



OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): Middle Schools

Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: At the Edge: Daring Acts in Desperate Times / Larry Verstraete

Genre: Juvenile Non-Fiction (True stories of survival, decision-making in life-threatening situations)

Lexile Reading Level: 960

Total number of pages: 185 pages

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

- A collection of over 20 true stories of people (young and adult) facing critical, life-or-death decisions under extreme circumstances.
- The stories take place across a wide variety of contexts: natural disasters (e.g., tsunamis), historical atrocities (e.g., the Holocaust), terrorist attacks (e.g., 9/11), political uprisings (e.g., Tiananmen Square) and other high-stakes survival situations.
- The book is organized into four thematic sections: **At the Edge of Disaster, At the Edge of Terror, At the Edge of Injustice**, and **At the**

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

- **Violence / Trauma:** Many of the stories include life-threatening violence, war atrocities, genocide, disasters in which people die or are severely injured. For example, one story concerns victims of the Holocaust (a historically violent genocide).
- **Death & Loss:** Several accounts include death of friends, family, or other victims; the book deals with survival in the face of death. E.g., "passengers on United Flight 93" are referenced in a community review.
- **Historical Atrocities / Injustice:** The section "At the Edge of Injustice"



Edge of the Impossible.	addresses events such as genocide in Rwanda, oppression under totalitarian regimes. These inherently contain disturbing themes. ● Disasters / Danger / Possible Trauma Triggering Situations: Natural disasters (tsunami, hurricanes) are portrayed; for example, one story mentions a woman and two children facing a tsunami and having to make a split second life-or-death decision. ● Moral / Ethical Complexity: Some stories may challenge readers with difficult moral dilemmas (for instance: "Which child does she let go?" in the tsunami story). This could be emotionally intense for younger readers.
Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) <i>Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links</i> ● Review by <i>Quill & Quire</i>: "At the Edge looks at people who have found themselves in severe crises and how they reacted... At the Edge is an easy to read, inspiring book..." (Quill and Quire) ● Review by <i>Library of Clean Reads</i>: "This is one of the most exciting and thought-provoking books I've read this year... The stories are short, concise and with just the right element of suspense." (Library of Clean Reads)	



ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards):

This book helps students explore decision-making under pressure, moral dilemmas, historical events and develop empathy by reading real-life stories of courage and survival.

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. **RI.7.1** – *Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.*
2. **RI.7.2** – *Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide an objective summary of the text.*
3. **W.7.7** – *Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.*
4. **W.7.9** – *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*
5. **L.7.4** – *Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.*

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. *Into Thin Air* — Jon Krakauer

Nonfiction • Mount Everest disaster • Extreme survival

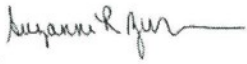
- First-person account of the deadly 1996 Everest expedition.
- High-stakes, real-world danger and near-impossible survival choices.
- **Closely matches the intense, real-life peril and dramatic storytelling style of *At the Edge*.**



2. *No Summit Out of Sight* — Jordan Romero

- Nonfiction • Young climber • Survival challenges
- Memoir by the youngest person to climb the Seven Summits.
Includes extreme conditions, danger, endurance, and heroism.
- Middle-school-friendly alternative featuring real-life daring accomplishments.

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

Teacher:  Date: 11/25/25

ELA Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

Building Principal:  Date: 11/25/25

District Curriculum Administrator:  Date: 4/15/26