

ADOLESCENT READERS AND  
THE MAKING OF MEANING  
NCTE  
CHICAGO  
2011

[HTTP://WWW.PUBLIC.ASU.EDU/~JBLASIN/INDEX.HTM](http://www.public.asu.edu/~jblasin/index.htm)

Dr. **Stephanie Knight** has been teaching Middle School for 9 years. Currently, she is teaching 7th and 8th grade Language Arts in a private, independent school after 8 years of teaching in a Title One public school. Stephanie just completed her doctorate and is now working on applying some of the passions for writing in her classroom. Her goal is to see young minds create, innovate, and critically think as they make meaning of their own reading and writing.

**Dr. Stacy Graber** teaches English for the Tempe Union High School District and recently graduated from the Arizona State University English Education doctoral program. She writes for both scholarly and creative publications. Her research interests include the sociology of education, popular culture and semiotics.

**Melissa Williamson** is studying for a PhD in English Education from Arizona State University. She is a former high school English teacher from Virginia who takes pride in finding unconventional ways to teach reading and writing concepts. She also loves to make students read and write every day!

**Charles Aron Jones** is a student in Arizona State University's English Education doctoral program. His main research interests are visual ethnography, Young Adult literature, educational technology, and teacher development. He has experience teaching and coaching at the secondary level and hails from Austin, Texas!

**Dr. Christina Saidy** is an Assistant Professor of English Education at Arizona State University. Her research interests include Writing Theory and Pedagogy; Teacher Education; and Gender in Adolescent Literature.

**Dr. James Blasingame** is an associate professor at Arizona State University and Director of the English Education Program. He is immediate past-president of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE and former editor of *The ALAN Review*. He is editor of the Books for Adolescents section of the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, author of *Books That Don't Bore 'Em: Young Adult Books that Speak to this Generation*, and coauthor of *Literature for Today's Young Adults*

Tim San Pedro, our respondent, is a doctoral candidate at Arizona State University. Tim is a Cultivating New Voices among Scholars of Color fellow. He is doing research on socio-culturally responsive pedagogy and the first-time implementation of Indigenous curriculum among Native students in the Southwest.

Laurie Halse Anderson, winner of the Margaret Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement in Young Adult Literature suggests “If you think about Adolescence as its own unique culture, the language, music, artistic expression, you will realize that they deserve books that reflect their cultural experience and what is going on inside them. We have a grand variety of authors from Gary Soto to Walter Dean Meyers who speak to the conditions of our readers so we can finally , in America, produce a literate generation. But. We haven’t done that yet.”



Louise Rosenblatt, who first imagined a theory of reading in which readers created meaning from the intersection between their own lives and the texts they were reading, believed that students could learn to interpret literature for themselves and that it meant something different to each individual depending upon his or her life experience. And, as Robert Probst tells us, readers who reflect upon their own life experience along with the literature they read “seek to understand themselves and the world around them.”





Arthur Applebee and his research cohort tell us that an older model of literature study in which the teacher initiates questions about a reading, the students answer, and the teacher evaluates the answers based on what the teacher wants the students to say will not bring those students to the high literacy acts precipitated by inviting them to rigorously discuss their own thoughts and feelings about a text.

The premise of our study entitled Adolescent Readers and the Making of Meaning is that young readers can and do make meaning of their own reading, sometimes very profound meaning, and English language arts education would benefit from knowing more about how and under what circumstance they do this, as well as how meaning making works for individuals from different backgrounds.

To gather about adolescent readers and their meaning making, we devised a fifteen question survey and began the process for conducting the survey all over Arizona, from sovereign Indigenous nations, such as the Navajo, the Tohono O'odham, and Pima Maricopa, to urban Phoenix, to suburbs, from private to vocational schools. We have just received permission for research on the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community and those surveys are waiting to be picked up. Permission from Mesa Public Schools has been granted but individual schools have not yet agreed. The same is true of Tempe District #. Currently, we have 210 young readers' surveys, readers from 14-19 years of age, from schools of different demographics from Metro Tech, an inner city vocational high school with 98 percent Spanish spoken in the home, to Tesseract School, a privately funded highly performing K-8 school. Our survey looks like this:

This survey is intended to gather information on the reading experiences of middle and high school students. Your answers may be helpful in designing curriculum for schools. Your participation is purely voluntary.

To answer the items in this survey, please choose one book you read over the past year or two that was the most important and/or influential for you.

1. What was the title?
2. Was this required reading or a book you chose? Circle one. Required My Choice
3. As you look back on it after finishing it, what was most important to you about this book? Use the back if more room is needed.
4. What do you think (from experience or speculation) a teacher would find most important about this book? Use the back if more room is needed.
5. If you chose this book, why or how did you choose it? Use the back if more room is needed.

6. How did the experience of reading this book change you and/or the way you see the world? In order to answer, fill out this template: Before I read this book, I thought

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, but because of what I read, now I think

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Use the back if more room is needed.

7. What books do you remember being read to you as a child? What books might be found in your home?

8. What kind of music do your parents listen to? What kind of music do you like?

9. Do you play a musical instrument? What is it? Do you take lessons?

10. What are some places and events you have been to in the last year? Concerts, plays, movies, festivals, the library? Be specific and name the cultural events, if you remember.

11. To what places have you traveled in your life (inside and outside the U.S.)?

12. Do you engage in any sports? Which ones?

13. How would you describe your ethnicity/cultural heritage?

14. Your gender? Circle one.      Boy              Girl

15. Your age?

# MAKING MEANING MATTER

Young Adult Literature shapes lives

Dr. Stephanie Knight  
Tesseract School  
Paradise Valley, Arizona

# THREE OBSERVATIONS

- ◉ Both genders desire to understand their lives
- ◉ Students desire to grow their vocabulary
- ◉ Students want to see connections to other classes/areas

# GIRLS NEED ACCEPTANCE; THEY NEED TO UNDERSTAND THEIR LIVES

**The Dreamer:** by Pam Munoz Ryan

“I used to think I had to follow some unspoken code of conduct to be accepted but now I think I can be whatever I want and if people choose not to accept me, then that is their loss.”

**One for the Money:** by Janet Evanovich

“My family was extremely chaotic and it was hard to develop characters in a story. Now I see there are other people who are struggling more than my family and that there are very creative ways to improve the characters in a story. [maybe my life too]”

**Pride and Prejudice:** by Jane Austen

“Romance is stupid and gross, but now I think the genre of romance has many different levels, and can be cute and modest.”

# CONTINUED..

## **The Perks of Being a Wallflower:** by Stephen Chbosky

“I was a bit more closed-minded about everything, and now I am more open to new inspirations and thoughts.”

## **Chicken Soup for the Teen Soul**

“My life sucked because my parents didn’t let me go out, but now I think that my parents are right; I get them.”

## **Burned** by Ellen Hopkins

“Even though I am a teenager, I have different thoughts and feelings; no one understands me, but I now think people feel just like me.

## **The Uglies:** by Scott Westerfield

“I used to think changing something about yourself is fine. Now I see you should not change; what you have is fine.”

# BOYS NEED IT TOO.

**Brian's Winter** by Gary Paulsen

“Don't take anything for granted. Cherish”

**Lightning Thief:** by Rick Riordan

“I thought myths are a waste of time. Now, I see myths and legends are more interesting and have great morals. I learned how to relate to others.”

**The Alchemist:** by Paulo Coelho

“I used to not think a lot about my goals. Now I know I can achieve my goal when I'm about to do something.

**Night:** by Elie Wiesel

“I felt the cold reality of the total truths.”

“The Holocaust was horrible and now I am well aware of actions against the victims.”

“People live life like they are invincible and that they will never die or be hurt to a degree that they wished for death. I now think that everybody should live as though tomorrow does not exist and there is no tomorrow.”

# CONTINUED...

**The Glass Castle:** by Jeannette Walls

“I didn’t think it was possible that people could have such a bad childhood and yet be happy; One can overcome anything.”

**Before We Were Free:** by Julia Alvarez

“I thought all countries are like mine. Not all are like this and some are dangerous.”

**The Hunger Games:** by Suzanne Collins

“I though my life was normal and all lived like me. I now see there is a lot more to the world than my little area.”

**A Child Called It:** by David Peltzer

“How could one live in such an abusive environment? I see now that one can be brave and survive anything.”

**Stormbreaker:** by Anthony Horowitz

“Treat others with respect.”

# CONTINUED...

**When Legends Die:** by Hal Borland

“Never forget who you really are”

**The Power of One:** by Bryce Courtenay

“Many things I wanted, I will never get it. Now, I will fight for it.”

**Monster:** by Walter Dean Myers

“I thought it was gonna be wack, but now I could be the kid in the book and it changed my background. I better change my life or suffer bad consequences.

**Ender’s Game:** by Orson Scott Card

“You couldn’t figure a person out from small actions, but it could be possible.”

**Flight of Passage:** by Rinker Buck

“Boring book about airplanes? NO, the harder the circumstances, the closer you become to the people you love.”

# WORDS MATTER! [MY WRITING MATTERS]

**City of Glass:** by Paul Auster

“Helped me with my words; they can change a lot of things.”

**13 Reasons Why:** by Jay Asher

“I never have seen many words before!”

**To Kill a Mockingbird:** by Harper Lee

“Vocabulary makes me want to improve.”

**I am Legend:** by Richard Matheson

“I like repeating a word or a phrase every other sentence to show suspense or insanity.” (boy)

**Tales of The Crypt**

“Exciting words”

**Hunger Games**

Description/dialogue (boy)

# CONTINUED...

**Julius Caesar:** by William Shakespeare

“Strong and emotional words”

**Gossamer:** by Lois Lowry

“I learned how to catch one’s attention.”

**Stormbreaker**

“Vocabulary and Sentence fluency.”

**Hitler Youth:** by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

“Helped me with technique”

# MY CLASSROOM: KIDS ARE GETTING WHAT MATTERS

Choices of literature. Making connections and making it matter: History + Protagonist interaction

- ◉ Uprising
- ◉ Letters from Rifka
- ◉ Private Peaceful
- ◉ Black Duck
- ◉ A Break With Charity
- ◉ Chains

I USED TO THINK...BUT NOW I  
KNOW...

“BEING A PRETENTIOUS RECLUSE  
IS AWESOME.”

--11<sup>TH</sup> GRADER COMMENTING ON WALDEN

How “honors” and “regular” designations direct reading choices and attitudes as considered against demographic features of cultural capital.

Dr. Stacy Graber  
Desert Vista High School  
Phoenix, Arizona

# SCHOOL CULTURE

- Results reflect findings in a **suburban school** in **Phoenix, Arizona**.
- Students enjoy **myriad resources**: general integration of **technology** and **research**, an array of dynamic **extra-curricular** opportunities and **tutoring** programs.
- The majority of **staff members** hold **advanced degrees** in their subjects and they routinely attend various **staff development** activities.
- The **parent group** actively and enthusiastically **participates** in students' academic lives.

# METHODOLOGY OF INTERPRETATION

- ◉ **Qualitative** representation: **snap-shot** of the various **levels** designated by the school.
- ◉ **Landscape portrait** similar to Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.
- ◉ Bourdieu researched **everyday choices** people made as a metaphoric **index of social class** (e.g., clothing, interior design, food, movies, music, art and sports).
- ◉ Two of the **demographic questions** we included on the survey came from Bourdieu's **survey of French culture**.

# BOURDIEUIAN SURVEY QUESTIONS

- ◉ **Question 10:** What are some places and events you have been to in the last year? Concerts, plays, movies, festivals, the library? Be specific and name the **cultural events**, if you remember.
- ◉ **Question 11:** To what places have you **traveled** in your life (inside and outside of the United States)?
- ◉ I considered whether **“honors” and “regular”** designations directed **reading choices and attitudes** against demographic features of **cultural capital**.
- ◉ Word **portraits = descriptive lists**.

# BOOK SELECTION BY GRADE AND COURSE LEVEL DESIGNATION

## “Required”

○ 9 <sup>th</sup> grade regular	1
○ 9 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	4
○ 10 <sup>th</sup> grade regular	12
○ 10 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	5
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade regular	2
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	8
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade AP Language	6
○ 12 <sup>th</sup> grade Adv. Comp.	11
○ 12 <sup>th</sup> grade AP Literature	6

## “My Choice”

○ <u>9<sup>th</sup> grade regular</u>	<u>17*</u>
○ 9 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	22
○ 10 <sup>th</sup> grade regular	5
○ 10 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	5
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade regular	2
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	10
○ 11 <sup>th</sup> grade AP Language	2
○ 12 <sup>th</sup> grade Adv. Comp.	7
○ 12 <sup>th</sup> grade AP Literature	12

# 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “REGULAR”

- ◉ “Required” Books: No title.
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *The Hunger Games, The Outsiders, Impulse, Nine Stories, Breaking Dawn, Someone Like You, Twilight, The Thief Lord, Black Hawk Down, The Lightning Thief, The Last Olympian, What My Mother Doesn’t Know, The Alchemist, Brian’s Winter*
- ◉ Cultural Events: band festival, dance performance library, movies, plays, pop-cultural concert, sports event, ROTC army exercises, theater
- ◉ Travel: Cambodia, Canada, Caribbean, Central America, China, Ireland, Laos Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, US

# 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “HONORS”

- ◉ “Required” Books: *Till We Have Faces*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Night*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *Artemis Fowl*, *One For the Money*, *Jurassic Park*, *Mockingjay*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *ible*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows*, *Sam’s Letter to Jennifer*, *The Hunger Games*, *Flight of Passage*, *The Uglies*, *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, *Book Thief*, *Ender’s Game*, *The Dreamer*, *Night*
- ◉ Cultural Events: amusement park, art festival, art museum, band competition, bookstore, carnival, choir competition, cultural festival, fair, library, mission, movies, music festival, musical, plays, pop-cultural concert, professional convention, national park, sports event, symphony
- ◉ Travel: Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Holland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, US, Vietnam

# 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “REGULAR”

- ◉ “Required” Books: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 1984, *The Outsiders*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Nectar in a Sieve*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *The Last Song*, *Summer Ball*, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
- ◉ Cultural Events: botanical garden, car show, cultural festival, dance show, library, movies, music festival, musical, parade, pop-cultural concert, sports event, state fair, theater, zoo
- ◉ Travel: Canada, Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Navajo Reservation, US, Vietnam

# 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “HONORS”

- ◉ “Required” Books: *Jane Eyre*, *Les Miserables*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *The Hiding Place*, *Gone With the Wind*, *The Fountainhead*, *Anna and the French Kiss*, 1984
- ◉ Cultural Events: art festival, band concert, charity benefit, Chinatown, cultural festival, library, movies, music competition, musical, national park, play, pop-cultural concert, sports event, theater, university campus tour
- ◉ Travel: Baltic states, Bahamas, Canada, Caribbean, China, Europe, Greece, India, Japan, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, US

# 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “REGULAR”

- “Required”  
Books: *Romeo and Juliet*; *Bless Me, Ultima*
- “My Choice”  
Books: *The Last Ember*, *The Spy*
- Cultural Events:  
**horse show**, movies, rock/jazz concert
- Travel: Austria, Burma, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Laos, Mexico, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, US

# 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE “HONORS”

- ◉ “Required” Books: *A Tale of Two Cities, Les Miserables, The Secret Life of Bees, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Outsiders, Frankenstein*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *The Ultimate Gift, The Hunger Games, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows, The Last Song, Once a Runner, The Clique, 13 Reasons Why*
- ◉ Cultural Events: art museum, choir competition, cultural festival, dance show, horse show, library, mission, movies, musical, play, pop-cultural concert, sports event, theater
- ◉ Travel: Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, China, Fiji, France, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Jamaica, Mexico, Philippines, US

# 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE AP

- ◉ “Required” Books: *Les Miserables*, *Walden*, *1984*, *The Woman in White*, *A Tale of Two Cities*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *Unwind*, *Bossypants*
- ◉ Cultural Events: amusement park, art museum, bookstore, cultural festival, film festival, library, movies, multi-country concert tour, music festival, musical, national monument, national park, natural history museum, pop-cultural concert, science museum, studio tour, theater
- ◉ Travel: Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Scotland, Switzerland, US

# 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ADVANCED COMPOSITION

- ◉ “Required” Books:  
*Storming Heaven, The Great Gatsby, The Secret Life of Bees, The Catcher in the Rye, To Kill a Mockingbird*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books:  
*Redeeming Love, The Glass Castle, The Outsiders, The Lost Symbol, Weapons of Mass Destruction, The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*
- ◉ Cultural Events:  
amusement park, art museum, ballet, concert, cultural festivals, dance performance, farmer’s market, movies, library, music museum, musical, national park, open-mic night, pop-cultural concerts, religious event, Renaissance festival, science center, student government seminar, symphony, theater
- ◉ Travel: Canada, Caribbean, England, France, India, Italy,

# 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE AP LITERATURE

- ◉ “Required” Books: *The Great Gatsby*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Angela’s Ashes*, *Walden*, *The Iliad*
- ◉ “My Choice” Books: *The Accidental Asian*, *The Amber Spyglass*, *Orion You Came and You Took All My Marbles*, *The Ring of Solomon*, *From Stones to Schools*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Gone*, *Dispatches from the Edge*, *1984*, *Slaughterhouse 5*, *Hero*, *The Alchemist*
- ◉ Cultural Events: award reception, band festival, ballet, charity benefit, choir festival, church, college tour, cultural concerts, cultural festival, culinary festival, dance performance, debate tournaments, film festival, Latin competition, leadership seminar, library, movies, museum, music festival, musical, orchestra, play/theater, pop-cultural concerts, political demonstration, national park, summer seminar, symphony
- ◉ Travel: Austria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, London, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Turkey, US

# I USED TO THINK...BUT NOW I KNOW...

## 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### "Required"

#### Regular

- ◉ No response

#### Honors

- ◉ Trials make us stronger.

### "My Choice"

#### Regular

- ◉ Some people might be thieves because they have to live.

#### Honors

- ◉ If you stick through the difficult parts, you might get to read about a pliosaur ripping out a man's intestines.

## 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### "Required"

#### Regular

- ◉ Americans have it easy.

#### Honors

- ◉ It's admirable to think independently and to follow your own reasoning.

### "My Choice"

#### Regular

- ◉ The world is a truly magical place and I see its beauty in the simplest places.

#### Honors

- ◉ Karma hits everyone and you get what you deserve.

# I USED TO THINK...BUT NOW I KNOW...

## 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### "Required"

Regular

- ◉ Shakespeare's language is beautiful.

Honors

- ◉ Everyone doesn't have an equal start.

AP Language

- ◉ **Being a pretentious recluse is awesome.**

### "My Choice"

Regular

- ◉ History is complicated.

Honors

- ◉ **It's possible for society to hate itself, but there's always hope.**

AP Language

- ◉ I think of every new experience as a story.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### "Required"

Advanced Comp.

- ◉ Every place has its ugly side.

AP Literature

- ◉ **[The book] opened my eyes to the possible darkness in people.**

### "My Choice"

Advanced Comp

- ◉ Hidden messages are embedded in all literature.
- ◉ Not all gang members are heartless.

AP Literature

- ◉ There are no set rules on what makes a book.
- ◉ **My Chinese-American heritage is something to embrace.**

# FINDINGS SUMMARIZED

- ◉ Students in honors and AP designated courses noted **more and varied** kinds of **cultural capital** (experiences that would be useful for all kids).
- ◉ Some forms of experience may reflect **tastes** correlating to **socio-economic status** (e.g., state fair, car show, parade, zoo, orchestra, culinary festival, film festival, museum, theater).
- ◉ **“Required”** Reading: leitmotif = **looking outward**; **cultural reflections** (pronouns: us, you, your, we).
- ◉ **“My Choice”** Reading: leitmotif = **looking inward**; **personal epiphanies** (pronouns: I, me, my, our).

# ATHLETES AND READING

Charles Aron Jones  
Arizona State University

# PURPOSE

- Do relationships exist between athletic participation and...
  - Reading selections
    - Titles (what are they?)
    - Required vs. self-selection
  - Thoughts on reading (before & after)
  - Involvement in activities outside of school

# FOCUS & REASONING

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who engage in sports
- Reasoning:
  - 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher
  - Soccer coach
  - Athlete
  - Experiences with former students in Texas

# CURRENT SAMPLE

- 88 students total
  - 50 female
  - 38 male
- Two distinct learning communities
  - Public high school (32)
  - Charter school (56)

# ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

- Students participate in...
  - 1 sport: 37 (42%)
  - 2-3 sports: 40 (45%)
  - 4-5 sports: 9 (10%)
  - Other: 2 (2%)
    - This category consists of students who indicate they participate in sports, yet provided no further explanation.

# SPORTS INDICATED

- Soccer
- Football
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Track and Field
- Tennis
- Swimming
- Wrestling
- Lacrosse
- Cheerleading
- Dance
- Volleyball
- Softball
- Gymnastics
- Rowing
- Marching Band
- Badminton
- Running

# ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION & TITLES CHOSEN

- No titles were indicated that had an immediate connection with sports.
  - The Hunger Games was the closest selection
- 86% (76) of students selected their own book
- 14% (12) discussed a required text

# SAMPLE OF TEXTS INDICATED

- ◉ Twilight series
- ◉ The Hunger Games trilogy
- ◉ The Uglies
- ◉ Harry Potter series
- ◉ Hatchet series
- ◉ Percy Jackson series
- ◉ Ender's Game series
- ◉ Comics and Graphic Novels
- ◉ The Outsiders
- ◉ Black Hawk Down
- ◉ A Child Called "It"
- ◉ Bible
- ◉ To Kill a Mockingbird
- ◉ A Lesson Before Dying
- ◉ The Diary of Anne Frank
- ◉ Where the Red Fern Grows
- ◉ Bluford Series

# THOUGHTS ON READING BEFORE & AFTER

- Books/reading = boring
  - 21 students indicated that they believe books and reading to be boring
    - 20/21 changed their mind after reading their chosen selection
- Changes
  - 52 students describe a change in the way they act, feel, or think after reading their selected text
  - One student indicated that the selected text improved his/her writing skills
- 11 students made affirmation statements
- Three responses indicated no change in thinking after reading the text

# WHAT MATTERED MOST

- ◉ Characters
- ◉ Plot (was it interesting?)
- ◉ Lessons conveyed through text (ex Beastly)
- ◉ Seeing historical events in new ways (BHD, Hitler Youth)
- ◉ Author's craft (Ender's Game)
- ◉ Thought provoking
- ◉ Reread (What did I miss?)

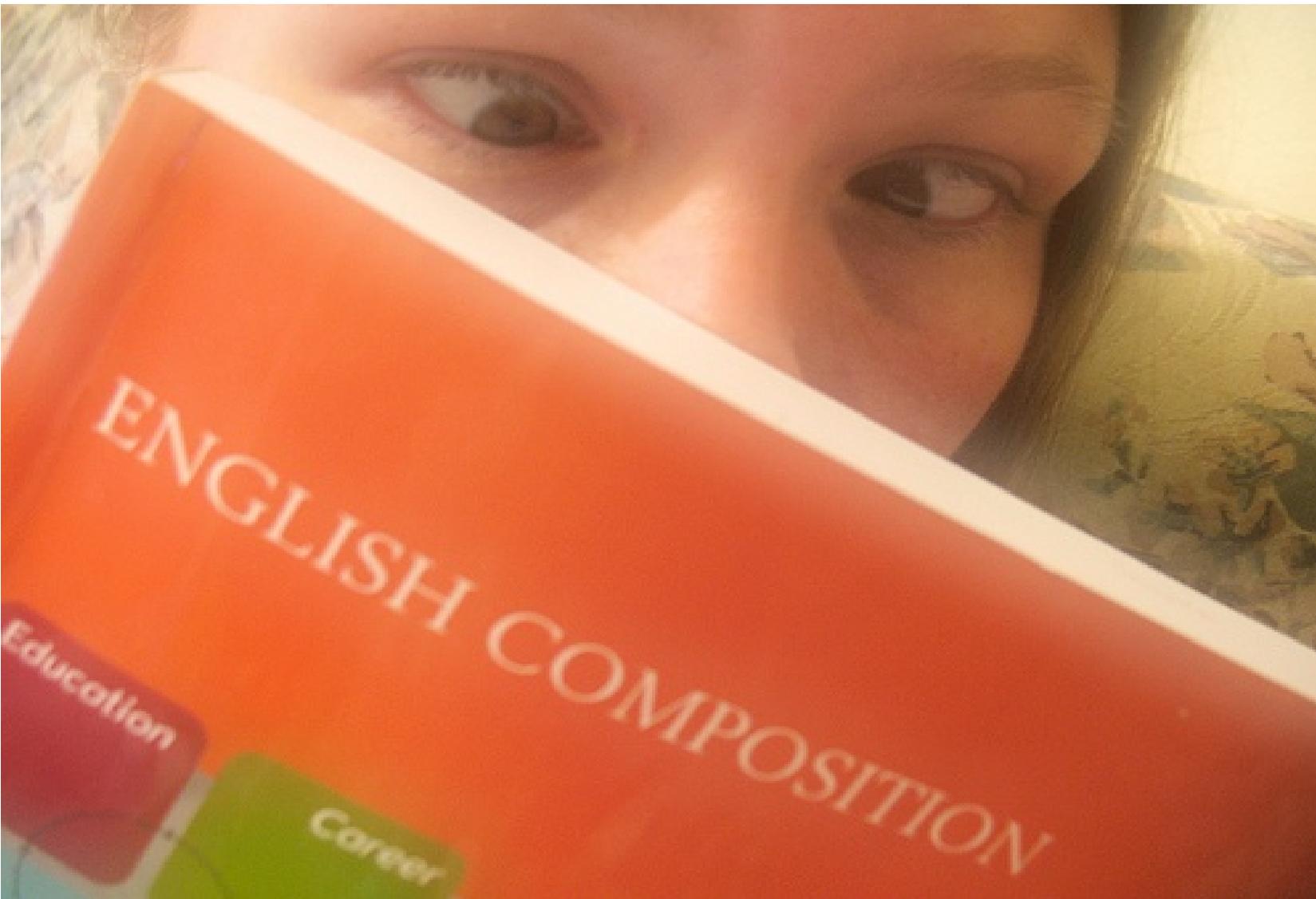
# OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES POPULAR RESPONSES

- ◉ Movies: 27
- ◉ Stage Productions: 9
- ◉ Concerts: 17
- ◉ Libraries: 9
  - One student admitted to being kicked out of a library for fighting
- ◉ Travel: 12
- ◉ Athletic Events: 4

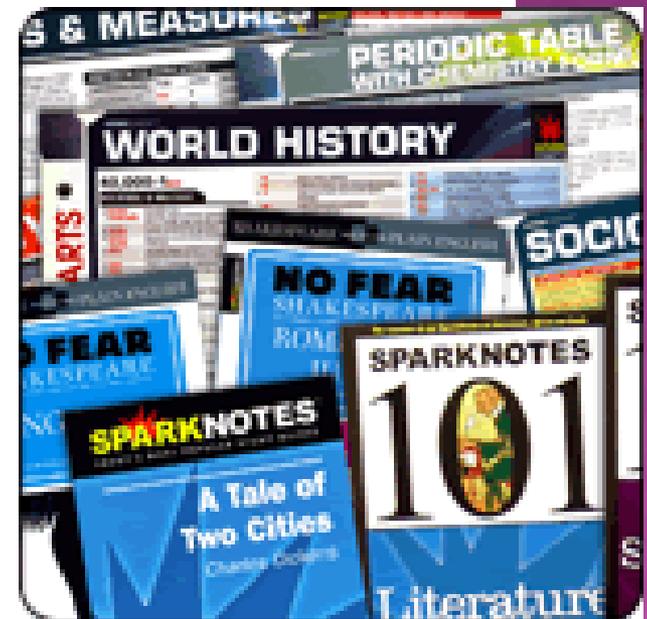
# POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS

- ◉ Students make the time to read despite busy schedules
- ◉ Students read for pleasure
- ◉ Students are interested in a wide variety of texts and genres
- ◉ Students derive meaning from the text
- ◉ Students engage in activities that may involve literacy

# MELISSA WILLIAMSON, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



- ◉ *Before I read this book, I thought "Books used to be enjoyable before required readings", but because of what I read, now I think "reading really isn't that fun."*
- ◉ Hasn't read a book in 2 years
- ◉ Uses Sparknotes
- ◉ "Students [that are] being forced to read takes enjoyment away from reading."



Roughly 17% (whoa)

expressed negativity  
or did not discuss a  
meaningful book

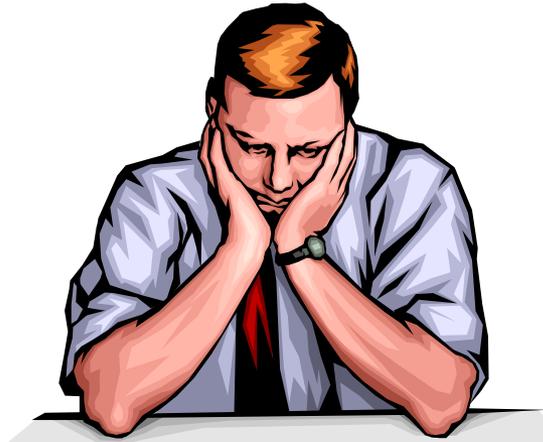
**Before I read this book, I  
thought,**

---

but because of what I read, I  
now think

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# BEFORE I READ THIS BOOK, I THOUGHT



◉ 28 - **boring** /dull

◉ 5 - waste of time

◉ 5 - long or big

◉ 4 - don't read/don't like to read

◉ 4 - bad/will "suck" /stupid/dumb

◉ 3 - not interesting or important

◉ 2 - not understand

◉ 2 - difficulties finishing book

Before I read this book, I  
thought

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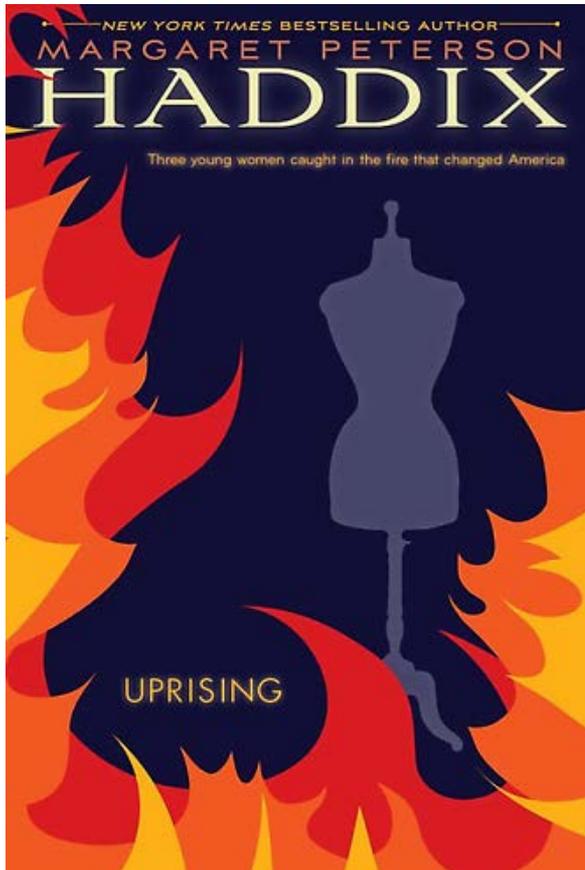
**but because of what I  
read, I now think**

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# THE BAD NEWS

- “I’m not into books”
- “It wouldn’t change my thinking”
- “I haven’t really read a serious book”
- “I don’t read, so I can’t remember [a meaningful book]”
- No changes in feelings

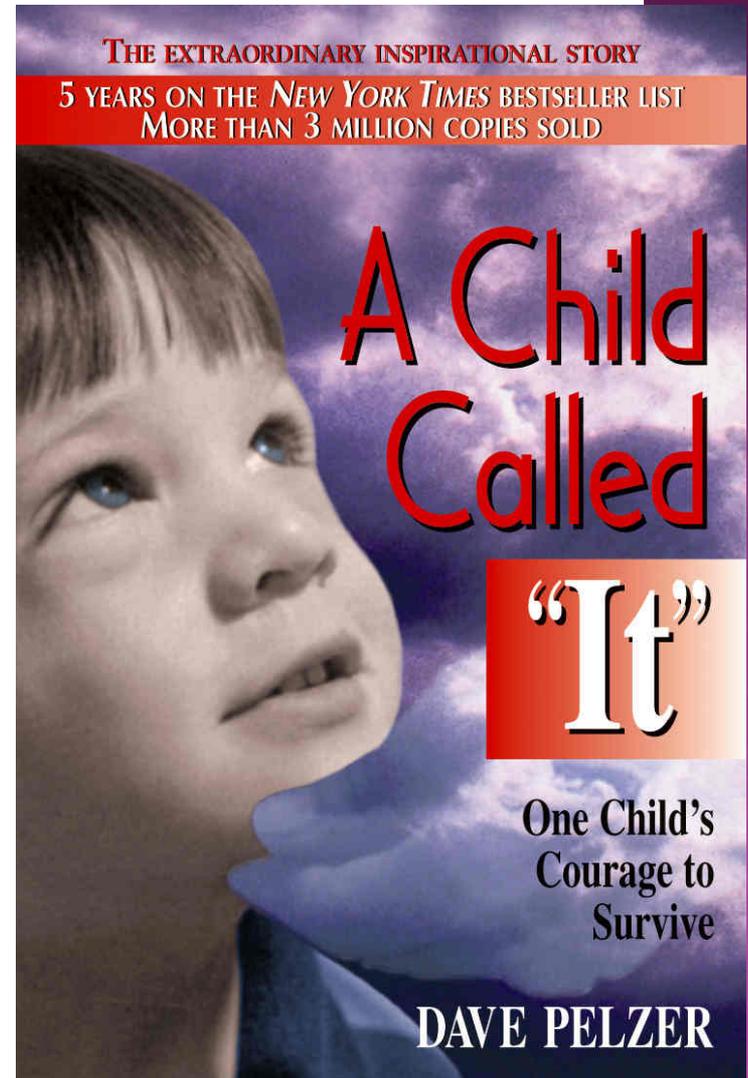
# THE BETTER NEWS



- Sorta liked it
- Some books are interesting
- Student learns more details

# THE GREAT NEWS

- ◉ Interesting
- ◉ Important
- ◉ One of the best
- ◉ Good
- ◉ Fun
- ◉ Cool
- ◉ Fantastic
- ◉ Recommend it
- ◉ Definitely worth reading
- ◉ Reading again

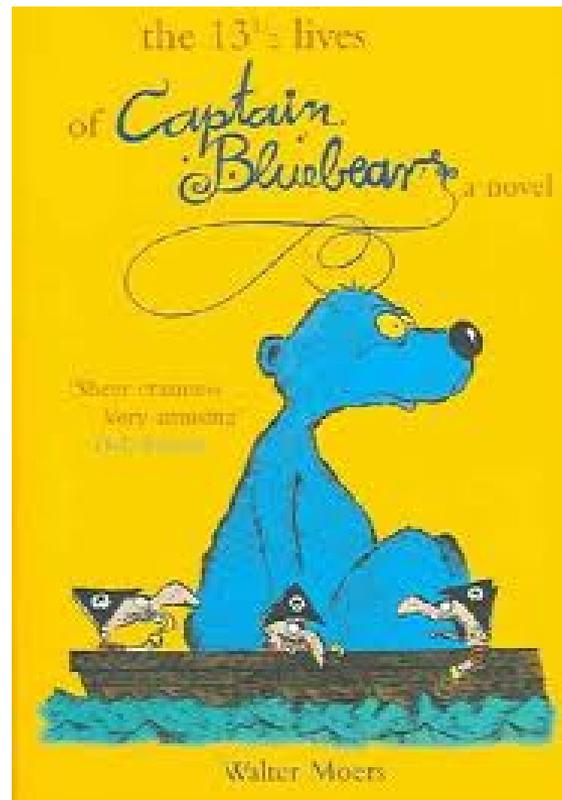


# WHAT THEY SAY

- “Classics help me understand all books better”
- “Shakespeare’s language is BEAUTIFUL!”
- “No better use of my time”
- “If you sit down and put time into reading, it's the best thing that you can do”

# WHAT YOU CAN DO!

## MAKE 'EM READ!



# GENDERED TRENDS

## DR. CHRISTINA SAIDY, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

- ◉ Less gender difference in reading choices at lower grade levels
  - *A Child Called It*
  - *The Hunger Games*
  - Middle school students reported reading more required books
- At lower grade levels responses were more textual summary, which made gender differentiation more difficult to assess.

# GENDERED TRENDS

- Books became more noticeably gendered with participants' increased ages
  - More 'girl' books in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Boys interests shift to fantasy, history, war
  - May be an exception in honors classes at the higher grade levels

# AFFIRMATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

- ◉ Girls in higher grade levels responded in more empathetic ways to texts
- ◉ Many girls' responses contained an activist element
- ◉ Older boys responded in more individualistic ways

# SHAPING IDENTITY

- Boys tried to shape the gender question
  - Man versus boy
  - Only one girl added to the question
- Girls reported reading books because they were recommended by their mothers