



Grade 9 - Unit 3 - Book Clubs & Theme Essay

Unit Focus

Students will be immersed in book clubs, all of which fall into three distinct categories. The first category, “Thematically Relevant,” includes titles with similar structures, characters, and themes that students could identify and explore in the core novel, *Just Mercy*. The second category provides options for students who want to hone their craft when analyzing themes. The final category includes a list of options for students who might want something that speaks more to their daily lives: “Life of a Teen.” These titles include characters who are similar in age to our freshmen students and might be dealing with similar situations. As such, these titles help our students feel understood and seen. Titles can be seen broken down in this chart (seen below). This list is not limited to the options below, as teachers are always searching for new and exciting reads to add to our extensive collection. Students will independently apply the skills taught in the core text to their book club book while having rich discussions. The teacher will facilitate these discussions and meet with small groups/clubs that need support with previously taught skills and strategies. Throughout the book club experience, groups will gather evidence to support their thinking about theme as they will ultimately craft a formal theme essay to present their analysis.

As a final note, all titles are vetted through research (which includes consideration from other districts), professional resources (such as the LMC and professional academic reviews), student choice and feedback, and experience (before providing a text as an option, members of the department read the entirety of the text).

Book Club Offerings / Options:

In green = Common Sense Media’s age suggestion

	Thematically Relevant	Great for Tracking Theme	Life of a Teen
Challenge (Honors- bound)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee (12+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lord of the Flies</i> by William Golding (12+) <i>Catch-22</i> by (N/A) <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck (13+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Breakfast with Buddha</i> by Roland Merullo (N/A)
On Grade Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>All American Boys</i> by J. Reynolds and B. Kiely (12+) <i>The Hate U Give</i> by Angie Thomas (N/A) <i>This is My America</i> by Kim Johnson (12+) <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i> <i>Patron Saints of Nothing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Salt to the Sea</i> by Ruta Sepetys (13+) <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> by Jesymn Ward (N/A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Summer of Letting Go</i> by Gae Polisner (N/A) <i>Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes</i> by Chris Crutcher (N/A)
Highly Engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Monster</i> by Walter Dean Myers (N/A) <i>Wolf Hollow</i> by Lauren Wolk (10+) <i>Dear Martin / Dear Justyce</i> by Nic Stone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry (11+) <i>Purple Heart</i> by Patricia McCormick (15+) <i>Red Kayak</i> by Priscilla Cummings (N/A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Speak</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson (14+) <i>Everyday</i> by David Levithan (14+) <i>Orbiting Jupiter / Jupiter Rising</i> by Gary D. Schmidt (12+)

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer
Common Core English Language Arts: 9-10	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i> T1 Evaluate the author’s message, identify the author's purpose, and cite text evidence to support conclusions. T2 Listen, exchange, evaluate, and build upon ideas.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10)
- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A)
- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B)
- Spell correctly. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2.C)

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- Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2)
- Collective Intelligence: Working respectfully and responsibly with others, exchanging and evaluating ideas to achieve a common objective. (POG.3.1)

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...

U1 Readers support and elaborate on their interpretation with description and detail (both textual evidence and schema).

U2 Readers and writers come to discussions prepared with text evidence to support their ideas or points of view and utilize this evidence to support continuous thinking.

U3 Readers understand that authors write stories that address a critical part of the human experience.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...

Q1 How do readers and writers collaborate to come to a new understanding or position about a topic?

Q2 How can I reflect on my own biases and schema when analyzing literature?

Q3 How do authors use characterization to develop alternate perspectives and empathy?

Q4 How do I identify an important theme about human experience?

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...

K1 Perspective is shaped by examining what characters and authors experience and how these experiences influence their actions, beliefs, and behaviors.

K2 Theme can be identified by examining the problem in the text and considering what the author is saying about human nature.

K3 Vocabulary: perspective, point of view, conflict, empathy, theme, restitution, retribution, rehabilitation, recidivism (and various vocabulary relating to law, courts, etc.)

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...

S1 Evaluating perspective and character motivation.

S2 Analyzing a text to determine a theme about human experience.

S3 Evaluating a text to determine best evidence to support theme analysis.