

OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): Olentangy Liberty High School

Classes/Grade Level(s): English 9

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: *We Are Not Free* by Traci Chee

Genre: Historical Fiction

Lexile Reading Level: 925L

Total number of pages: 365

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary) Fourteen teens who have grown up together in Japantown, San Francisco. Fourteen teens who form a community and a family, as interconnected as they are conflicted. Fourteen teens whose lives are turned upside down when over 100,000 people of Japanese ancestry are removed from their homes and forced into desolate incarceration camps. In a world that seems determined to hate them, these young Nisei must rally together as racism and injustice threaten to pull them apart.	Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number) • There are many racial slurs (page 7), and several curse words like "a**" (page 101), "sh*t" (page 187). • There are depictions of violence: muggings, beatings, combat overseas, a character is shot and killed in the incarceration camps (160, Chapter 8). • Characters kiss, but otherwise, there is no real explicit or mentioned romance (chapter 2)
Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) <i>Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links</i> https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/49934666-we-are-not-free	

ABOUT THE CLASS

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



Traci Chee's novel *We Are Not Free* offers an exceptional, accessible entry point for 9th-grade English students to explore high-level literary devices through historical fiction. Set during World War II, the novel follows fourteen Japanese American teenagers forcibly relocated to incarceration camps. Because the story is told through fourteen distinct perspectives, it will be used to teach authorial choices shape character, narrative, and historical context. The skills that will specifically be used will be diction, structure, narrative voice, and tone. The novel's multi-POV structure is divided into distinct thematic sections, each told by a different narrator. Students will analyze how Chee sequences these perspectives to build a cohesive collective history while maintaining individual narrative arcs. Each narrator possesses a distinct voice reflecting their unique personality, age, and outlook on their situation.

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](#)

- **W.9-10.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- **RL.9-10.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- **RL.9-10.5:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

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 Outsiders* – S.E. Hinton
2. *American Born Chinese* – Gene Luen Yang

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

Teacher:  Date: 9/23/26
ELA Department Chair:  Date: 9/24/26
Building Principal:  Date: 9/28/26
District Curriculum Administrator:  Date: 10/1/26