



OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): High School

Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: **Somebody Everybody Listens To / Suzanne Supplee**

Genre: Realistic Fiction / Young Adult (Contemporary)

Lexile Reading Level: 830L

Total number of pages: 288 pages

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)

- Retta Lee Jones, fresh out of high school in a small Tennessee town, dreams of being a country-music singer and heads to Nashville with little more than a beat-up car and her savings.
- Upon arrival in Nashville she faces setbacks: car troubles, being mugged, sleeping in her car, and navigating a music industry filled with show-business types and scammers.
- Along the way she tries to stay true to herself while working multiple jobs (including singing gigs) and balancing friendships, family ties, and her identity.
- Each chapter opens with a short biographical note about a famous country star, framing Retta's journey in the context of musical legends.

Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)

- **Violence/Crime:** Retta is mugged in Nashville early in her journey.
- **Housing/Independence Issues:** Retta ends up living out of her car as she tries to make it in Nashville.
- **Family conflict:** Retta's parents' marriage is troubled and they face domestic challenges, which impact Retta's decisions.
- **Themes of insecurity and self-identity:** While not inherently objectionable, the novel contains realistic emotional struggles that may need discussion (e.g., self-doubt, leaving home).
- **Sexual content:** brief references to DD's and kissing (ch 1)
- **Drugs and alcohol:** reference to someone getting drunk and using prescription drugs (ch 9)



Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links

Review #1 — School Library Journal

"You don't have to be a fan of country music to fall in love with Retta Lee Jones and her inspiring quest to be a country singer. Following graduation from high school, she leaves her tiny hometown of Starling, Tennessee, with her savings and a diploma in hand, headed for Nashville to make her dreams come true. Each step forward, however, seems to take her two steps back. But Retta Lee doesn't give up. Supplee captures her protagonist's fears, disappointments, and determination with insight and humor. Readers will root for this determined young woman as she learns that life's path rarely follows a straight line."

— Roxanne Myers Spencer, *School Library Journal* (October 1, 2010)

<https://prod.slj.com/review/somebody-everybody-listens-to>

Review #2 — Publishers Weekly

*"Propelled by her best friend's belief in her musical talent—and the encouraging words of her high-school guidance counselor—recent high-school grad Retta Lee Jones leaves self-doubt, clingy parents, and her small-town life behind as she heads to Nashville to become a country-music star. There she faces rejection, homelessness, and the guilt-inducing pull of home. Supplee (author of *Artichoke's Heart*) presents a sympathetic, realistic heroine and balances Retta's setbacks with moments of hope and humor. While a must-read for country-music lovers, Supplee's latest will appeal to a wide audience with its message of perseverance and self-discovery."*

— *Publishers Weekly* (2010)

<https://www.penguinteen.com/9780142418864/somebody-everybody-listens-to/>

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)

This novel gives students a realistic view of ambition, perseverance, and the process of finding one's voice—both literally (in music) and figuratively (in life). The protagonist's journey from a small town to a major music city invites exploration of themes such as dreams vs. reality, identity, risk, and resilience. It also offers a culturally rich setting (country music, Tennessee/Nashville) and can be tied into lessons on media, music industry, and narrative structure (chapter intros with artist bios). The book is accessible for middle/high school students and allows for discussion of character growth, setting, and real-life challenges in authentic voice.



The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only* and abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards) [Link to Ohio's ELA Standards](#)

1. **RL.9.1** – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. **RL.9.2** – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details.
3. **RL.9.3** – Analyze how complex characters develop, interact with others, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
4. **W.9.9** – Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (1-2 texts, title/author; Note: these texts must also have lit. reviews forms associated with their selection)

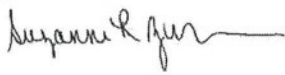
1. *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

- Both books center on young women struggling to find their voice in the face of personal challenges. While *Speak* deals with more intense subject matter, its focus on empowerment, self-expression, and finding the courage to speak up parallels *Somebody Everybody Listens To*.
- **Themes:** Identity, resilience, voice, emotional growth, overcoming silence.

2. *Starfish* by Lisa Fipps

- A novel in verse about self-acceptance and learning to love yourself despite societal pressures. Like Retta in *Somebody Everybody Listens To*, the protagonist develops confidence through reflection and creativity.
- **Themes:** Body image, confidence, emotional healing, voice.

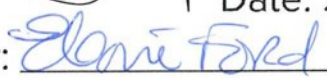
SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: 

Date: 2/12/26

ELA Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

Building Principal:  Date: 2/17/25

District Curriculum Administrator:  Date: 2/17/26