OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OOHS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 9

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: We Have Always Lived in the Castle by Shirley Jackson

Genre: Gothic Fiction / Psychological Mystery

Lexile Reading Level: 920L

Total number of pages: 160

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)

Litcharts Summary	• ***Profanity***
	  ○ *Several instances of mild swearing: "I was laughing at Charles and even Constance was smiling. Charles stood staring at Uncle Julian, and Uncle Julian, going through his papers, said to himself, "Damned impertinent puppy," and then, "Constance?" (page 95)*
	• ***violence and/or abuse of any kind***
	  ○ *Merricat poisoned her family: "In some ways," Uncle Julian sailed on, "a piece of extraordinarily good fortune for me. I am a survivor of the most sensational poisoning case of the century. I have all the newspaper clippings. I knew the victims, the accused, intimately, as only a relative living in the very house could know them. I have exhaustive notes on all that happened. I have never been well since." (page 42).*
	• ***descriptions of underage drinking alcohol, drugs, smoking, and/or vaping,***
	  ○ *Mild alcohol and tobacco use: "Uncle Julian kept himself awake, listening and dreaming, and even Charles did not quite dare to put his feet on the furniture in the drawing room, although the smoke from his pipe drifted against the wedding-cake ceiling and he moved restlessly while Constance played." (page 88).*
	• ***implicit and explicit sexual content and sexual innuendo,***
	  ○ *None*
	• ***other topics that elicit psychological traumas or re-traumas,***
	  ○ *Again, mention of murder and poisoning. See previous example.*
	• ***and language or actions that reflect bias, stereotypes, and prejudice***
	  ○ *Merricat and her sister are ostracized by the community because of the murder trial: "Merricat, said Connie, would you like a cup of tea? / No, said Merricat, you'll poison me." (Chapter 1, page 15)*

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

Horror Writers Association
The Guardian

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)
I am going to be using this book for an honors freshmen English class to introduce them to academic reading strategies including symbolism, motif, theme, universal ideas, character development and perspective.

We Have Always Lived in the Castle serves as an ideal foundational text for Honors English 9 students learning to transition from high-level comprehension to rigorous academic literary analysis. The novel provides an engaging entry point for analyzing narrative perspective and literary devices.

The text is layered with motifs (food, domestic routines, magical rituals) and symbols (the family home, buried talismans, the sugar bowl) that allow students to practice evidence-based close reading and trace how motifs build into larger universal ideas such as isolation, trauma, female power and the concept of home. Additionally, the text offers rich material for tracking character development, motivation, and conflict. At approximately 160 pages depending on the version, the text offers the perfect blend of complexity and accessibility, allowing students the time to do legitimate line-by-line analysis without getting overwhelmed with material. Also, the main character is an 18 year old girl, which is relatable to my classroom demographic.

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.9-10.2 (Theme Development & Central Ideas)
2. RL.9-10.3 (Complex Character Analysis & Interaction)

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. *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
2. [illegible]

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

Teacher: Elizabeth Stringer Date: 9-5-26

ELA Department Chair: Andrew J. Dobak Date: 9-8-26

Building Principal: M. Q Date: 9/14/26

District Curriculum Administrator: _____ Date: _____

District Curriculum Administrator: Elizabeth Date: 9/15/26