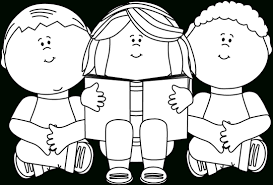
Cross-Texts: A New Kind of Literature Circle

Using Books of Choice

Presenter: Amy Benjamin

[www.amybenjamin.com](http://www.amybenjamin.com)

Your handouts:

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Poems by Langston Hughes

Mother to Son

**Mother to Son**

BY [LANGSTON HUGHES](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/langston-hughes)

Well, son, I’ll tell you:

Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.

It’s had tacks in it,

And splinters,

And boards torn up,

And places with no carpet on the floor—

Bare.

But all the time

I’se been a-climbin’ on,

And reachin’ landin’s,

And turnin’ corners,

And sometimes goin’ in the dark

Where there ain’t been no light.

So boy, don’t you turn back.

Don’t you set down on the steps

’Cause you finds it’s kinder hard.

Don’t you fall now—

For I’se still goin’, honey,

I’se still climbin’,

And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.

**Harlem**

BY [LANGSTON HUGHES](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/langston-hughes)

What happens to a dream deferred?

      Does it dry up

      like a raisin in the sun?

      Or fester like a sore—

      And then run?

      Does it stink like rotten meat?

      Or crust and sugar over—

      like a syrupy sweet?

      Maybe it just sags

      like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

**The Myth of Narcissus**

Narcissus had a twin sister whom he loved better than anyone else in the world. This sister died when she was young and very beautiful. Narcissus missed her so much that he wished to die along with her.

One day, as he sat on the ground by a spring, looking absently into the water and thinking of his lost sister, he saw a face like hers, looking up at him. It seemed as if his sister had become a water-nymph and that she was actually there in the spring, but she would not speak to him.

Of course, the face Narcissus saw was really the reflection of his own face in the water, but he did not know that. In those days there were no clear mirrors like ours; and the idea of one’s appearance that could be seen from a polished brass shield, for instance was a very dim one. So Narcissus leaned over the water and looked at the beautiful face so like his sister’s and wondered what it was and whether he should ever see his sister again.

After this, he came back to the spring day after day and looked at the face he saw there, and mourned for his sister until, at last, the gods felt sorry for him and changed him into a flower..

This flower was the first narcissus. All the flowers of this family, when they grow by the side of a pond or stream, still bend their beautiful heads and look at the reflection of their own faces in the water.

**The Myth of Endymion**

When the plains below were parched and brown and dusty with the heat of summer, on Mount Latmus all was so still and cool, so fresh and green, that one seemed to be in another world. The mountain was most beautiful of all at night, when the moon drove her chariot overhead, and flooded every tree and all the grassy slopes with her pale light.

Endymion was a young shepherd who led his flocks high up on the sides of this mountain and let them browse on the rich pastures along the margins of its snow-fed streams. He loved the pure mountain air, and the stillness of the higher slopes, which was broken only by the tinkle of his sheep-bells, or the song of birds. There, he dreamed his days away, while his sheep and goats were feeding; or, at night, he leaned his head on a log or a mossy stone and slept with the flock.

Selene, the moon-goddess, loved to visit Mount Latmus; in fact, the mountain belonged, in some sense, to her. It was her influence that made everything there so quiet and beautiful. One night, when she had stolen down from her place in the sky for a walk through one of the flowery meadows of Mount Latmus, she found Endymion there, asleep.

The shepherd looked as beautiful as any flower on the mountain, or as the swans which were floating in the lake near by, with their heads tucked under their wings. If it had not been for his regular breathing, Selene would have believed that she stood looking at a marble statue. There, at a little distance, lay his sheep, and goats, unguarded, and liable to be attacked by wild beasts. Oh, Endymion was a very careless shepherd! That was the effect of the air on Mount Latmus.

Selene knew that it was the wonderful air of her mountain which had made the shepherd heedless, as well as beautiful, therefore she stayed by his flock all night at watched it herself.

She returned the next night and the next, and for many nights, to gaze at the sleeper, and to watch the unguarded flock. One morning, when she returned to the sky, she looked so pale from her watching that Jupiter asked her where she had been, and she described the beautiful shepherd she had found on her mountain, and confessed that she had been guarding his sheep.

Then, she begged of Jupiter that since Endymion was so very, very beautiful that he might always look as she had seen him in his sleep, instead of growing old as other mortals must. Jupiter answered, “Even the gods cannot give to mortals everlasting youth and beauty without giving them also everlasting sleep; but Endymion shall sleep forever and forever be young.”

So there, in a cave, on Mount Latmus, Endymion sleeps on to this day; and his wonderful beauty has not faded in the smallest degree, but is a joy still to all who can climb those lofty heights.



**The Myth of Hyacinthus**

Hyacinthus was a beautiful Greek boy who was greatly loved by Apollo. Apollo often lay aside his golden lyre and his arrows, and came down from Mount Olympus to join Hyacinthus in his boyish occupations. The two were often busy all day long, following the hunting-dogs over the mountains or setting fish nets in the river or playing at various games.

Their favorite exercise was the throwing of the discus. The discus was a heavy metal plate about a foot across, which was thrown somewhat as the quoit, or horseshoe, is thrown. One day, Apollo threw the discus first, and sent it whirling high up among the clouds, for the god had great strength. It came down in a fine, strong curve, and Hyacinthus ran to pick it up. Then, as it fell on the hard earth, the discus bounded up again and struck the boy a cruel blow on his white forehead.

Apollo turned as pale as Hyacinthus, but he could not undo what had been done. He could only hold friend in his arms, and see his head droop like a illy on a broken stem, while the purple blood from his wound was staining the earth.

There was still one way by which Apollo could make Hyacinthus live, and this was to change him into a flower. So, quickly, before it was too late, he whispered over him certain words the gods knew, and Hyacinthus became a purple flower, a flower of the color of the blood that had flowed from his forehead. As the flower unfolded, it showed a strange mark on its petals, which looked like the Greek words meaning *woe! woe!*

Apollo never forget his young boy and their friendship; he sang about him to the accompaniment of his wonderful lyre until the name of Hyacinthus was known and loved all over the land.

**Quotations Pertaining to the First Amendment**

**I**

“Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion, or Prohibiting the Free Exercise Thereof; or Abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the Right of the People to Peaceably Assemble, and To Petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances.”

First Amendment

II

“First Amendment freedoms are most in danger when the government seeks to control thought or to justify its laws for that impermissible end. The right to think is the beginning of freedom, and speech must be protected from the government because speech is the beginning of thought.”

Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy,

Ashcroft V. Free Speech Coalition

“Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion, or Prohibiting the Free Exercise Thereof; or Abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the Right of the People to Peaceably Assemble, and To Petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances.”

First Amendment

III

“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”

President Harry S. Truman

**Quotations Pertaining to the First Amendment**

**I**

“Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion, or Prohibiting the Free Exercise Thereof; or Abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the Right of the People to Peaceably Assemble, and To Petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances.”

First Amendment

IV

“Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government’s purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men or zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.”

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

Olmstead V. U.S

from Democracy in America

by Alexis De Tocqueville, (1835)

1. “Our contemporaries are constantly wracked by two warring passions: they feel the need to be led and the desire to remain free. Unable to destroy either of these contrary instincts, they seek to satisfy both at once. They imagine a single, omnipotent, tutelary power, but one that is elected by the citizens. They combine centralization with popular sovereignty. This gives them some respite. They console themselves for being treated as wards by imagining that they have chosen their own protectors. Each individual allows himself to be clapped in chains because that the other end of the chain is held not by man or a class but by the people themselves.”

II. “It would seem as if the rulers of our time sought only to use men in order to make things great; I wish that they would try a little more to make great men; that they would settles value on the work and more upon the workman; that they would never forget that a nation cannot long remain strong when every man belonging to it is individually weak; and that no form or combination of social policy has yet been devised to make an energetic people out of a community of fearful and enfeebled citizens.”

III. Every nation that has ended in tyranny has come to that end by way of good order. It certainly does not follow from this that peoples should scorn public peace, but neither should they be satisfied with that and nothing more. A nation that asks nothing of government but the maintenance of order is already a slave in the depths of its heart; it is a slave of its well-being, ready for the man who will put it in chains.”

IV. “I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers—and it was not there…in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there…in her rich mines and her vast world commerce—and it was not there—in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution—and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”

16

17

Moby Dick

Herman Melville

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul, whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every tuner I meet, and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately knocking people’s hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings toward the ocean with me.

On the Road

Jack Kerouac

I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won’t bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road. Before that I’d often thought of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off. Dean is the perfect guy for the road because he actually was born on the road, when his parents were passing through Salt Lake City in 1926, in a jalopy, on their way to Los Angeles. First reports of him came to me through Chad King, who’d shown me a few letters from him written in a New Mexico reform school. I was tremendously interested in the letters because they so naively and sweetly asked Chad to teach him all about Nietzche and all the wonderful intellectual things that Chad knew. At one point Carlo and I talked about the letters and wondered if we would ever meet the strange Dean Moriarty. This is all far back, when Dean was not the way he is today, when he was a young jailkid shrouded in mystery. Then news came that Dean was out of reform school and was coming to New York for the first time, also there was talk that he had just married a girl called Marylou.

Ethan Frome

Edith Wharton

I had the story, bit by bit, from various people, and, as generally happens in such cases, each time it was a different story.

If you know Starkfield, Massachusetts, you know the post-office. If you know the post-office you must have seen Ethan From drive up to it, drop the reins on his hollow-backed bay and drag himself across the brick pavement to the white colonnade; and you must have asked who he was.

It was there that, several years ago, I saw him for the first time; and the sight pulled me up sharp. Even then he was the most striking figure in Starkfield, though he was but the ruin of a man. It was not so much his great height that marked him, for the “natives” were easily singled out by their lank longitude from the stockier foreign breed; it was the careless powerful look he had, in spite of a lameness checking each step like the jerk of a chain. There was something bleak and unapproachable in his face, and he was so stiffened and grizzled that I took him for an old man and was surprised to hear that he was not more than fifty-two. I had this from Harmon Gow, who had driven the stage from Bettsbridge to Starkfield in pre-trolley days and knew the chronicle of all the families on his line.

Number the Stars

Lois Lowry

Chapter 1: *Why Are You Running?*

“I’ll race you to the corner, Ellen!” Annemarie adjusted the thick leather pack on her back so that her schoolbooks balanced evenly. “ready?” She looked at her best friend.

Ellen made a face. “No,” she said, laughing. “You *know* I can’t beat you—my legs aren’t as long. Can’t we just walk, like civilized *people*?” She was a stocky ten-year-old, unlike lanky Annmarie.

“We have to practice for the athletic meet on Friday— I know I’m going to win the girls’ race this week. I was second last week, but I’ve been practicing every day. Come on, Ellen, Annemarie pleaded, eyeing the distance to the next corner of the Copenhagen street. “Please?”

Ellen hesitated, then nodded and shifted her own rucksack of books against her shoulders. “Oh, all right. Ready,” she said.

“Go!” shouted Annemarie, and the two girls were off, racing along the residential sidewalk. Annemarie’s silvery blond hair flew behind her, and Ellen’s dark pigtails bounced against her shoulders.

“Wait for me!” wailed little Kirsti, left behind, but the two older girls weren’t listening.

Annemarie outdistanced her friend quickly, even though one of her shoes came untied as she sped along the street called Osterbrogade, past the small shops and cafes of her neighborhood here in northeast Copenhagen. Laughing, she skirted an elderly lady in black who carried a shopping bag made of string. A young woman pushing a baby in a carriage moved aside to make way. The corner was just ahead.

Annmarie looked up, panting, just as she reached the corner. Her laughter stopped. Her heart seemed to skip a beat.

“*Halte!”* the soldier ordered in a stern voice.

The German word was as familiar as it was frightening. Annemarie had heard it often enough before, but it had never been directed at her until now.

Behind her, Ellen also slowed and stopped. Far back, little Kirsti was plodding along, her face in a pout because the girls hadn’t waited for her.

Annemarie stared up. There were two of them. That meant two helmets, two sets of cold eyes glaring at her, and four tall shiny boots planted firmly on the sidewalk, blocking her path to home.

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963*

Christopher Paul Curtis

Chapter 1: *And You Wonder Why We Get Called the Weird Watsons*

It was one of those super-duper-cold Saturdays. One of those days that when you breathed out your breath kind of hung frozen in the air like a hunk of smoke and you could walk along and look exactly like a train blowing out big, fat, white puffs of smoke.

It was so cold that if you were stupid enough to go outside, your eyes would automatically blink a thousand times all by themselves, probably so the juice inside of them wouldn’t freeze up. It was so cold that if you spit, the slob would be an ice cube before it hit the ground. It was about a zillion degrees below zero.

It was even cold inside our house. We put sweaters and hats and scarves and three pairs of socks on and still were cold. The thermostat was turned all the way up and the furnace was banging and sounding like it was about to blow up but it still felt like Jack Frost had moved in with us.

All of my family sat real close together on the couch under a blanket. Dad said this would generate a little heat but he didn’t have to tell us this, it seemed like the cold automatically made us want to get together and huddle up. My little sister, Joetta, sat in the middle and all you could see were her eyes because she had a scarf wrapped around her head. I was next to her, and on the outside was my mother.

Momma was the only one who wasn’t born in Flint so the cold was coldest to her. All you could see were her eyes too, and they were shooting bad looks at Dad. She always blamed him for bringing her all the way from Alabama to Michigan, a state she called a giant icebox. Dad was bundled up on the other side of Joey, trying to look at anything but Momma. Next to Dad, sitting with a little space between them, was my older brother, Byron.

Byron had just just turned thirteen so he was officially a teenage juvenile delinquent and didn’t think it was “cool” to touch anybody or let anyone touch him, even if it meant he froze to death. Byron had tucked the blanket between him and Dad down into the cushion of the couch to make sure he couldn’t be touched.

*Walk Two Moons*

Sharon Cheech

Chapter 1: A Face in the Window

Gramps says that I am a country girl at heart, and that is true. I have lived most of my thirteen years in Bybanks, Kentucky, which is not much more than a caboodle of houses roosting in a green spot alongside the Ohio River. Just over a year ago, my father plucked me up like a weed and took me and all our belongings (no, that is not true—he did not bring the chestnut tree or the willow or the maple or the hayloft or the swimming hole or any of those things which belong to me) and we drove three miles straight north and stopped in front of a house in Euclid, Ohio.

‘Where are the trees?’ I said. ‘This is where we’re going to live?’

‘No,’ my father said. ‘This is Margaret’s house.’

The front door of the house opened, and Margaret, the lady with the wild red hair, stood there. I looked up and down the street. The buildings were all jammed together like a row of birdhouses. In front of each one was a tiny square of grass, and in front of that was a long, long cement sidewalk running alongside the cement road.

‘Where’s the barn?’ I asked. ‘Where’s the river? Where’s the swimming hole?’

‘Oh Sal,’ my father said. ‘Come along. There’s Margaret.’ He waved to the lady at the door.

‘We have to go back,’ I said. I forgot something.

‘Don’t be a goose,’ he said. ‘Come and see Margaret.

I did not want to see Margaret. I stood there, looking around, and that’s when I saw the face pressed up against an upstairs window next door. It was a girl’s round face, and it looked afraid. I didn’t know it then, but that face belonged to Phoebe Winterbottom, the girl who had a powerful imagination, who would become my friend, and who would have all those peculiar things happen to her.

Not long ago, when I was locked in a car with my grandparents for six days, I told them the story of Phoebe, and when I finished telling them—or maybe even as I was telling them— I realized that the story of Phoebe was like the plaster wall in our old house in Bybanks, Kentucky.

My father started chipping away at a plaster wall in the living room of our house in Bybanks, shortly after my mother left us one April morning. Our house was an old farmhouse, which my parents had been restoring, room by room. Each night, as he waited to hear from my mother, he chipped away at that wall.

On the night that we got the bad news— that she was not returning— he pounded and pounded on that wall with a chisel and a hammer. At two o’clock in the morning, he came up to my room. I was not asleep. He led me downstairs and showed me what he had found. Hidden behind the wall was a brick fireplace.

The reason that Phoebe’s story reminds me of that plaster wall and the hidden fireplace is that beneath Phoebe’s story was another one. It was about me and my own mother.

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key

Jack Gantos

Chapter I: Off the Wall

At school they say I’m wired bad, or wired mad, or wired sad, or wired glad, depending on my mood and what teacher has ended up with me. but there is no doubt about it, I’m *wired*.

This year was no different. When I started out all the days there looked about the same. In the morning I’d be okay and follow along in class. But after lunch, when my meds had worn down, it was nothing but trouble for me.

One day, we were doing math drills in class and every time Mrs. Maxy asked a question, like “What’s nine times nine?” I’d raise my hand because I’m really quick at math. But each time she called on me, even though I knew the answer, I’d just blurt out, “Can I get back to you on that?” Then I’d nearly fall out of my chair from laughing. And she’d give me that white-lipped look which meant, “Settle down.” But I didn’t and kept raising my hand each time she asked a question until finally no other kid would raise their hand because they knew what was coming between me and Mrs. Maxy.

“Okay, Joey,” she’d say, calling on me and staring hard at my face as if her eyes were long fingers that could grip me by the chin. I’d stare right back and hesitate a second as if I was planning to answer the question and then I’d holler out really loud, “ Can I get back to you on that?” Finally, after a bunch of times of me doing that in a row, she jerked her thumb toward the door. “Out in the hall,” she said. And the class cracked up.

So I went and stood in the hall for about a second until I remembered the mini-Superball in my pocket and started to bounce it off the lockers and ceiling and after Mrs. Deebs in the next class stuck her head out her door and yelled, “Hey, cut that racket,” like she was yelling at a stray cat. I remembered something I wanted to try. I had seen the Tasmanian Devil on TV whirling around like a top so I unbuckled my belt and pulled on the end really hard, as if I was trying to start a lawn mower. But that didn’t get me spinning very fast. So I took out my high-top shoelaces and tied them together and then to the belt and wrapped it all around my waist. Then I grabbed one end and yanked on it and sort of got myself spinning. I kept doing it until I got getter and better and before long I was bouncing off the lockers because I was dizzy too. Then I gave myself one more really good pull on the belt and because I was already dizzy I got going really fast and began to snort and grunt like the Tasmanian Devil until Mrs. Maxy came out and clamped her hands down on my shoulders. She stopped me so fast I spun right out of my shoes and they went shooting up the hall.

“You glue your feet to the floor for five whole minutes or you can just spin yourself down to the principal’s office,” she said. “Now, what is your choice going to be?”

“Can I get back to you on that?” I asked.

A Sampling of Questions for First Pages:

1. Tell us a little about what you read.

2. Do any particular visuals stand out? Why?

3. First paragraphs can focus on characters, setting, plot, or theme. Which does yours focus on?

4. First paragraphs are trying to intrigue you. How is the author trying to

intrigue you?

5. Let’s talk about narrative point of view. Who is narrating? What (do you

think) is going to be the narrator’s relationship to the story?

6. Is this a present-day story? How do you know?

7. What are your “why” questions?

8. What are your predictions?

Question Menu:

Next Generation Reading Standards 1-6

| Reading Standard | Questions |
| --- | --- |
| 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. | What do you think is the author’s point in writing this? How do you know?  What can we assume about \_\_\_\_\_?  Is that stated explicitly or is it implied? Show us where.  What do you think lines xx-xx mean? |
| 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development, summarize the key supporting details and ideas. | What is the author saying to support the idea that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_?  Often an author will repeat his or her main idea in different places. Are you seeing that? Where?  Authors usually give examples. Are you seeing any? Why might the author have chosen these particular examples?  Authors usually give visuals. Are you seeing any? Why might the author have chosen these particular visuals? |
| 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. | What is the relationship between this (event, character, setting, detail) and that (event, character, setting, detail)?  Why do you think the author chose to include this detail? How would it change the overall meaning if this detail were left out? |
| 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. | Are there any words or phrases that you want to know more about?  Are there any words that are used in unusual ways?  Look at the word \_\_\_\_. Is that word used literally or metaphorically? How do you know?  Find a metaphor. Metaphors have their power in making associations. What association is the author wanting us to make here. Why?  What would you say is the tone of this piece? At what point in the piece does the tone become obvious? How? |
| 5: Analyze the structure of the text, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., sections, chapters, scenes, stanzas) relate to each other and the whole. | Authors may give us specific words to make transitions. Are you seeing any of those? What kind of transition are we seeing with that word? How is the author setting us up for what he or she is leading to?  Authors may make abrupt transitions. Are you seeing any? What is their effect?  Authors always make decisions about where to say what they say. Why do you think the author began the piece this way? Why do you think the author ended the piece this way?  Authors may present information in a direct, linear way; or, they may jump around in time. How is this information arranged? Why do you think the author chose to use this arrangement? |
| 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of text. | Do you sense that the author has a particular point of view (bias) about this subject, or do you think the author is trying to be completely objective?  How do you know what the author’s point of view is, judging by the author’s diction (word choice)?  What do you think the author wants you to say or think after reading this? |

Vocabulary for Speaking about Abstract Ideas:

Abstract Noun-Making Suffixes: *-ment, -ness, -ity, -tion/sion, -ism,*

*-hood, -ship, -ance/ence*

**101** Classics: Outside Reading

What is a classic? **A classic is a work of literature that has not gone out of style because of its meaning and quality. You may not “like” every classic that you read. You may not even understand all of them. But if you focus your attention on the meaning and the quality of the overall piece, as well as the details, then you can get that classic to speak to you. Some classics, such as classic children’s literature, are easy to read. Others demand patience, concentration, and an open mind. Approach the classic with *humility*: That is to say, recognize that you are in the presence of an acknowledged masterpiece.**

Rules: **You will read one work of literature from this list or the contemporary list by the due date. Be prepared to participate in an “inner circle” discussion group. If you have an idea for a book which is not on this list or the contemporary list, you must clear it with me. (Do *not* assume that another book by an author on this list is okay.) Parental approval is always a must: There are lots of choices here…**

Evaluations: **Your “inner circle” participation will be evaluated on the basis of:**

* **your familiarity with the generalities and specifics of the piece**
* **your ability to transcend the obvious**
* **the depth and complexity of your ideas**
* **your ability to make connection to other works of literature, history, your own world**
* **IMPORTANT: You are not allowed to say the S-word (“stupid”: *This is stupid*, in your discussion.) If you do, you will fail. Same applies to the B-word (*boring*).**

**The List**

**(Not all of these are considered “classics” yet. They are all excellent, well-respected books.)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Chronicles of Narnia | C.S. Lewis |
| Jane Eyre | Charlotte Bronte |
| A Lesson Before Dying | Ernest Gaines |
| Snow Falling on Cedars | David Guterson |
| The Art of Racing in the Rain | Garth Stein |
| Animal Farm | George Orwell |
| A Wrinkle in Time | Madeleine L’engle |
| I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings | Maya Angelou |
| The Count of Monte Cristo | Alexander Dumas |
| Speak | Laurie Hulse Anderson |
| Into Thin Air | Jon Krakauer |
| The Alchemist | Paulo Coelho |
| Uglies | Scott Westerfield |
| Mythology | Edith Hamilton |
| A Tree Grows in Brooklyn | Betty Smith |
| The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian | Sherman Alexie |
| Their Eyes Were Watching God | Nora Zeale Hurston |
| The Kitchen God’s Wife | Amy Tan |
| The Joy Luck Club | Amy Tan |
| Sleeping Arrangements | Laura Cunningham |
| The Liar’s Club | Mary Karr |
| Oranges are Not the Only Fruit | Jeanette Winterson |
| Annie John | Jamaica Kincaid |
| Go Tell It on the Mountain | James Baldwin |
| The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Who | Junot Diaz |
| The Kite Runner | Khaled Hosseini |
| A Thousand Splendid Suns | Khaled Hosseini |
| Allegedly | Tiffany L. Jackson |
| Never Let Me Go | Kazuo Ishiguro |
| The Namesake | Jhumpa Lahiri |
| Annie on My Mind | Nancy Garden |
| Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children | Ransom Riggs |
| Uprooted | Naomi Novik |
| This Savage Song | Victoria Schwab |
| Artemis Fowl | Eoin Colfer |
| History is All You Left Me | Adam Silvera |
| Divergent | Veronica Roth |
| Caraval | Stephanie Garber |
| The Inexplicable Logic of My Life | Benjamin Alire Saenz |
| The Book Thief | Marcus Zuzak |
| The Phantom Tollbooth | Norton Juster |
| Siddhartha | Herman Hesse |
| Dracula | Bram Stoker |
| The Call of the Wild | Jack London |
| White Fang | Jack London |
| Black Beauty | Anna Sewell |
| On the Road | Jack Kerouac |
| The Autobiography of Malcolm X | Malcolm X |
| My Name is Asher Lev | Chaim Potok |
| The Mists of Avalon | Marion Zimmer Bradley |
| Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry | Mildred D. Taylor |
| The Hazel Wood | Melissa Albert |
| The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy | Douglas Adams |
| Fahrenheit 451 | Ray Bradbury |
| Heart of Darkness | Joseph Conrad |
| One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest | Ken Kesey |
| Things Fall Apart | Chinua Achebe |
| One Hundred Years of Solitude | Gabriel Garcia Marquez |
| Slaughterhouse-Five | Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. |
| Catch-22 | Joseph Heller |
| McTeague | Frank Norris |
| The Picture of Dorian Gray | Oscar Wilde |
| The Illustrated Man | Ray Bradbury |
| Goodbye to All That | Robert Graves |
| Never Cry Wolf | Farley Mowatt |
| In Cold Blood | Truman Capote |
| Ready Player One | Ernest Cline |
| Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee | Dee Brown |
| Uncle Tom’s Cabin | Harriet Beecher Stowe |
| Beloved | Toni Morrison |
| Cannery Row | John Steinbeck |
| Maus | Art Spiegleman |
| Native Son | Richard Wright |
| Angela’s Ashes | Frank McCourt |
| The Other Wes Moore | Wes Moore |
| Cold Sassy Tree | Olive AnnBurns |
| The Maelstrom | Henry H. Neff |
| Ethan Frome | Edith Wharton |
| Bless Me Ultima | Rudolfo Anaya |
| Vampire’s Assistant | Darren Shan |
| Skelleg | Dave Almond |
| Water for Elephants | Sara Gruen |
| How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent | Julia Alvarez |
| The Plague | Albert Camus |
| October Sky | Homer Hickham |
| Doctor Zhivago | Boris Pasternak |
| Love in the Time of Cholera | Gabriel Garcia Marquez |
| The Secret Life of Bees | Sue Monk Kidd |
| The Hunt for Red October | Tom Clancy |
| Eragon | Christopher Paolini |
| The Unbearable Lightness of Being | Kundra Milan |
| Life of Pi | Yann Martel |
| A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius | Dave Eggers |
| Rubyfruit Jungle | Rita Mae Brown |
| Still Life with Woodpecker | Tom Robbins |
| Monster | Walter Dean Meyer |
| Whale Talk | Chris Crutcher |
| Crank | Ellen Hopkins |
| Everybody Sees the Ants | A.S. King |
| Looking for Alaska | John Green |
| The Perks of Being a Wallflower | Stephen Chbosky |

Rubric:

You may have this with you during your book talk.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Preparation | You have your book with you, with specific parts flagged for good reasons | You have your book, with some parts flagged | You have your book, but no parts are flagged | You don’t have your book with you. |
| Knowledge of the book | You are knowledgeable about the generalities and specifics of your book. | You know some generalities and specifics about the book. | You know only basic information about the book. | You seem not to have read the book. |
| Transcending the obvious | You show perceptive and mature insights into literary subtleties. | You state one or two interesting observations | You show basic insights that transcend the obvious. | You can state only the most obvious information about the book. |
| Making connections | You make insightful connections to the books of other members of your group | You make a few connections to the books of other members of your group. | You make only the most basic connections to the books of other members of your group | You make no connections to the books of other members of your group. |
| Using literary language | You use literary terms skillfully in the context of discussing the book. | You use a few important literary terms to discuss the book. | You use the most basic literary terms to talk about the book | You use no literary language to talk about the book. |

**Talking Points: Essential Questions**

**(Suggestions)**

**Power:**

Complex and meaningful stories are always about **power**. The power can be physical, intellectual, economic, or emotional. How is power a driving force in your story? Who has the power? What kinds of power are there? How is the power usedRefer to literary elements in your discussion such as plot, theme, characterization, irony, setting, etc.

**Transformation:**

All classics involve a *transformation* of the main character. Describe the main character’s transformation: How and why does he or she change? How do the other characters cause the change? What is the effect of the change? How, if at all, does the change deliver greater understanding to the main character?

**Sense of Urgency:**

All classics involve a situation that creates a *sense of urgency* for the characters. Describe the *sense of urgency*: what causes it, why it is urgent, how it is resolved.

**Deception and Betrayal**

All great stories involve deception and/or betrayal. Describe the deception or betrayal, name the characters involved and their motivation, tell the results of the deception or betrayal.