OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OOHS

Classes/Grade Level(s): Honors 9 ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author:

Midnight at the Electric by Jodi Lynn Anderson

Genre: YA Science and Historical Fiction

Lexile Reading Level: 810L (age 12 and up, grades 7-12)

Total number of pages: 252-288 (dependent on printing)

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)	**Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)**
Midnight at the Electric, published in 2017, is a speculative fiction novel written by Jodi Lynn Anderson and is the recipient of multiple awards and nominations. Anderson is an American children's author who has worked as an editor for HarperCollins and a writing instructor at the University of North Carolina. *Midnight at the Electric* follows three protagonists across three different timelines. One of these, Adri Ortiz, lives in 2065 and has been accepted into a training program to become a Colonist on Mars. While staying with her previously unknown cousin, Lily Ortiz, Adri stumbles across an old diary and some letters, which introduce the characters	**Some Romance:** A teen couple kiss and caress a lot, but it's not described (pg 56) **Drinking/Smoking:** Older teens of legal age in 1920s England drink wine with a couple of meals, one mention of getting a little drunk(pg 81) **Violence:** A beloved pet dies, and a teen sees her mother cut it open so that they can know what it died of; brief mention of muck pouring out of the cut (pg 54) **Language:** "A--hole," (pg 26)

Catherine Godspeed and Lenore Allstock into her life. Catherine, whose diary dates from 1934-1935, was a young woman living in Canaan, Kansas during the Dust Bowl. Lenore, who wrote to her friend Beth Godspeed in 1919 and 1920, was from Forest Row, England. Lenore lived through World War I and then left her home country to join Beth in Kansas. The novel explores diverse themes, including the concepts of environmental destruction, resilience, belonging, and the interconnectedness of human experiences over time and space.

From SuperSummary

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

From CommonSenseMedia:
Parents need to know that *Midnight at the Electric*, by Jodi Lynn Anderson (*The Vanishing Season*), follows three young women from World War I to the year 2065 at important turning points in their lives. Prominent themes are connections between one generation and the next, love, making your own life, and being better stewards of the natural world. Negative content is rare and not described in detail but is emotionally heavy, making this novel best for older teens. A beloved pet dies, a couple of older teens kiss a lot, including once in bed under covers, and "a--hole" is used a few times. The young female protagonists, ages 16 to 18, are good role models in different ways, but they all face their fear of the unknown to make the best lives for themselves that they can.

From Screenwise:
This is the kind of YA novel English teachers love to assign—and for good reason. Anderson weaves three timelines into a genuinely moving meditation on connection, loss, and resilience without ever feeling heavy-handed. The Mars angle gives it a hook, but the real draw is

watching three distinct young women navigate their vastly different worlds with courage and heart.

It's not a page-turner in the traditional sense. If your kid needs explosions or romance or constant plot momentum, this might not land. But for readers who appreciate beautiful writing, historical settings, and the satisfaction of watching puzzle pieces click together across a century? This is a gem.

The grief themes are real—Lenore mourning her brother, Catherine's family struggling through the Dust Bowl—but handled with care. It's emotionally mature without being traumatic. Six starred reviews don't lie: this is quality storytelling that trusts its readers to think and feel deeply.
Best for ages 12-16 who enjoy thoughtful, literary YA with emotional depth. The historical settings, lyrical prose, and grief themes require some maturity, but there's nothing inappropriate content-wise. Strong readers on the younger end will appreciate it; older teens who love character-driven stories will too.

TAGS: Wholesome, Safe, Enriching, Imaginative

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)
In 9th-grade English, our overarching thematic lens is **identity**—specifically, how an individual's sense of self is forged, fractured, and reshaped by their environment, historical circumstances, and inherited legacies. Jodi Lynn Anderson's *Midnight at the Electric* serves as an ideal anchor text for this exploration by intertwining the lives of three young women across different eras: Adri in a near-future 2065, Catherine in 1934 Kansas during the Dust Bowl, and Lenore in 1919 England after WWI. As these narratives intersect, honors students will analyze how each protagonist navigates the constraints of her era to answer the essential question: *To what extent do our pasts and our surroundings dictate who we become?* By witnessing these characters reclaim their agency, students will deeply engage with their own burgeoning concepts of identity.

Furthermore, because the novel relies on three distinct narratives told through varying mediums—including letters, journal entries, and third-person prose—it acts as a masterclass in authorial craft. We will utilize this text as an instructional anchor to analyze **voice, tone, and style**. Students will evaluate how Anderson constructs entirely distinct character voices through shifts in syntax and diction, track atmospheric tone from the suffocating despair of Kansas dust storms to the sterile anticipation of a future Mars mission, and dissect how a lyrical style and recurring motifs serve as anchors that tie disparate timelines together.

Finally, *Midnight at the Electric* acts as a crucial historical and conceptual bridge to our next classical text, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Rather than learning about the 1930s Great Depression through dry textbook bullet points, students will build historical schema and gain a visceral understanding of the Dust Bowl through narrative fiction. Experiencing the grit, isolation, and desperation of Catherine's timeline prepares students for the psychological weight, loss of the American Dream, and environmental displacement that drives characters like George and Lennie, providing the scaffolding necessary for deep engagement with an American classic.

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
This text will link to the Q1 and Full Year Rubrics

1. **Textual Analysis & Perspective (RL.9-10.4 & RL.9-10.6) (Q1)**
2. **Use of Figurative Language & Word Choice (L.9-10.5a-b & RL.9-10.4) (Q1)**
3. **Textual Evidence & Analysis (RL.9-10.1) (Full Year)**
4. **Comprehension & Text Complexity (RL.9-10.10) (Full Year)**

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. The Book Thief, Markus Zusak
2. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred D. Taylor
3. The House on Mango Street, Sandra Cisneros

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

Teacher: Rachel Hukes Date: 7/16/26
ELA Department Chair: [signature] Date: 7/20/26
Building Principal: [signature] Date: 7/21/26
District Curriculum Administrator: [signature] Date: 8/17/26