

# High School English Curriculum Resources

## We believe...



### Core Belief #1

Every student is uniquely capable and deserves to be challenged and engaged in relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning each day.

### Core Belief #2

Every student is expected to learn, grow, and succeed while we will eliminate the ability to predict achievement based on socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

### Core Belief #3

Well-supported, highly effective, and dedicated principals, teachers, and staff are essential to success for all students.

## Our vision is ...

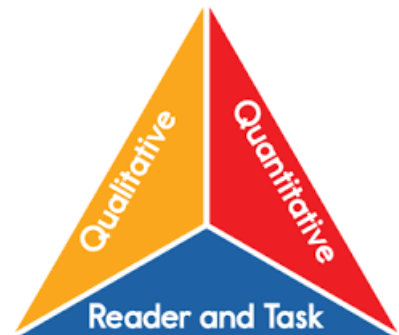
To provide WCPSS high school English teachers with a **rigorous, standards-based curriculum that values text complexity and culturally responsive instruction** as a means of engaging with and promoting college & career **readiness for all students**.



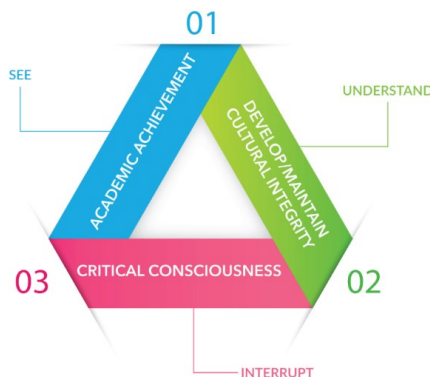
## We value...

One of the most important elements of an effective ELA classroom is the use of high quality, complex texts. Teachers should evaluate texts to determine if a text is appropriately complex for that grade level and/or time of year. Text complexity consists of three measures: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Reader and Task. All three measures should be taken into consideration when selecting texts for classroom use. By the end of high school, students should experience a staircase of increasingly complex texts, so they are able to independently and proficiently read and be prepared for careers and/or college. These complex texts should also be rich and worthy of students' time and attention.

## Text Complexity



## Cultural Responsiveness



Diverse text selection is critical to both literacy instruction and student engagement. In the 21st century ELA classroom, texts should be selected not only for their complexity, but also for the diversity and representation that are inherently part of them. Over the course of their English studies, students should be exposed to divergent cultures and diverse experiences found within the written word. This inclusion of all voices will allow students to explore other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading works of literature and nonfiction and informational texts representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

WHAT  
STARTS HERE  
CHANGES EVERYTHING.

*Our core resources are...*



## WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



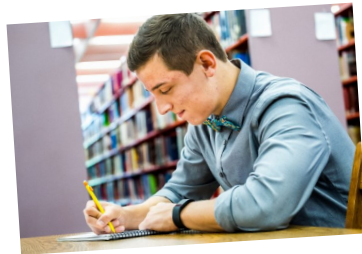
### Curriculum Framework

Vertically aligned common thematic units, grouped standards progression, grade-specific focus with essential questions & understandings of the human condition.



### Anchor Texts

Whole-class readings that address need for grade-level complexity and cultural responsiveness. Students build knowledge through exposure to diverse authors, perspectives, time periods, and genres. 3 common titles and one literature circle provided.



### Course Curriculum housed on Learning Central:

Backwards designed units provided for teachers with standards-aligned understandings, authentic mid and end-unit assessments, targeted learning experiences, and multi-genre text set.

## *Our Commitment:*

In order to help fulfill the educational goals and objectives of the school system, the Wake County Board of Education strives to provide instructional materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and enhance student learning. Instructional materials should be representative of the rich diversity of our nation, respect the legitimacy of different cultures, and empower students to value diverse perspectives. Instructional materials should also be appropriate for the maturity levels and abilities of the students, and address a spectrum of learning styles.

WCPSS School Board Policy 3200: Selection of Instructional Materials

## *Valuing the talent of our teachers & diverse needs of our students:*

High School English curriculum resources provide clear standards for all WCPSS teachers, but do not limit their instructional practices or choice of supplemental materials (including additional texts) appropriate to engage with their specific students.

High School English curriculum resources provide common anchor texts for all students to ensure equity, and a common foundation of learning, but do not limit student choice of independent or supplemental reading.

High School English curriculum resources provide standards-aligned text sets and assessments connected to the WCPSS HS ELA Framework, but do not limit teachers' ability to add, scaffold, refine, or enhance the materials in order to meet their students' needs.





<b>Home &amp; Family</b>	What connections exist between home and family?	To what extent are conceptions of family dependent on hereditary connections versus emotional ones?	How has the family unit and home life been shaped by prevailing institutions?	How does my understanding of home affect my perceptions / actions toward others?
	What defines a home? What influences how we define a home?	In what ways can home be a nostalgic connection to one's past and new spaces we create for ourselves in the present?	How has the American family and its home life changed throughout history?	How does my experience with family develop my perception of what family looks like for others and shape our sense of self?
	How does the concept of home differ from a structure?	How are ideas of home and family both biological and sociological?	To what extent have legal decisions defined home and family?	How can home and family provide psychological stability/instability for an individual?
	What defines a family? What influences how we define a family?		How have the ideals and realities surrounding family life changed? What tensions have existed between the societal ideals and actual realities?	
<b>Identity &amp; Culture</b>	How are ideas of home and family both biological and psychological?			
	How does an individual's culture shape his or her identity? Who am I versus who everyone else thinks I am?	How much of one's identity is the result of cultural understandings versus individual choices?	How have prevailing institutions influenced cultural identity through systemic practices?	To what extent does power or the lack of power affect individuals?
	What defines an individual's culture?	How is identity both personal and communal?	To what extent has historical law affected identity?	How does a person's identity in a privileged position negatively or positively affect those without that status?
	How do cultural stereotypes impact personal identity?	What is the appropriate tension between assimilation and abandonment of one's culture in times of change?	How have historical eras affected the cultures born in them?	How do the understandings I have of my identity have an impact on the cultures to which I belong?
<b>Conformity &amp; Rebellion</b>	How does one gain a sense of self identity and community identity?	How do understandings of cultural pasts influence personal values and the choices we make in the present?	How have generational experiences affected American systems?	When a person's individual choices are in direct conflict with his/her society, what are the consequences?
	What factors influence whether individuals conform or rebel? (lead students toward types of survival)	How can conformity and rebellion be forces of survival for both the self and the group?	To what extent do legal systems inspire and inhibit rebellion?	How does conformity/rebellion cause global consequences?
	What are conformity / rebellion?	Are conformity and rebellion catalysts for change or conduits for complacency?	How have societal institutions changed through rebellion?	How does fear contribute to the natural instinct to want to conform?
	In what circumstances are conformity / rebellion advisable or not advisable?		To what extent has conformity been a necessary function of society?	How does human society thrive with both conformists and rebels?
<b>Tradition &amp; Progress</b>	How does an individual's identity determine whether a person conforms or rebels?			
	How are tradition and progress interconnected?	In what ways should tradition balance the needs of the past with the realities of the present?	How have conventional practices influenced legal systems?	How have advances or changes the modern world affected the human psyche?
	What is tradition? What are the benefits and drawbacks of tradition? How do traditions influence whom individuals become?	How can we progress and change while still having respect for custom and convention?	In what ways have societal institutions acted as arbiters of societal progress?	What role does tradition play in the development of social norms such as technology, family, morals?
	What is progress? What are the benefits and drawbacks of progress? How does progress influence whom individuals become?		To what extent do historical experiences influence tradition and progress?	How does an individual reconcile a personal sense of morality and tradition with progression?
			How do ideas of tradition and progress differ among society's individuals?	

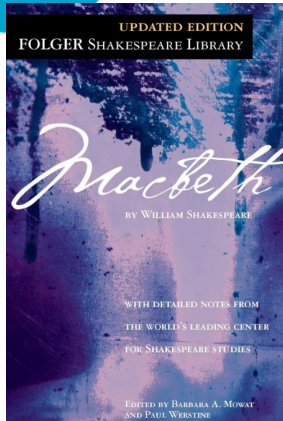
<b>Home &amp; Family</b>	Reading Standards: 1, 2, 4 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Of Mice and Men</i> , John Steinbeck  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 1, 2, 4 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>The Kite Runner</i> , Khaled Hosseini  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 1, 2, 4 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Being Mortal</i> , Atul Gawande  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 1, 2, 4 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Little Fires Everywhere</i> , Celest Ng  Building Knowledge:
	Reading Standards: 3, 6, 7 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>The Marrow Thieves</i> , Cherie Dimaline  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 3, 6, 7 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Literature Circle: <i>Born a Crime</i> , Trevor Noah; <i>A Long Way Gone</i> , Ishmael Beah; <i>The Joy Luck Club</i> , Amy Tan  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 3, 6, 7 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Zora Neale Hurston  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 3, 6, 7 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Literature Circle: <i>The Color Purple</i> ; <i>Small Great Things</i> , Jodi Picoult; <i>The Namesake</i> , Jhumpa Lahari  Building Knowledge:
	Reading Standards: 5, 9 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Macbeth</i> , William Shakespeare  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 5, 9 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Night</i> , Elie Wiesel  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 5, 9 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>House Built on Ashes</i> , Jose Antonio Rodriguez  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 5, 9 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards: Central Text: <i>1984</i> , George Orwell  Building Knowledge:
	Reading Standards: 4, 5, 8 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Literature Circle: <i>Swing</i> , Kwame Alexander; <i>The Hate U Give</i> , Angie Thomas; <i>The Other Wes Moore</i> , Wes Moore  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 4, 5, 8 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>Purple Hibiscus</i> , Chimimanda Adichie  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 4, 5, 8 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Literature Circle: <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , F Scott Fitzgerald; <i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls; <i>Nickel and Dime</i> , Barbara Ehrenreich  Building Knowledge:	Reading Standards: 4, 5, 8 Writing Standards: Speaking & Listening Standards:  Central Text: <i>The White Tiger</i> , Aravind Adiga  Building Knowledge:

**A Note on Texts:** Each course consists of four units per grade level, with an anchor text assigned to each unit. An **anchor text** is the central work of literature or nonfiction that students are collectively reading as an entry point for discussing the unit's universal theme, standards, and essential understandings. These texts were selected for their grade level complexity and rigor, as well as the diverse perspectives and literary merit they represent. In order to value student voice and choice, one unit per course is a **literature circle** where students get to select one of three texts to discuss that unit's desired focus and outcomes. In addition to the anchor text, the curriculum is also accompanied by a **multi genre text set**. This consists of shorter works, — such as poems, short stories, articles, and other works of non-fiction — that allow students to explore and reflect on different angles/perspectives of the unit's theme. This variety of texts per unit allows students a volume of reading that assists in building important world knowledge and acquiring additional vocabulary

**A Note on Tasks:** Curriculum for each course includes eight assessments: **one mid and end of unit assessment per unit**. During a student's experience in a course, they will be assessed in authentic, transferable, and diverse ways in order to measure their understanding of the standards and share their thoughts on the essential questions provided by the framework. Student products will range in type, but will consist of the following requirements: argument, narrative, and informative writing; research; seminars; digital media presentations and publications; and performance-based tasks that reflect 21st century skills.



# English I The Personal Lens



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Macbeth*

William Shakespeare

In 1603, James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne, becoming James I of England. London was alive with an interest in all things Scottish, and Shakespeare turned to Scottish history for material. He found a spectacle of violence and stories of traitors advised by witches and wizards, echoing James's belief in a connection between treason and witchcraft.

In depicting a man who murders to become king, *Macbeth* teases us with huge questions. Is Macbeth tempted by fate, or by his or his wife's ambition? Why does their success turn to ashes?

Like other plays, *Macbeth* speaks to each generation. Its story was once seen as that of a hero who commits an evil act and pays an enormous price. Recently, it has been applied to nations that overreach themselves and to modern alienation. The line is blurred between Macbeth's evil and his opponents' good, and there are new attitudes toward both witchcraft and gender.

[Why should you read "Macbeth"? — TedEd](#)

## *The Marrow Thieves*

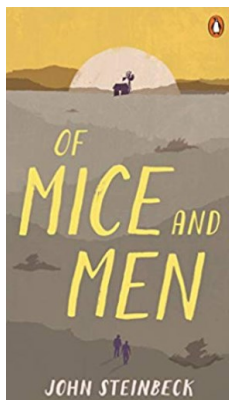
Cherie Dimaline

Humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream. In this dark world, Frenchie and his companions struggle to survive as they make their way up north to the old lands. For now, survival means staying hidden—but what they don't know is that one of them holds the secret to defeating the marrow thieves.

[Winner of Canada Reads 2018 — CBC Books](#)



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## *Of Mice and Men*

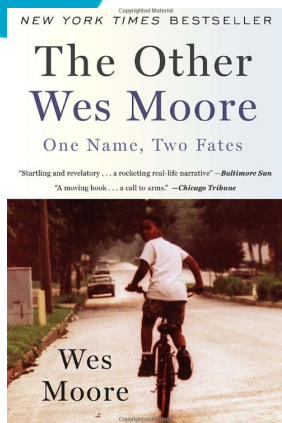
John Steinbeck

His classic novel tells the tale of an unusual friendship between two very different men: the mentally challenged and sometimes violent Lennie, and his loyal yet reluctant caretaker George. Finding comfort in one another's company, George and Lennie travel from farm to farm looking for work in pre-Depression Salinas Valley, California.

While the powerlessness of the laboring class is a recurring theme in this classic work, Steinbeck narrows his focus, creating an intimate portrait of two men facing a world marked by petty tyranny, misunderstanding, jealousy, and callousness, and a parable about commitment, loneliness, hope, and loss.

[Who, what, why: Why do children study Of Mice and Men? — BBC News](#)

# English I Literature Circle



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *The Other Wes Moore*

Wes Moore

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

[College Common Reads: Learning From 'Wes Moore'](#) — NPR

## *The Hate U Give*

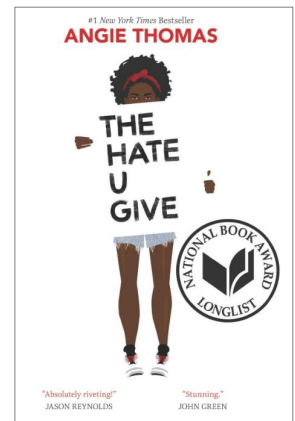
Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

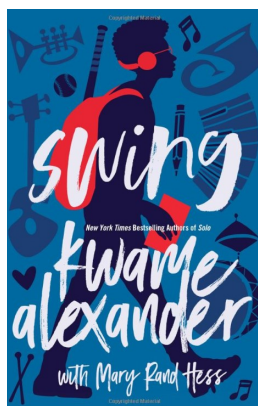
[Teachers and Students Across the Country Are Falling in Love with \*The Hate U Give\*](#) —Donors Choose



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Swing*

Kwame Alexander



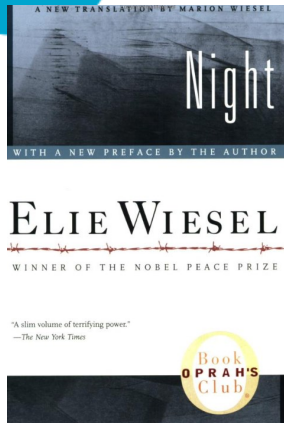
[Text Vetting Tool](#)

Seventeen-year-old Noah Wallace is not having any luck. He got cut from the baseball team, again. His secret crush on Samantha Worthington is unrequited. She is dating an oafish baseball rival. Noah's best friend, charismatic Walt Disney "Swing" Jones, has plans for them to get back onto the team and become the kings of cool. Noah gets his inspiration to woo Sam from love letters written during the 1960s, which he finds at a thrift store. The love letters and Swing's vast love for jazz music motivate Noah to repurpose the letters and make them his own. Swing has issues with his future stepfather, meets and falls for slightly older thrift store employee Divya, and awaits the return of his older brother, Moses, from military action in Afghanistan. Noah and Swing's party, an American flag mystery, and Moses's return significantly alter their lives forever.

Alexander and Hess strike gold with this fun, witty, and intellectual YA novel. It is a free verse poetic narrative fused with collage art and manga influences. Noah's dialogue differs from the italicized dialogue of the other characters. Readers will fall in love with scene-stealer Swing. Jazz music fans will enjoy this focus and its intersections with art, history, baseball, and literature.

[Q&A with Kwame Alexander & Mary Rand Hess: SWING](#) — DiverseBooks.org

# English II The Global Lens



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Night* Elie Wiesel

**N**ight is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of *Night* and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man.

*Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

[Eye-Witness and Messenger](#) — Nobel Peace Prize, 1986

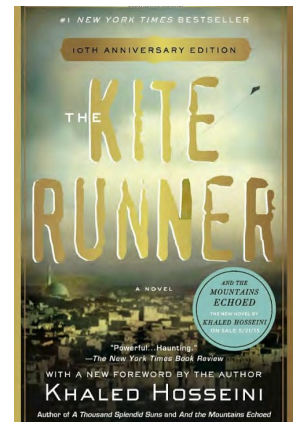
## *The Kite Runner*

Khaled Hosseini

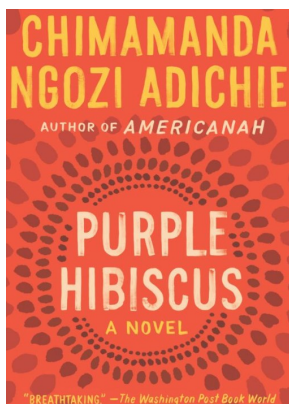
**T**he unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

Since its publication in 2003, *The Kite Runner* has become a beloved, one-of-a-kind classic of contemporary literature, touching millions of readers, and launching the career of one of America's most treasured writers.

[The Servant](#) — review, The New York Times



[Text Vetting Tool](#)



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Purple Hibiscus*

Chimimanda Adichie

**F**ifteen-year-old Kambili and her older brother Jaja lead a privileged life in Enugu, Nigeria. They live in a beautiful house, with a caring family, and attend an exclusive missionary school. They're completely shielded from the troubles of the world. Yet, as Kambili reveals in her tender-voiced account, things are less perfect than they appear. Although her Papa is generous and well respected, he is fanatically religious and tyrannical at home—a home that is silent and suffocating. As the country begins to fall apart under a military coup, Kambili and Jaja are sent to their aunt, a university professor outside the city, where they discover a life beyond the confines of their father's authority. Books cram the shelves, curry and nutmeg permeate the air, and their cousins' laughter rings throughout the house. When they return home, tensions within the family escalate, and Kambili must find the strength to keep her loved ones together. *Purple Hibiscus* is an exquisite novel about the emotional turmoil of adolescence, the powerful bonds of family, and the bright promise of freedom.

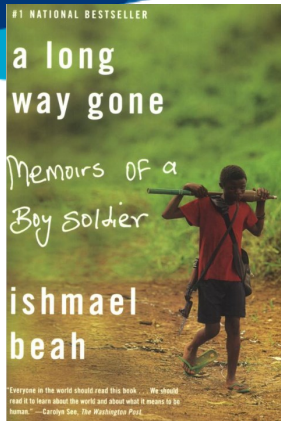
[A Moveable Feast](#) — review, The Washington Post



# English II Literature Circle

## *A Long Way Gone*

Ishmael Beah



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them.

What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived.

In *A Long Way Gone*, Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he'd been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts.

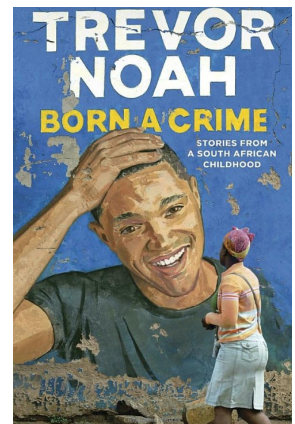
["War-torn childhood 'A Long Way Gone,' but not forgotten" — USA Today](#)

## *Born a Crime*

Trevor Noah

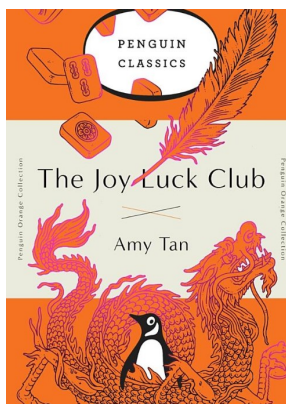
Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

*Born a Crime* is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

[Trevor Noah on taking 'Born a Crime' from the page to students' ears](#)— CBS This Morning



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

Four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money. "To despair was to wish back for something already lost. Or to prolong what was already unbearable." Forty years later the stories and history continue.

With wit and sensitivity, Amy Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender, and always deep connection between mothers and daughters. As each woman reveals her secrets, trying to unravel the truth about her life, the strings become more tangled, more entwined. Mothers boast or despair over daughters, and daughters roll their eyes even as they feel the inextricable tightening of their matriarchal ties. Tan is an astute storyteller, enticing readers to immerse themselves into these lives of complexity and mystery.

[John Mullan on The Joy Luck Club](#) — The Guardian book club

## *Joy Luck Club*

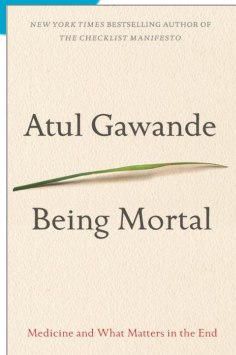
Amy Tan



# English III The Institutional Lens

## *Being Mortal*

Atul Gawande



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**M**edicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming the dangers of childbirth, injury, and disease from harrowing to manageable. But when it comes to the inescapable realities of aging and death, what medicine can do often runs counter to what it should.

Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced. Nursing homes, devoted above all to safety, battle with residents over the food they are allowed to eat and the choices they are allowed to make. Doctors, uncomfortable discussing patients' anxieties about death, fall back on false hopes and treatments that are actually shortening lives instead of improving them.

In his bestselling books, Atul Gawande, a practicing surgeon, has fearlessly revealed the struggles of his profession. Now he examines its ultimate limitations and failures—in his own practices as well as others'—as life draws to a close. Riveting, honest, and humane, *Being Mortal* shows how the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life—all the way to the very end.

[A Book About Dying Tells You How to Live](#)—*TIME*

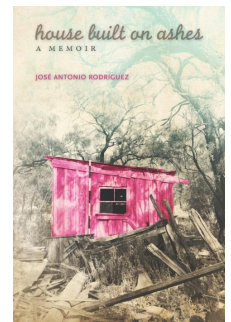
## *House Built on Ashes*

Jose Antonio Rodriguez

**T**he year is 2009, and José Antonio Rodríguez, a doctoral student at Binghamton University in upstate New York, is packing his suitcase, getting ready to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with his parents in South Texas. He soon learns from his father that a drug cartel has overtaken the Mexican border village where he was born. Now, because of the violence there, he won't be able to visit his early-childhood home. Instead, his memories will have to take him back.

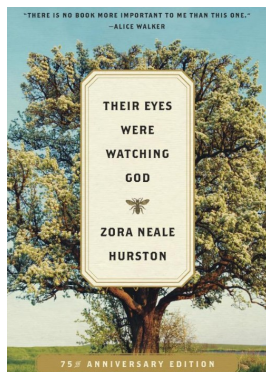
Thus, Rodríguez begins a meditative journey into the past. Through a series of vignettes, he mines the details of a childhood and adolescence fraught with deprivation but offset by moments of tenderness and beauty...

Poignant and lyrical, *House Built on Ashes* contemplates the promises, limitations, and contradictions of the American Dream. Even as it tells a deeply personal story, it evokes larger political, cultural, and social realities. It speaks to what America is and what it is not. It speaks to a world of hunger, prejudice, and far too many boundaries. But it speaks, as well, to the redemptive power of beauty and its life-sustaining gift of hope.



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

[“There is no doubt that \*House Built on Ashes\* by José Antonio Rodríguez is an important story.”](#) — *New Pages*



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Zora Neale Hurston

**O**ne of the most important works of twentieth-century American literature, Zora Neale Hurston's beloved 1937 classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty, and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, fiercely independent Janie Crawford, and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials, and purpose. A true literary wonder, Hurston's masterwork remains as relevant and affecting today as when it was first published—perhaps the most widely read and highly regarded novel in the entire canon of African American literature.

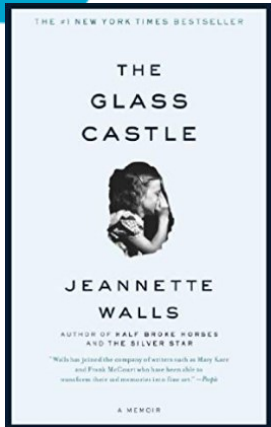
[‘Their Eyes Were Watching God’ is the under-discussed classic everyone should be reading](#)

— *The Mashable podcast*

# English III Literature Circle

## *The Glass Castle*

Jeannette Walls



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**T**he *Glass Castle* is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette's brilliant and charismatic father captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want the responsibility of raising a family.

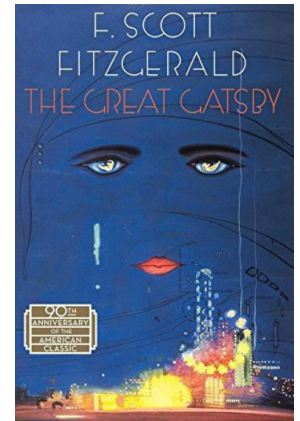
The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered.

*The Glass Castle* is truly astonishing—a memoir permeated by the intense love of a peculiar but loyal family.

[Jeannette Walls lets go of her shame](#)— *The Oprah Show*

## *The Great Gatsby*

F Scott Fitzgerald



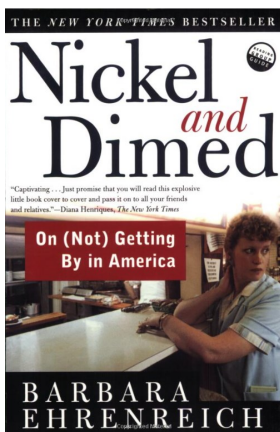
[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**T**he *Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when The New York Times noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s.

[The Great American Read: The Great Gatsby](#) —PBS

## *Nickel and Dimed*

Barbara Ehrenreich



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**M**illions of Americans work full time, year round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that a job -- any job -- can be the ticket to a better life. But how does anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted whatever jobs she was offered. Moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, she worked as a waitress, a hotel maid, a cleaning woman, a nursing-home aide, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk. She lived in trailer parks and crumbling residential motels. Very quickly, she discovered that no job is truly "unskilled," that even the lowliest occupations require exhausting mental and muscular effort. She also learned that one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors.

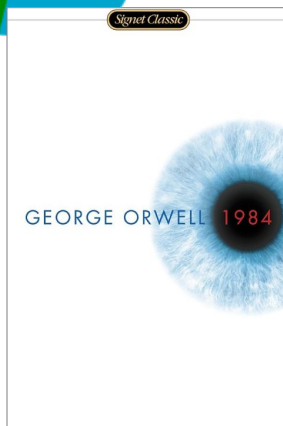
*Nickel and Dimed* reveals low-rent America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and surprising generosity -- a land of Big Boxes, fast food, and a thousand desperate stratagems for survival. Read it for the smoldering clarity of Ehrenreich's perspective and for a rare view of how "prosperity" looks from the bottom. You will never see anything -- from a motel bathroom to a restaurant meal -- in quite the same way again.

[Still Nickel & Dimed a decade later](#)— *The New Yorker*

# English IV The Psychological Lens

1984

George Orwell



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

Written in 1948, *1984* was George Orwell's chilling prophecy about the future. And while 1984 has come and gone, his dystopian vision of a government that will do anything to control the narrative is timelier than ever...

Winston Smith toes the Party line, rewriting history to satisfy the demands of the Ministry of Truth. With each lie he writes, Winston grows to hate the Party that seeks power for its own sake and persecutes those who dare to commit thoughtcrimes. But as he starts to think for himself, Winston can't escape the fact that Big Brother is always watching...

A startling and haunting vision of the world, *1984* is so powerful that it is completely convincing from start to finish. No one can deny the influence of this novel, its hold on the imaginations of multiple generations of readers, or the resiliency of its admonitions—a legacy that seems only to grow with the passage of time.

[Why 1984 is a 2017 Must-read](#)— *The New York Times*

## Little Fires Everywhere

Celeste Ng

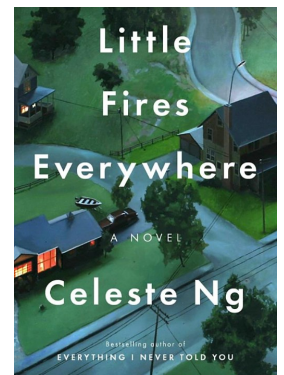
In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is planned – from the layout of the winding roads, to the colors of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules.

Enter Mia Warren – an enigmatic artist and single mother – who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenaged daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the status quo that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community.

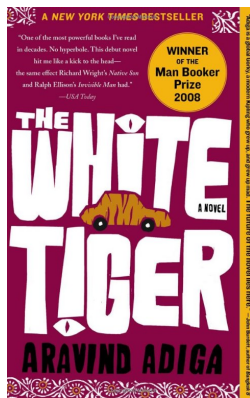
When old family friends of the Richardsons attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town—and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at unexpected and devastating costs.

*Little Fires Everywhere* explores the weight of secrets, the nature of art and identity, and the ferocious pull of motherhood – and the danger of believing that following the rules can avert disaster.

[On Little Fires Everywhere](#)— *Kenyon Review*



[Text Vetting Tool](#)



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

A stunning literary debut critics have likened to Richard Wright's *Native Son*, *The White Tiger* follows a darkly comic Bangalore driver through the poverty and corruption of modern India's caste society. "This is the authentic voice of the Third World, like you've never heard it before" (John Burdett, *Bangkok 8*).

The white tiger of this novel is Balram Halwai, a poor Indian villager whose great ambition leads him to the zenith of Indian business culture, the world of the Bangalore entrepreneur. On the occasion of the president of China's impending trip to Bangalore, Balram writes a letter to him describing his transformation and his experience as driver and servant to a wealthy Indian family, which he thinks exemplifies the contradictions and complications of Indian society.

[On The White Tiger](#)— *Man Booker Prize*

## The White Tiger

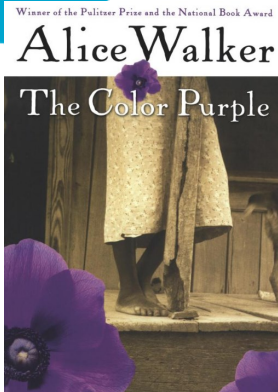
Aravind Adiga



# English IV Literature Circle

## *The Color Purple*

Alice Walker



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**P**ublished to unprecedented acclaim, *The Color Purple* established Alice Walker as a major voice in modern fiction. This is the story of two sisters—one a missionary in Africa and the other a child wife living in the South—who sustain their loyalty to and trust in each other across time, distance, and silence. Beautifully imagined and deeply compassionate, this classic novel of American literature is rich with passion, pain, inspiration, and an indomitable love of life.

[Rationale on Teaching The Color Purple](#)— *National Council for Teachers of English*

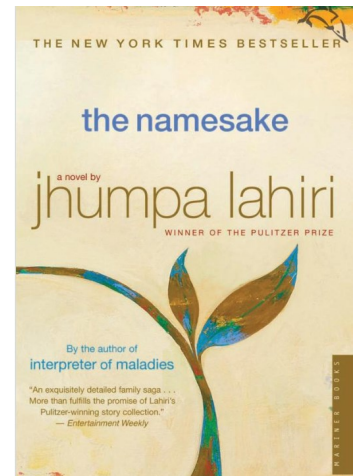
## *The Namesake*

Jhumpa Lahiri

**M**eet the Ganguli family, new arrivals from Calcutta, trying their best to become Americans even as they pine for home. The name they bestow on their firstborn, Gogol, betrays all the conflicts of honoring tradition in a new world—conflicts that will haunt Gogol on his own winding path through divided loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs.

In *The Namesake*, the Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri brilliantly illuminates the immigrant experience and the tangled ties between generations.

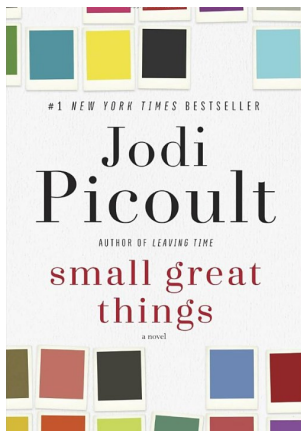
[NEA Big Read: The Namesake](#)— *National Endowment for the Arts*



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

## *Small Great Things*

Jodi Picoult



[Text Vetting Tool](#)

**R**uth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than twenty years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family—especially her teenage son—as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others—and themselves—might be wrong.

With incredible empathy, intelligence, and candor, Jodi Picoult tackles race, privilege, prejudice, justice, and compassion—and doesn't offer easy answers. *Small Great Things* is a remarkable achievement from a writer at the top of her game.

[Let's Talk About Race: Jodi Picoult's Small Great Things](#)— *The Educator's Room*