

MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT

NOVEL DESCRIPTION FORM

Title: 1984

Author: George Orwell

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

A utopian (dystopian) novel centered around the idea that a small percentage of people (ruling class) control all resources.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: A Brave New World

Author: Aldous Huxley

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

A dystopian depicting a future world of forced class distinctions, no family structure, and a small percentage of people controlling all!

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content X

Title: A Clockwork Orange

Author: Anthony Bergess

Publisher: Norton W and W Company, Inc.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Told by the main character, Alex, the dystopian novel creates an alarming futuristic vision of violence, high technology, and authoritarianism. Through Alex's actions, the reader is shocked into exploring the meaning of free will and the conflict between good and evil.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: A Farewell to Arms

Author: Ernest Hemmingway

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

The story of a young man disenchanted with war enough to leave the Italian army only to find tragedy in all facets of life.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius

Author: Dave Eggers

Publisher: Vintage

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

When 22 year old David Eggers loses both of his parents to cancer in a five month period, he becomes the unlikely parent to his eight-year-old brother, Christopher. Egger's manic behaviors and bizarre child rearing strategies provide interest while his unreliable narration and criticism of media driven culture expand the focus of this memoir.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: A Raisin in the Sun

Author: Lorraine Hansberry

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

A drama that details the struggle of an African American family trying to live in 1950's America.

Violence _____

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: A Separate Peace

Author: John Knowles

Publisher: Scribner

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

In the summer before WWII, Gene and Phineas are roommates at Devon, an all-boy prep school in New England. A tragic incident forces each boy to consider everything that is good and evil inside him. Years later adult Gene returns to Devon to deal with the pain of his youth.

Violence X

Profanity

Sexual Content

Title: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

Author: Betty Smith

Publisher: Perennial Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

The Nolans live in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn from 1902-1919. Their daughter, Francie, and their son, Neely, know more than their share of the privations and sufferings that are the lot of the city's poor. This is Francie's book. She is a superb feat of characterization, and an imaginative, alert, resourceful child. And Francie's growing up and the beginnings of wisdom are the substance of A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content

Title: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Author: Lewis Carroll

Publisher: Signet Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Curious Alice tumbles down a rabbit hole and finds herself in a fantastical land that offers remarkably realistic lessons about life and growing up. A parody of Victorian society, the land Alice encounters is filled with talking animals and ridiculous-seeming customs.

Violence _____

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: All Quiet on the Western Front

Author: Erich Maria Remarque

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Paul Baumer enlists with his classmates in the German army of World War II. Youthful and enthusiastic they become soldiers. But despite what they have learned, they fall apart under the first bombardment in the trenches. As the war continues year after year, Paul holds onto a single vow: to fight against the principles of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against each other.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: All The Pretty Horses

Author: Cormac McCarthy

Publisher: Vintage

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

As sixteen-year-old Texan, John Grady Cole crosses the Mexican border with fellow ranch hands his misadventures begin. This coming of age tale involves an ill-fated romance and a search for meaning in life. The novel also explores humanity's withering relationship with tradition.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Angela's Ashes

Author: Frank McCourt

Publisher: Scribner

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Narrated through the hopeful eyes of young Frankie McCourt, this memoir of growing up in Ireland is a testament to childhood resilience. Frankie survives poor parenting, poverty, and illness in pursuit of his American dream.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Animal Farm

Author: George Orwell

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

A striking commentary on the effects of socialism and communism expressed through animals on a farm.

Violence _____ Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: April Morning

Author: Howard Fast

Publisher: Bantam Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Set on April 19, 1775, at the beginning of the American Revolution, April Morning illustrates twenty-four hours in the life of fifteen-year-old militia member, Adam Cooper. This coming of age novel explores the independence of our nation – while also addressing heroism, death, and love.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Atonement

Author: Ian McEwan

Publisher: Anchor Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

On a hot summer day in 1935, 13 year old Briony Tallis witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant. Her lack of understanding of adult relations brings about a crime that will change all their lives.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content X

Title: Beowulf

Author: The Pearl Poet

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Beowulf is summoned to rid a far off land of the terrible monster known as Grendel.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Bride Price

Author: Buchi Emecheta

Publisher: George Braziller, Inc.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

The Bride Price focuses on the growth of Aku-nna, a young Ibo woman, and her obstacles separating traditional Nigerian life, from that of Nigerian life with post-colonial European influences. Her main goal to have her bride price paid so she will not die in childbirth, the fate of girls whose bride prices cannot be paid.

Violence X

Profanity

Sexual Content X

Title: Catch-22

Author: Joseph Heller

Publisher: Simon and Schuster

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

World War II bombardier Yossarian suffers from a moral dilemma: How does one cope with the temporary suspension of the rules and laws of civilization in military service during wartime? Full of circular logic, deliberate meaninglessness, and satire, Catch-22 exposes the insanity of war.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content

Title: Childhood's End

Author: Arthur C. Clarke

Publisher: Sagebrush

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

The fate of Earth's children is at stake when a supervisory race of extraterrestrials reveals their true intentions for Earth's inhabitants. Like the best works of the science fiction genre, Clarke's thought provoking novella serves as social commentary and reflects contemporary themes of existence.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Chinese Cinderella

Author: Adeline Yen Mah

Publisher: Laurel Leaf

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

Wu Mei is an infant, the "Fifth Younger Sister", when her father remarries. The apparent injustices of Wu Mei by her stepmother Niang are clear from the beginning. With persistence and the strength of human character, Wu Mei matures into a well-educated Chinese woman.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Crime and Punishment

Author: Fyodor Dostoevsky

Publisher: Vintage Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

This tragic tale of suffering and redemption represents the poverty and moral decay of 18th century Russia. When philosophy student Raskoinikov decides to put his education to the test, he oversteps the boundaries of accepted morality.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: Death of a Salesman

Author: Arthur Miller

Publisher: Penguin Classic

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Willy Loman has failed to attain his vision of the "American Dream." When his two grown sons return to the home of their youth, the whole family is forced to confront the effects this damaging dream has had on them and to watch a father/husband careen toward tragedy.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Deathwatch

Author: Robb White

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Dell

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

College student, Ben, is hired as a guide for business executive, Madec, who is hunting bighorn sheep in a remote region of the desert, Madec shoots an old prospector instead of a bighorn, and when Ben doesn't agree to cover-up the incident, Ben's survival depends on his knowledge of the desert and his ability to outwit Madec.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Ender's Game

Author: Orson Scott Card

Publisher: Tom Doherty Assoc.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

This science fiction novel is set in a future wherein humankind is facing annihilation by a hostile alien society. In an effort to successfully combat future attacks by the aliens, earth's world government has begun training child geniuses to become military leaders. Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, a six-year-old genius, is one of those recruited and taken from his family to learn the arts of war. The young protagonist begins a journey of self-discovery as he is groomed to become the leader who has the potential to save the planet. The novel touches on numerous moral, ethical, and social issues.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Ethan Frome

Author: Edith Wharton

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

A man is dissatisfied with life until a visitor brings him new happiness. A freak accident destroys that happiness.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Fahrenheit 451

Author: Ray Bradbury

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Montag, a fireman who burns books rather than put out fires, lives in a society whose government fears the knowledge gained from books. He realizes his error when he meets a young girl who teaches him the wonder of books and the ideas within them. Montag discovers "all isn't well with the world," and he sets out to make it right.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Fallen Angels

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Perry, a Harlem teen, volunteers for the service with three friends when his dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines of the Vietnam war. Perry and his platoon come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horror of warfare. However, violence and death are not the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why black troops are given the most dangerous assignments, and why the United States is there at all.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Falling Leaves: The memoir of an unwanted Chinese daughter

Author: Adeline Yen Mah

Publisher: Broadway

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

This novel is a poignant memoir of the injustices of Mah's childhood in mainland China after the 1949 revolution. Falling leaves is filled with captivating anecdotes on Chinese life. Chinese society and traditions, and history, Mah's story of her own life changes from emotional poverty to strength over obstacles in order to succeed.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Flowers for Algernon

Author: Daniel Keyes

Publisher: Bantam Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

This novel is told as a series of "Progress Reports" written by Charlie Gordon, a 32-year-old man with an IQ of 68 whose intelligence is temporarily tripled by an experimental surgical procedure.

Violence _____

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Grendel

Author: John Gardner

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

The story of Beowulf told through the eyes of Grendel offers a different perspective on the original epic poem.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Growing an Inch

Author: Stanley Gordon West

Publisher: Lexington-Marshall

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

Donny Cunningham, a senior at Central High in Saint Paul in 1949, is the shortest boy in his class. Although he struggles with his insecurities as a result of his height, his good heart and appealing personality allow him to win the girl of his dreams. Nonetheless, his life is burdened with the responsibility of preventing the county welfare department from placing his younger brothers and sisters in foster homes after his mother dies and his father becomes an alcoholic and a compulsive gambler. In an attempt to keep his family together, Donny meets numerous crises with an inner courage and ingenuity that belie his physical stature.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: Hamlet

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: Cambridge

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Upon learning the true nature of his father's death. Danish Prince Hamlet struggles with sanity and purpose. Shakespeare's psychological tragedy is wrought with the internal conflict of its protagonist betrayal, madness, murder, and beguile are essential elements of this complex drama.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Heart of Darkness

Author: Joseph Conrad

Publisher: Penguin Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Conrad's classic novella is at once an adventurous voyage into the dark depths of the Congo and a condemnation of 19th century imperialism. Narrated by English sailor Marlow, the tale subtly but undeniably exposes the exploitation of foreign cultures viewed as inferior by the colonizing powers.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: Hiroshima

Author: John Hersey

Publisher: Vintage Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10 Honors

Plot Summary:

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb is dropped from an American plane on the 245,000 residents of Hiroshima, Japan. Most of the city is destroyed and thousands of its inhabitants die. This non-fiction, journalistic masterpiece tells what happened on that day; some of its citizens survive and suffer the debilitating effects of terrible burns and radiation illness. The lives of six of those survivors are recounted in the six months following the bombing. A fifth chapter, "The Aftermath", was added later, detailing the lives of the survivors after the bombing (up to 1985).

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: House of the Spirits

Author: Isabel Allende

Publisher: Bantam

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

The focus in House of the Spirits is on the three generations of Trueba women trying to gain independence from their family's patriarch, Esteban. Strong political conflicts backdrop the storyline highlighting the conflicting differences of the Right and Left, which anticipates the country's dictatorship. Critics believe Allende uses the conflict of her homeland, Chile, and mythical realism to weave together a captivating Latin American novel written social and political unrest.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Author: Maya Angelou

Publisher: Bantam Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Angelou remembers her childhood in a small town in Arkansas during the 1930's and 40's. Angelou endures the strict love of her guardians, her aunt and uncle, the sexual abuse of her stepfather and the racism and injustice of the time and emerges on the other side strong.

Violence Profanity Sexual Content

Title: Inferno

Author: Dante Aligheri (Ciardi translation)

Publisher: Signet

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

In the Medieval epic poem, middle aged Dante chooses to reevaluate his life. Along with his guide, Homer, Dante traverses the nine circles of Hell to evaluate the wrongs of himself and humanity. Dante's travels are rich with mythological allusions, religious doctrine, themes, and essential historical figures to European history.

Violence X Profanity Sexual Content X

Title: Inherit the Wind

Author: Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

Publisher: Bantam Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

Inspired by the "Scopes Monkey Trial" of 1925, this fictional drama is about a Tennessee school teacher who disobeyed the law against teaching Darwin's theory of evolution. While exploring the themes of free thought, free speech, and the inevitability of progress, the drama concludes that creationism and evolution may not be mutually exclusive.

Violence Profanity Sexual Content

Title: Jane Eyre

Author: Charlotte Brontë

Publisher: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Orphaned into her harsh, resentful Aunt Reed's household and then matriculating at the cruel and underfunded Lowood Charity School, Jane Eyre finds herself looking for a new life. She becomes a governess at Thornfield, where she falls in love with the dark, jaded Rochester. Complications take the two on a tumultuous and nearly devastating journey.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Johnny Got His Gun

Author: Dalton Trumbo

Publisher: Bantam Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Joe Bonham, a small-town boy raised in Shale City, Colorado, goes off to fight in World War I. He returns to the states alive, but due to severe injuries (described in graphic detail), he is forced to live the remainder of his life in a hospital. Lying in his bed, Joe thinks about the gruesomeness of war and about the meaning of abstract terms like "liberty" and "decency" as he struggles to accept what has become of his own life.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: Jonathan Livingston Seagull

Author: Richard Bach

Publisher: Harper Collins

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Jonathan Livingston Seagull is no ordinary bird. He believes it is every gull's right to fly, to reach the ultimate freedom of challenge and discovery. He finds his greatest reward in teaching younger gulls the joy of flight and the power of dreams. Numerous biblical connections can be made when reading or studying this novel. This is a spirituality classic, and an engaging parable for adolescents.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Jude the Obscure

Author: Thomas Hardy

Publisher: Penguin Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Jude Fawley, a poor stone cutter with academic aspirations, dreams of a university career. His hopes are shattered, however, by the effects of a misguided marriage. Hardy effectively showcases how individuals in love alternately defy and succumb to the pressures of a disapproving society.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Julius Caesar

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: McDougal Littell

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

This Shakespearean tragedy tells about the hunger for power that led to the assassination of Julius Caesar, a Roman general and politician who lived from about 100 to 44 B.C. and about the events that immediately followed his death. It is a play of political intrigue, friendship, betrayal, envy and revenge. This drama forces readers to explore the intricacies of human nature, human values, and human conflict.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Looking Backward 2000-1887

Author: Edward Bellamy

Publisher: Signet Classic (Penguin Putnam)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Written in 1888, this novel exposes the injustices of the American economic and social systems of that time period. However, when Mr. Julian West, a prominent citizen of industrialized Boston in 1887, is strangely transported to the year 2000, we find that life in America is one of utopia. For readers of the nineteenth century, this novel provided ideas for economic and social reform. For readers of the twenty-first century, it presents a plan for a more perfect society and forces us to consider how choices or decisions made in the present will impact our future.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Lord of the Flies

Author: William Golding

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

In this dystopian novel, a group of English school boys are left stranded, to their own devices, on an unpopulated island. The novel explores the idea of nature vs. nurture and the struggles of good vs. evil.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Macbeth

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: Cambridge

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

After learning that he is destined for greater things, heroic Macbeth sets out to make his prophecy come true. Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy examines the human desire to control fate and the human weakness that lends itself toward self-destruction.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Metamorphosis

Author: Franz Kafka

Publisher: Norton Critical Editions

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

Gregor Samsa wakes up to find himself changed into a giant insect. Kafka gives the perspective that although Gregor has changed, he is still human. Kafka reflects on modern literature and philosophical thought as he transforms Gregor and the characters around him.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Midnight's Children

Author: Salman Rushdie

Publisher: Penguin

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

An allegory set in modern India, Midnight's Children focuses on the life of Saleem Sinai, who was born at midnight of the first hour of India's Independence from Britain. Saleem is raised by a well-to-do Muslim family, a parallel to modern India. His counterpart born at the exact same time is Shiva, the son of a poor Hindu street performer, who grows up as Saleem's enemy. Due to Saleem narrating his own memoirs, he places himself at every significant event which occurs in India after its independence.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Monster

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Publisher: Harper Collins Children's Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon faces the possibility of life in prison for being an accomplice to murder. Steve narrates his trial as though it is a film. The reader joins Steve in the struggle to decide if he is the monster the prosecutor says he is or a victim of circumstance.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: My Antonia

Author: Willa Cather

Publisher: Houghton-Mifflin Co.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Set during the great migration west to settle the plains of the North American continent, the novel follows Antonia Shimerda, a pioneer who comes to Nebraska as a child and grows with the country, inspiring childhood friend, Jim Burden, to write her life story. *My Antonia* is Cather's portrait of a remembered American girlhood: her hardships and difficulties as well as her search for happiness are the themes of this novel.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: My Darling, My Hamburger

Author: Paul Zindel

Publisher: Harper

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Although set in the 1960's, this is still a cautionary tale for today's teens. Four high school seniors: Liz, Sean, Maggie, and Dennis, experience difficulties with their parents, their desires, their expectations, and their responsibilities. It's a novel about real-life teenage dilemmas, choices, and their consequences.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Nectar in a Sieve

Author: Kamala Markandayah

Publisher: Signet

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

Rukmani was married by her parents as a child bride to a farmer who she had never met before their marriage. She and her husband farm their field to make a living from the earth. Throughout the course of the novel, their field is not the only place where disaster must be overcome. Rukmani's survival in a primitive village is encouraging and persistent and shows a different side to the British colonized country of India.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Night

Author: Elie Wiesel

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

A recount of a man's experience in concentration camps during Nazi occupation of Europe. Vivid details of the experience recounted.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Oedipus Rex

Author: Sophocles

Publisher: Various

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

According to many people, critics, professors, and historians. Oedipus Rex is the greatest Greek dramatic tragedy. King Oedipus discovers he has killed his own father and married his mother. This drama offers the basis of Western drama and a landmark in literature.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Of Mice and Men

Author: John Steinbeck

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

The story of a young man (George) who is forced to look after a man with special needs (Lennie). Lennie continually gets into trouble forcing George to make the ultimate decision.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Author: Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Publisher: Signet Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

First published in the Soviet journal *Novy Mir* in 1962, this novel stands as a classic of contemporary literature. The story of labor-camp inmate Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, it graphically describes one day in his life-long struggle to maintain his dignity in the face of communist oppression. This is the first novel to reveal the terrors of Stalin's prison camps. It allowed Solzhenitsyn, who later became Russia's conscience in exile, to challenge the brutal might of the Soviet Union.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Ophelia Speaks

Author: Sara Shandler

Publisher: Harper Paperbacks

Grade Level of Intended Use: _____

Plot Summary:

This nonfiction anthology covers the wide range of experiences by teenage girls in crisis. Edited and conceived by a concerned college students, this collection contains heartfelt works of short memoir and poetry reflecting the internal and external traumas of the young writers.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Ordinary People

Author: Judith Guest

Publisher: Penguin

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

The Jarretts are the perfect family leading a perfect life in a perfect world: wealthy, respectable, an expensive house in an exclusive neighborhood, European vacations, Texas golf trips. But perfection comes at a price, and when older son Buck dies in a boating accident and surviving son Conrad attempts suicide, the difference between the American dream and the American reality becomes apparent. The mask of perfection cracks, and those who hide behind it find themselves with the challenge to rebuild their lives.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: Othello

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

A powerful drama featuring intense mutual devotion, jealous rage, and death.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Pride and Prejudice

Author: Jane Austen

Publisher: Penguin Classics

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

As the title suggests, when independent spirit Elizabeth Bennet expresses prejudiced feelings against the haughty and prideful Mr. Darcy, a comedy of manners emerges. Austen's Victorian romance reveals the folly of judging on first impressions and exposes the snobbery of 19th century middle class life.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Ramayana

Author: Anonymous

Publisher: Various

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

The *Ramayana* has been among the most important literary and oral texts of South Asia for the past two thousand years. This epic poem provides insights into many aspects of Indian culture and also continues to influence the politics, religion and art of modern India. The Ramayana explains life in India around 1000 BCE and offers models in dharma. The hero, Rama, lived his whole life by the rules of dharma: In fact, that was why Indians consider him heroic. When Rama was a young boy, he was the perfect son. Later he was an ideal husband to his faithful wife, Sita, and a responsible ruler of Ayodhya. Indians consider this epic as a moral of how Hindus should live.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Ransom

Author: Lois Duncan

Publisher: Bantam Doubleday Deli

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Five teenagers are kidnapped by a substitute bus driver and held for ransom. The ordeal is told from their points of view. The teens include a popular jock and his younger brother, a loner whose uncle doesn't even know he's missing, an army brat, and a cheerleader who can't count on her stepfather.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Rats Saw God

Author: Rob Thomas

Publisher: Simon Pulse

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

When high school student Steve York is faced with failing his senior year, his guidance counselor offers him a way out: writing a one hundred page composition. The novel progresses along with Steve's paper, revealing the events that led his life toward a downward spiral of drug abuse and academic apathy.

Violence _____ Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Romeo and Juliet

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: Cambridge

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Shakespeare's drama of star-crossed lovers begins with a violent conflict between two families and ends with the tragic but fated deaths of his protagonists. Set in Verona, Italy, the play follows the desperate series of actions the pair commits, provoked by the fear of separation, in the name of eternal love.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

Author: Tom Stoppard

Publisher: Grove Press

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Absurd humor and existentialist thought highlight Stoppard's examination of the meaning behind the lives of these two minor characters from Shakespeare's "Hamlet". The playwright integrates seldom performed scenes from "Hamlet" in an inventive study of Hamlet's ill fated school chums, who are charged by the king to murder their former classmate.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Running Loose

Author: Chris Crutcher

Publisher: Harper Collins Children's Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Louis Banks rules the school as a football star senior with the girl of everyone's dreams, but when his world is turned upside down, he is faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Louis learns about sportsmanship, love, and death in this coming of age novel.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: Schindler's List

Author: Thomas Keneally

Publisher: Touchstone

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10 Honors

Plot Summary:

Schindler's List is a remarkable piece based on the true story of German industrialist and war profiteer, Oskar Schindler, who, confronted with the horror of the extermination camps, gambled his life and fortune to rescue 1,300 Jews from the gas chambers.

Working with the actual testimony of Schindler's Jews, Thomas Keneally artfully depicts the courage and shrewdness of an unlikely savior, a man who is a flawed mixture of hedonism and decency and who, in the presence of unutterable evil, transcends the limits of his own humanity.

As would any historical fiction about the events of what could be considered the darkest hour of the 20th century-possibly of all humanity, Schindler's List contains descriptions of violence and the deaths of almost six million Jews.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Slaughterhouse Five

Author: Kurt Vonnegut

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Billy Pilgrim, a man who has come "unstuck in time" finds himself suddenly transported to other points in his own past or future. Extraordinary events happen to Billy, from witnessing the Dresden firebombing to being kidnapped by aliens. Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time and space reflects his search for meaning.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Sniper

Author: Theodore Taylor

Publisher: Avon Books/Harcourt Brace

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

While his parents are on a safari in Africa, Ben is left alone to cope with a mysterious sniper who begins shooting lions and other big cats on his family's zoological preserve in California.

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: Snow falling on Cedars

Author: David Guterson

Publisher: Vintage

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Author Guterson interweaves interracial romance, courtroom drama, murder mystery, and the World War II internment of Japanese Americans. Set in the 1950's north of Puget Sound, Washington, this work of fiction, often revealed in flashbacks, is also a study of prejudice.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: Sound of Waves

Author: Yukio Mishima

Publisher: Vintage

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

Shinji is a young fisherman and falls in love with the beautiful fisherman's daughter, Hatsue. They both fall in love, but must tolerate the talk of the villagers and the Japanese society they live in. This novel offers an in-depth analysis of develop characters and can be compared to a Japanese *Romeo and Juliet* as they tolerate society's rumors and clarify their truths.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Author: Thomas Hardy

Publisher: Penguin Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

When Tess Durbeyfield, a beautiful young woman of no social standing, is sent by her father to seek out distant noble relations, a chain of tragic events is set into motion. Hardy's heroine is a victim of circumstances, providing a model of the unjust roles of women in Victorian society.

Violence _____ Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: The Bell Jar

Author: Sylvia Plath

Publisher: Harper Collins

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Ester Greenwood, a beautiful and talented young writer, spends a painful month in New York as a contest-winning junior editor on a magazine. Her strained relationships and pressure drive Esther into a dark insanity, landing her in a mental institution where drastic measures are taken to try and rehabilitate her.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: The Buffalo Tree

Author: Adam Rapp

Publisher: Harper Trophy

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

Thirteen-year-old Sura is sentenced to a juvenile detention facility for stealing. While there, he faces a struggle of survival and a test of inner strength. Rapp's morality tale takes the reader on a journey of hope and validates the power of the human spirit. From penance to redemption, Sura's experience is our own.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: The Chocolate War

Author: Robert Cormier

Publisher: Random House Children's Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Jerry Renault, a high school freshman, is pondering the question of the poster in his locker: Do I dare disturb the universe? Jerry at once learns the ruinous costs of refusing to join the school's annual fundraising drive, drawing attention of school bullies.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: The Chosen

Author: Chaim Potok

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Two boys, Reuven and Danny, meet one day during a softball game. Danny is a Hassidic Jew and Reuven is Orthodox. Danny's initial impression is one of disdain towards Reuven as he is unable to relate to people who are not on his religious level at first impression. An accident in the field brings them together and eventually they begin a friendship. It grows deeper when both their fathers are drawn into each other's worlds. It is very interesting how each father raises his son so differently.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: The Complete Works

Author: William Shakespeare

Publisher: Harper Collins

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

This collection of Elizabethan dramas ranges from comedies to tragedies to historic plays. Included here are Shakespeare's seldom performed works as well as his recognized canonical works.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content X

Title: The Contender

Author: Robert Lipsyte

Publisher: Harper Collins

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

The Contender, a coming of age novel, is about Alfred Brooks, a high school dropout who lives with his aunt and cousins in Harlem. Alfred struggles to become a contender in the boxing ring and in life. Themes explored: racism, crime, poverty, drugs, physical fitness, friendships, family, self-esteem, education, perseverance, and making wise choices.

Violence X Profanity Sexual Content

Title: The Corrections

Author: Jonathan Franzen

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Enid looks forward to one last family Christmas, but she, her husband, and three grown children are each falling apart in their own ways. Their individual journeys take place amid the colliding old-time American society of freight trains and civic duties and the absurd modern world of promiscuity and home surveillance.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: The Crucible: A Play in Three Acts

Author: Arthur Miller

Publisher: Penguin (Non-Classics Department)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

This classic play examines the witch-hunts and the trials in seventeenth century Salem, Massachusetts. Based on historical people and real events, Miller's drama is a searing portrait of a community engulfed in hysteria. In the rigid theocracy of Salem, rumors that women are practicing witchcraft rock the town's most basic fears and suspicions; and when a young girl accuses Elizabeth Proctor of being a witch, self-righteous church leaders and townspeople insist she is brought to trial. The ruthlessness of the prosecutors and the eagerness of neighbor testifying against neighbor show the destructive power of socially sanctioned violence. *The Crucible* reflects the anti-communist hysteria inspired by Senator Joseph McCarthy's "witch-hunts" in the United States.

Violence X

Profanity

Sexual Content

Title: The Dante Club

Author: Matthew Pearl

Publisher: Random House

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

When a series of gruesome Boston murders simulate the descriptions in Dante's "Inferno", a group of esteemed New England poets conduct their own investigation. Though a work of suspense fiction, this academic exploration is based upon a real historical society of writers whose members included Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content

Title: The Glass Menagerie

Author: Tennessee Williams

Publisher:

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

The drama of a family mired in mediocrity. Characters struggle to break out of their proverbial shells.

Violence

Profanity

Sexual Content

Title: The Grapes of Wrath

Author: John Steinbeck

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

Although it follows the movement of thousands of men and women and the transformation of an entire nation during the Depression, this novel is also the story of one Oklahoma family, the Joads, who are driven off their homestead and forced to travel to the promised land of California. The Joads lose family members to death and cowardice as they go, and are challenged by everything from weather to the authorities to the angry California locals. However, they, like many others during the Depression, have the mindset that "we go on".

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: The Great Gatsby

Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

The novel about a man who will stop at nothing to get the love he lost so long ago.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content X

Title: The Handmaid's Tale

Author: Margaret Atwood

Publisher: Anchor Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

In a world of the near future, Offred is a handmaid in the republic of Gilead, where is not permitted to read and is only valuable if the commander can make her pregnant. Offred remembers days before when she had a husband, a job, her own money, and the freedom to gain knowledge, but all of that is gone now.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content X

Title: The hound of the Baskervilles

Author: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Publisher: Modern Library

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Violence X Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: The House on Mango Street

Author: Sandra Cisneros

Publisher: Knopf Publishing Group

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

The House on Mango Street tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza's story is one of a young girl coming of age – inventing for herself what she will become.

Violence _____

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: The Human Comedy

Author: William Saroyen

Publisher: Sagebrush

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11

Plot Summary:

During World War II, in Ithaca, California, the Macauleys struggle to attain the American dreams of second-generation immigrants. The novel focuses on Homer, a teenage boy, who delivers telegrams of love, death, war and money which enlightens him because of the raw human emotion of the people he delivers the messages to.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: The Iliad

Author: Homer

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Helen, Queen of Sparta and the most beautiful woman in the world, is kidnapped by Paris, a Trojan Prince. Hungry for revenge, the Greek army lays siege on Troy. For nine long years, they are unsuccessful – until they come up with a plan for their greatest-ever attack on the city.

Violence X Profanity Sexual Content X

Title: The Kite Runner

Author: Khaled Hosseini

Publisher: Riverhead Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Khaled Hosseini's *Kite Runner* provides an educational and enlightening account of Afghanistan's political turmoil through the eyes of developing characters, in this case two growing boys, whose struggles and triumphs with which students will identify, empathize, and sympathize. We follow the growth of Amir, the wealthy son of a businessman in Kabul in the 1970's. His best friend, Hassan just so happens to be Amir's father's servant's son. At one of the few times of peace in Afghanistan, readers see a contrasting Afghanistan—one before the Taliban eventually invades.

Violence X Profanity Sexual Content

Title: The Mayor of Casterbridge

Author: Thomas Hardy

Publisher: Modern Library

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

A farm worker, in a drunken stupor, sells off his wife and child, before swearing off of alcohol and reinventing himself as a community leader. Hardy's reversal of fortune tale is also a study in flawed human nature. The author reveals how a moment's wrong decision can lead to tragic consequences.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: The Odyssey

Author: Homer Translated by Robert Fitzgerald

Publisher: Farrar, Stratus and Giroux

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

Greek mythology. Aided by Athena and thwarted by Poseidon. Odysseus faces many perils on his long journey back to his wife, Penelope, and home of Ithaca after the Trojan war.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content X

Title: The Old Man and the Sea

Author: Ernest Hemingway

Publisher: _____

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

An old man attempts to prove his worth by landing the biggest fish.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: The Plague

Author: Albert Camus

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

A bubonic plague devastates the people of a North African coastal town in a haunting tale of human resilience in the face of unrelenting horror.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: The Return of the Native

Author: Thomas Hardy

Publisher: Penguin Books

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

When a successful young man returns from Paris to the barren landscape of Egdon Heath, his presence ignites a passion for escape in the local dark-haired beauty. Clym Yeobright's return provides the catalyst for the suffering of others as several conflicts unfold. The reader is left to contemplate the mysterious forces of the human heart.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content X

Title: The Scarlet Letter

Author: Nathaniel Hawthorne

Publisher: Modern Library

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 and 10 honors (American Studies)

Plot Summary:

This emotional, psychological novel revolves around Hester Prynne, a young woman convicted of adultery in colonial Boston by the civil and Puritan authorities. She is condemned to wear the scarlet letter "A" on her chest as a permanent sign of her sin. The narrative describes the effort to resolve the torment suffered by Hester and her co-adulterer, whose name she refuses to make public, in the years after their affair. In addition to probing the inner workings of the human heart, themes of hypocrisy and revenge are presented.

Violence X

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____

Title: The Séance

Author: Joan Lowery Nixon

Publisher: Harcourt

Grade Level of Intended Use: 9

Plot Summary:

A few teenage girls decide to have a séance for fun, only it turns out to be the beginning of a mystery. Sara disappears during the séance and is found dead in the swamp the next morning. Soon, another girl disappears. Lauren is concerned that she may end up being the next victim.

Violence X

Profanity

Sexual Content

Title: The Things They Carried

Author: Tim O'Brien

Publisher: Random House

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

This novel depicts the men of Alpha Company who battle the enemy, each other and themselves as they risk their lives in American's most controversial war: Vietnam. *The Things They Carried* consists of 22 interconnected stories told by the author and studies men at war and their personal capacities and limits.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content

Title: The Turn of the Screw

Author: Henry James

Publisher: Dover

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

James' classic psychological ghost story is filled with haunting ambiguity. A young governess fears that her charges are controlled by malevolent spirits. The reader, as well as those around her, must decide if the children are really possessed or if the governess suffers from neurosis.

Violence _____ Profanity _____ Sexual Content _____

Title: The Wasp Factory

Author: Iain Banks

Publisher: Simon and Schuster

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

At once the serious examination of the nature of violence and a dark humored depiction of disturbed adolescence, this Scottish novel emerges as a social experiment. Sixteen-year-old Frank Cauldhame lives a secluded island life when his sense of the surreal is allowed to flourish in his own isolated universe.

Violence X Profanity X Sexual Content _____

Title: Things Fall Apart

Author: Chinua Achebe

Publisher: Anchor

Grade Level of Intended Use: 11 Honors (Global Studies)

Plot Summary:

Achebe portrays an honest view of Nigerian life before and after colonialism. Okonkwo, the main character, is a prosperous farmer, husband to three wives, father to children, and a local government figure. A series of unfortunate events eventually bring him to his downfall. His flaws resemble many of the same flaws which parallel to Greek tragic heroes.

Violence _____

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Until They Bring the Streetcars

Author: Stanley Gordon West

Publisher: Lexington-Marshall

Grade Level of Intended Use: 10

Plot Summary:

During the post-war era of 1949 in St. Paul, Cal Gant, a high school student, finds himself drawn into a strange and secret alliance with the haunting Gretchen Luttermann whom he meets in a seventh period study hall. His friendship with Gretchen leads him into a struggle against her brutal father. As a result, Cal makes heart-shattering choices that have profound effects on his life and the lives of others.

Violence X

Profanity X

Sexual Content _____

Title: Wuthering Heights

Author: Emily Brontë

Publisher: Penguin Group (USA)

Grade Level of Intended Use: 12

Plot Summary:

Nell Dean, nanny for several generations of a family on the 19th century English moors, tells a traveler the story of a tortured love and hate between uncivilized, violent Heathcliff and upper class, beautiful Catherine. When Heathcliff loses her, he spends the rest of his life getting revenge on her family.

Violence _____

Profanity _____

Sexual Content _____