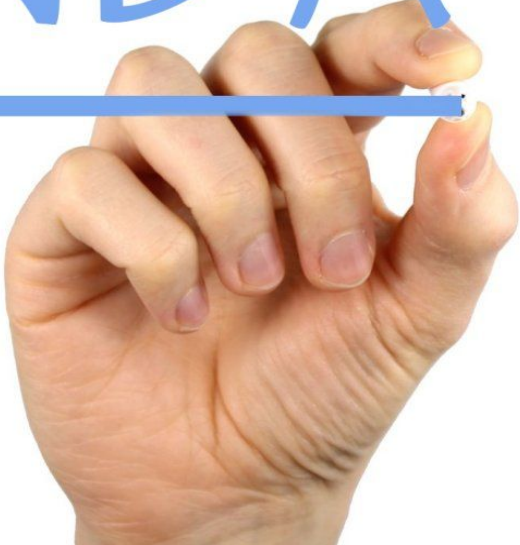
Secondary Novel Review Committee

Welcome!

Please sign in when the sheet comes to you.

January 18, 2022
5:00-7:00 PM

AGENDA



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

Introductions:



“That’s Me!”
On an index card, write down one fact about yourself.

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

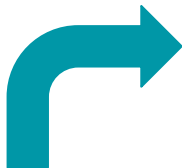
Completion of rubric:

~~Book #1: November 5~~

~~Book #2: January 7~~

★ Book #3 February 25

Book #4: April 1



Small group meeting:

~~Book #1 discussion: Week of November 8~~

~~Book #2 discussion: Week of January 10~~

★ Book #3 discussion: Week of February 28

Book #4 discussion: Week of April 4

Whole group meeting:

~~Book #1 discussion: November 15~~

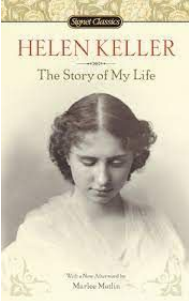
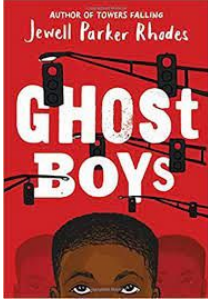
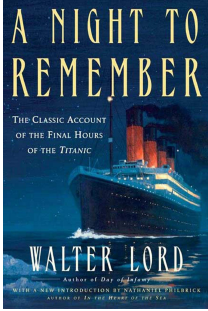
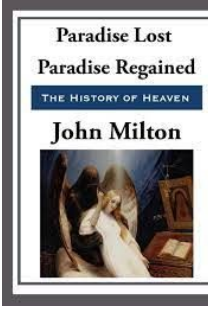
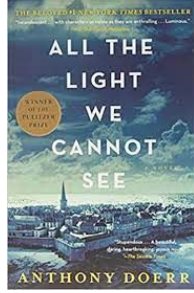
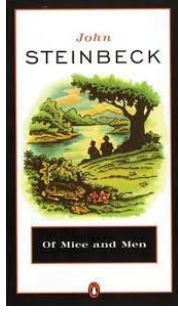
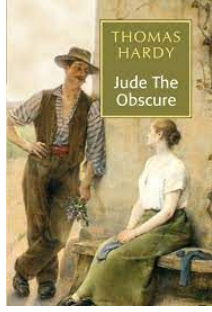
★ Book #2 discussion: January 18

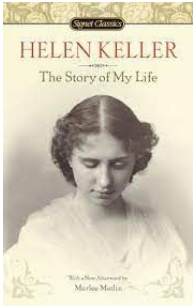
Book #3 discussion: March 7

Book #4 discussion: April 11



Round 2 Books:

						
Grade 6: <i>The Story of My Life</i> by Helen Keller	Grade 7: <i>Ghost Boys</i> by Jewell Parker Rhodes	Grade 8: A <i>Night to Remember</i> by Walter Lord	Grade 9: <i>Paradise Lost & Paradise Regained</i> by John Milton	Grade 10: <i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> by Anthony Doerr	Grade 11: <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck	Grade 12: <i>Jude the Obscure</i> by Thomas Hardy

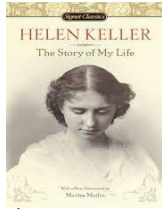


The Story of My Life, by Helen Keller, 6th Grade Unit 5

Essential Question: *How does one “make a mark” on the world?*

Summary

A journey of discovery. Most of us know Helen Keller as the little deaf and blind girl who triumphed over adversity to become world-famous. This novel shows that Keller's life is neither a miracle nor a joke. It is a tremendous achievement. Seemingly destined to be imprisoned in darkness and isolation for the rest of her life, Keller built upon the brilliant work of her teacher, Anne Sullivan, to become a nationally recognized and respected figure. Keller's determination to learn, her passion for experience, and her refusal to allow society to define her are inspiring.



The Story of My Life, by Helen Keller, 6th Grade

Unit 5 Essential Question: *How does one “make a mark” on the world?*

Positives

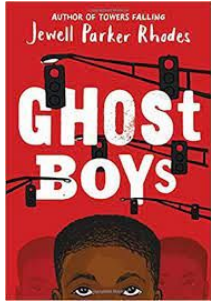
- Illustrates the commonalities in the human experience - seeing and hearing through others' perspectives
- Opens for consideration what it is that connects us as humans
- Good topic of conversation - expectations for females during that time period
- Early letters show how quickly Helen learned to write and gives the reader a glimpse into her personality
- The people she wrote to and met makes this timeless.

Concerns

- One-dimensional - not a lot of emotion
- Not a clear explanation of how she got to where she ended up
- She's too self-conscious to express her true emotions

Recommendation:

3 out of 4 members recommended this novel. However, it should be read as a class in order to help students relate to some of the events. For Honors or Gifted students, it could be used as an extension and read independently.



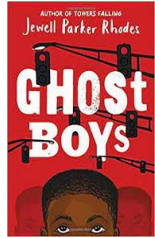
Ghost Boys, by Jewell Parker Rhodes, 7th Grade

Units 1 or 2

Essential Questions: *When do differences become conflicts? OR
What do we learn from love and loss?*

Summary

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of his death. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened through historical context and how he and others can move forward in the future. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions, and with the help of Jerome and Emmett works on her own way to move forward in the future.



Ghost Boys, by Jewell Parker Rhodes, 7th Grade

Units 1 or 2 Essential Questions: *When do differences become conflicts?* OR *What do we learn from love and loss?*

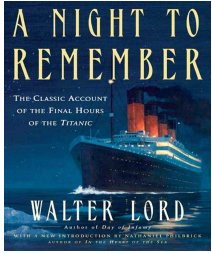
Positives

- Aligns with both essential questions.
- Valid, real perspective of a particular inner city community (Chicago).
- Timeline offers perspective of past, present, and possible (positive) future.
- Engaging point of view (ghost).
- Written at a middle-school level about a middle-school child.
- Empowering message to young people to make a positive change.

Concerns

- Violence - violence is written from a factual, non-gratuitous way (Jerome and Emmett Till). The main character also endures bullying.
- Social Commentary - although this novel focuses on race, it may be confused as presenting CRT. However, it does not talk or debate CRT theoretical concepts. In addition, it does not present the police officer as neutral, but rather as unconsciously racist.
- Balance - lack of positive adult white characters presented (only policeman/wife – both neutral).

Recommendation: Consensus of all four members of the group is to recommend this book for use in 7th grade. This book requires a strong, open, robust conversation about race. Since this is a complex issue, teachers are encouraged to let parents know about the book and encourage at-home discussions.

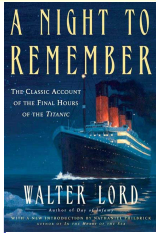


A Night to Remember, by Walter Lord, 8th Grade

Unit 3 Essential Question: *Why do we take chances?*

Summary

A Night to Remember gives a gripping, detailed account of what happened the night the *Titanic* hit an iceberg and sank in the Atlantic Ocean, killing more than 1,500 people. Originally published in 1955, Walter Lord had interviewed survivors and reviewed documents to create this incredible nonfiction account of the events surrounding April 15, 1912.



A Night to Remember, by Walter Lord, 8th Grade

Unit 3 Essential Question: *Why do we take chances?*

Positives

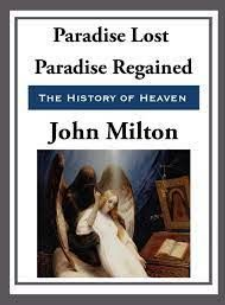
- Beautiful prose
- Gripping story
- Classic and timeless
- Engaging in interested in the topic
- Nonfiction account

Concerns

- More 7th grade content vs 8th Grade content
- The main character - not character driven

Recommendation:

We recommend this book.



Paradise Lost & Paradise Regained, by John Milton, 9th Grade

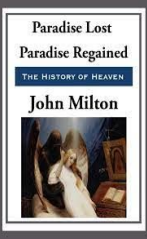
Unit 6 **Essential Question:** *Why do we try to imagine the future?*

Summary

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is one of the greatest epic poems in the English language. It tells the story of the Fall of Man, a tale of immense drama and excitement, of rebellion and treachery, of innocence pitted against corruption, in which God and Satan fight a bitter battle for control of mankind's destiny. The struggle rages across three worlds – heaven, hell, and earth – as Satan and his band of rebel angels plot their revenge against God. At the center of the conflict are Adam and Eve, motivated by all too human temptations, but whose ultimate downfall is unyielding love.

Marked by Milton's characteristic erudition is a work epic both in scale and, notoriously, in ambition. For nearly 350 years it has held generation upon generation of scholars, students and readers in rapt attention and its profound influence can be seen in almost every corner of Western culture.

https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/336518.Paradise_Lost_and_Paradise_Regained



Paradise Lost & Paradise Regained, by John Milton, 9th Grade

Unit 6 Essential Question: *Why do we try to imagine the future?*

Positives

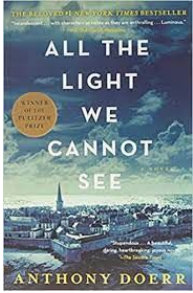
- High literary merit
- So many opportunities to dive deeper into different themes
- Fabulous imagery created by the author
- Important to expose students to productive struggle with a higher level novel - especially in college-prep courses

Concerns

- High reading complexity (vocabulary and syntax)
- Complex themes rooted in religious context
- Violence and suicide referenced
- Portrayal of women
- Need/concern for offering novels from different religious perspectives
- Supporting teachers and students with providing background information (theology, philosophy, and history) that is needed to understand the novel
- Can be tricky separating religious instruction from novel instruction.

Recommendation:

This novel is not recommended for 9th grade as suggested. This is recommended for 11th and/or 12 Grade Honors/AP/IB level.



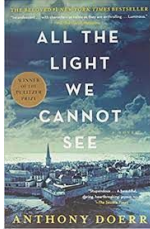
All the Light We Cannot See,

by Anthony Doerr, 10th Grade

Unit: 6 **Essential Question:** *How many ways are there to see – or fail to see – the world?*

Summary

This novel is about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.



All the Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr, 10th Grade

Unit: 6 Essential Question: *How many ways are there to see - or fail to see - the world?*

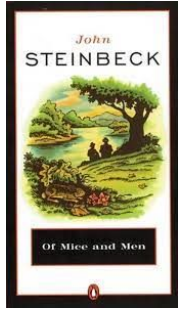
Positives

- Appropriate for 10th grade students
- Pleasant read
- Opportunity for an integrated reading experience to partner with/reinforce social studies
- Book would generate interesting discussion

Concerns

- Vocabulary level
- References that require background or contextual understanding
- Enjoyable but not filled with complex themes (not necessarily a concern--more of an observation)
- When limited to a certain amount of novels for during a school year, this would not be a priority for in-class reading.

Recommendation: Good book. Length may hinder use during the semester. Would be a good summer read or novel for book club/literature circles.

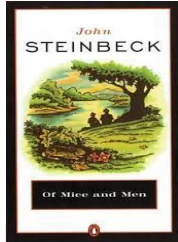


Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, 11th Grade

Unit 6 **Essential Question:** *What do stories reveal about the human condition?*

Summary

Of Mice and Men is John Steinbeck's best-known work. The 1937 novella tells the story of George Milton and Lennie Small, two migrant workers who travel from farm to farm in search of work in Depression-era California. They are an unlikely pair and yet they have formed a "family" clinging together in the face of loneliness and altercations.



Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck, 11th Grade

Unit 6 Essential Question: *What do stories reveal about the human condition?*

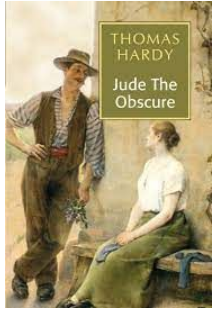
Positives

- Resilience
- A lot to say about the human condition
- Classic American Literature - perfect for the time period
- Relationships
- Although lower lexile - conversations meet the needs of all students
- Argumentative piece - is murder justified
 - Conversations around moral questions

Concerns

- Portrayal of intellectual disabilities
- Use of the N word - having discussions about historical context - was a negative word then and a negative word now - brings on a positive discussion. When reading the book teacher skips over the N word

Recommendation: This book is highly recommended by the group. Students widely enjoy it. Much is packed into 100 page book.



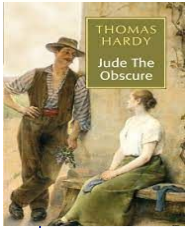
Jude the Obscure, by Thomas Hardy

12th Grade

Unit 4 **Essential Question:** *Why are both vision and disillusion necessary?*

Summary

This is the story of Jude Fawley and his struggle to rise from his station as a poor Wessex stonemason to that of a scholar at Christminster. It is also the story of Jude's ill-fated relationship with his cousin Sue Bridehead - and the ultimate tragedy that causes Jude's undoing and Sue's transformation. It explores man's essential loneliness.



Jude the Obscure, by Thomas Hardy 12th Grade

Unit 4 Essential Question: *Why are both vision and disillusion necessary?*

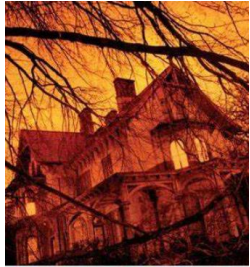
Positives

- This is British literature
- Good character development - follows Jude from a young boy up to his death
- Touches on real-life issues

Concerns

- Reads too much like a soap opera
- This could be a manual on how not to process social-emotional issues
- Contains forbidden love; a relationship that starts on a lie; incest, murder, suicide
- Needs to be taught in concert with history which would take a lot for an English teacher to cover

Recommendation: This book is not recommended for use.



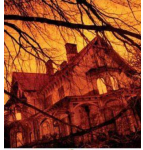
The Haunting of Hill House,

by Shirley Jackson, 10th Grade

Unit: 1 **Essential Question:** *What is the allure of fear?*

Summary

Carefully selected by a scholar, three principle characters come together to join him in investigating a rumored haunted house. They experience hauntings and interpersonal drama that deeply affects one of the central characters who dies by suicide.



The Haunting of Hill House, by Shirley Jackson, 10th Grade

Unit: 1 Essential Question: *What is the allure of fear?*

Positives

- Complex character development which leads to rich discussion fostering critical thinking and discourse
- Effective use of an unreliable narrator
- Exploration of emotions: dichotomy of emotions ranging from fear to exhilaration
- Pacing to build suspense

Concerns

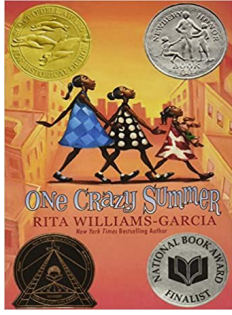
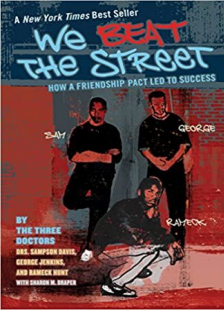
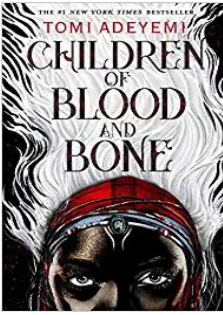
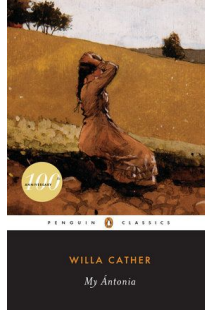
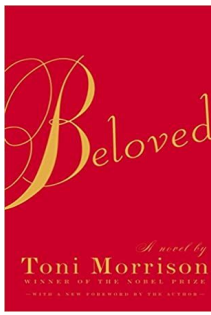
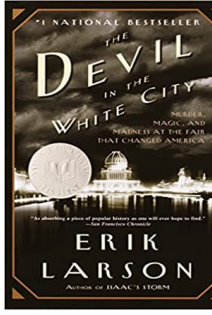
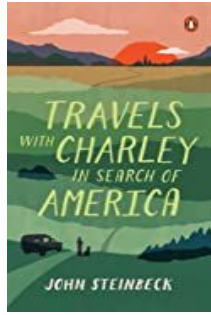
- Context of current social emotional state of our students
- Power dynamic between characters, manipulation, manic behavior, power and control leading to self harm of a principal character

Recommendation: Thrilling book; however, due to the themes within the book such as isolation, dysfunctional relationships and self-harm, we do not recommend reading this book now and would like to re-evaluate the novel in fall of 2023.

Recommendation Directions

- Please write your first and last name on your ballot.
- For each novel check your choice of: **yes**, you would recommend this book to be used in SUSD, or **no**, you would not recommend this book to be used in SUSD.
- When you are finished marking your choices, hand your ballot to your group facilitator.

Round 3 Books:

						
Grade 6: <i>One Crazy Summer</i> by Rita Williams Garcia	Grade 7: <i>We Beat the Street</i> by Dr. George Jenkins, et. al.	Grade 8: <i>Children of Blood and Bone</i> by Tomi Adeyemi	Grade 9: <i>My Antonia</i> by Willa Cather	Grade 10: <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison	Grade 11: <i>The Devil in the White City</i> by Erik Larson	Grade 12: <i>Travels with Charley</i> by John Steinbeck

*Thank
you*



Next whole group meeting date:

**March 7, 2022, 5pm,
MDA**