

The Art of Choosing a Book

There are several challenges that arise when selecting literature for junior high students. Students are coming of age and it is at this juncture that adolescents begin moving toward more mature content. Young people are moving into social circles that will expose them to a myriad of issues, some wonderful, and others challenging. Literature provides them the unique opportunity to be exposed to ideas and issues without risk. As readers, students can observe the characters within these books as they struggle with the issues society presents. Young adult literature explores the dangers and wonders the world has to offer. The themes from these novels often present moral and ethical conflicts as well as their consequences. The lessons that can be garnered from these texts provide necessary information for the student as they mature and are confronted with some of the same challenges/issues in real life. This is one of the ways in which the school can help our students grapple with difficult issues and provide strategies.

We recognize that not all junior high students mature at the same rate. Some adolescents are already struggling with complex issues that others do not know exist. As a public school we have the responsibility to meet children where they are and provide literature that meets their needs, addresses their concerns, and piques their interest. Literacy teachers assist students in making the best book choice decisions.

Please know that there are two libraries available from which your child can select their independent reading books. Each serves a unique purpose. Hadley's Library Media Center houses a collection that serves three grade levels. These volumes support curricular goals, student inquiry, and foster an appreciation for literature for the general interests of 1200 students. The classroom library serves a different, yet crucial role. Classroom teachers choose and curate books for their libraries based on their knowledge of their students' interest and reading levels, taking into account their intellectual and social-emotional development. As a result, a classroom collection, by definition, would seek not to simply replicate the library's collection, but to add to the diversity of materials from which students have an option to choose.

Therefore, parents need to be aware of the book choices their children are making because ultimately it is the parents' decision as to the appropriateness of the book for their child. In order to assist you in this decision making process, the following links to book reviews are provided below:

Booklist Online	Hadley LMC: Novelist	Commensemedia
http://www.booklistonline.com/greatreads	http://web.ebscohost.com/novpk8/search?sid=a88d1971-52c4-4f18-bc09-bbd0db09781c%40sessionmgr14&vid=1&hid=9 For Novelist use the following login information: wmadley wilcats	http://www.commonsemedia.org

If you would like further information about District 41's Balanced Literacy Framework and the role of independent reading within that framework, please consult the links below.

Literacy Curriculum

http://www.d41.org/curriculum_parents_lit.htm

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