

Curriculum & Student Development Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 4, 2025 5:30 PM

Town Campus Hammonasset Room/Zoom, 10 Campus Drive , Madison, CT 06443

I. **ELA: Grade 9, Unit 3 Overview**

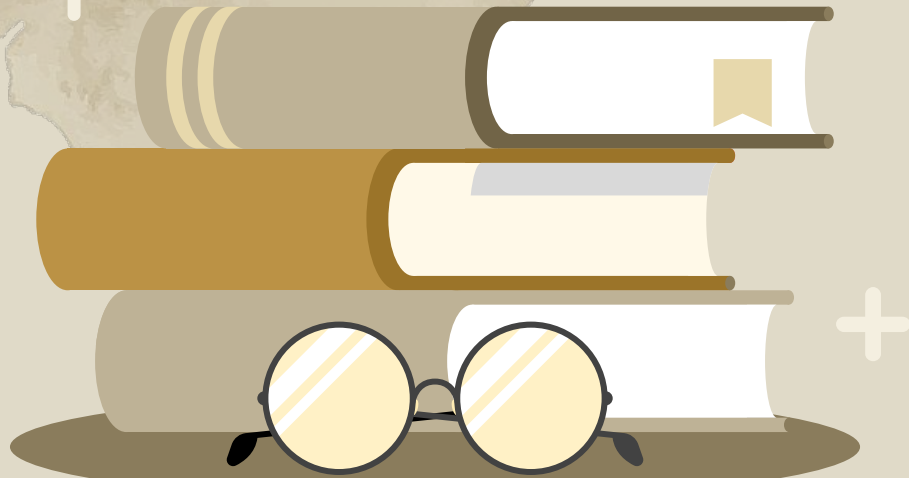
II. **Virtual Reality Learning Experience
Presentation**

III. **Public Comment**

IV. **The Town of Madison does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and the meeting facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals who need assistance are invited to make their needs known by contacting the Town ADA/Human Resources Director, Debra Ferrante, at 203-245-6310 or by email at ferranted@madisonct.org at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.**

DHHS English Grade 9, Unit 3

BOE Curriculum
Subcommittee Update



Purpose of Book Clubs



01.

Provide Choice

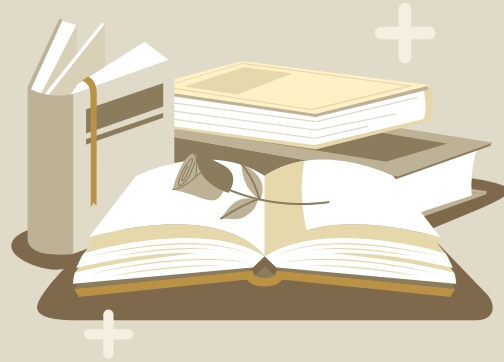
Book club units provide students with a variety of choice. Due to the nature of the selection process, students are not forced into books; students often get their first or second choice.



03.

Indicates Transfer / Guided Practice

Book clubs often take place after a core novel, a process that follows a gradual release model. Teachers provide direct instruction related to skills in a core text, and students work together to practice those skills during a book club unit.



04.

Moves Beyond Canon

Book club often rely on high-interest, YA titles, which allows our curriculum to provide access to both classic and contemporary texts.

02.

Support Growing Independence

Book clubs rely on student independence and collaboration. They must determine roles, goals, and often encounter issues that require problem-solving (all POG-worthy traits!).



05.

Develops Inquiry Skills

Book clubs require students to navigate a text based on what they deem to be important. While teachers act as “guides by the side,” student inquiry furthers the development of skills and analysis.



Original Unit Overview

Students will be immersed in book clubs. Titles include, but are not limited to, *All American Boys*, *The Hate U Give*, *Wolf Hollow*, *Speak*, *The Lovely Bones*, *Monster*, *everyday*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*, etc. Students will independently apply the skills taught in the core text to their book club book while having rich discussions. The teacher will facilitate these discussions and meet with small groups/clubs that need support with previously taught skills and strategies. Throughout the book club experience, groups will gather evidence to support their thinking about theme as they will ultimately craft a formal theme essay to present their analysis.

Portrait of a Graduate: Analyzing, Collective Intelligence



Proposed/Updated Overview

*Students will be immersed in book clubs, all of which fall into three distinct categories. The first category, “Thematically Relevant,” includes titles with similar structures, characters, and themes that students could identify and explore in the core novel, *Just Mercy*. The second category provides options for students who want to hone their craft when analyzing themes. The final category includes a list of options for students who might want something that speaks more to their daily lives: “Life of a Teen.” These titles include characters who are similar in age to our freshmen students and might be dealing with similar situations. As such, these titles help our students feel understood and seen. Titles can be seen broken down in this chart (seen below). This list is not limited to the options below, as teachers are always searching for new and exciting reads to add to our extensive collection.*

Students will independently apply the skills taught in the core text to their book club book while having rich discussions. The teacher will facilitate these discussions and meet with small groups/clubs that need support with previously taught skills and strategies. Throughout the book club experience, groups will gather evidence to support their thinking about theme as they will ultimately craft a formal theme essay to present their analysis.

As a final note, all titles are vetted through research (which includes consideration from other districts), professional resources (such as the LMC and professional academic reviews), student choice and feedback, and experience (before providing a text as an option, members of the department read the entirety of the text).

Proposed/Updated Options

	Thematically Relevant	Great for Tracking Theme	Life of a Teen
Challenge (Honors-bound)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee (12+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lord of the Flies</i> by William Golding (12+) • <i>Catch-22</i> by (N/A) • <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck (13+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Breakfast with Buddha</i> by Roland Merullo (N/A)
On Grade Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All American Boys</i> by J. Reynolds and B. Kiely (12+) • <i>The Hate U Give</i> by Angie Thomas (N/A) • <i>This is My America</i> by Kim Johnson (12+) • <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i> • <i>Patron Saints of Nothing</i> by R. Ribay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Salt to the Sea</i> by Ruta Sepetys (13+) • <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> by Jesmyn Ward (N/A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Summer of Letting Go</i> by Gae Polisner (N/A) • <i>Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes</i> by Chris Crutcher (N/A)
Highly Engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monster</i> by Walter Dean Myers (N/A) • <i>Wolf Hollow</i> by Lauren Wolk (10+) • <i>Dear Martin / Dear Justyce</i> by Nic Stone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry (11+) • <i>Purple Heart</i> by Patricia McCormick (15+) • <i>Red Kayak</i> by Priscilla Cummings (N/A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speak</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson (14+) • <i>Everyday</i> by David Levithan (14+) • <i>Orbiting Jupiter / Jupiter Rising</i> by Gary D. Schmidt (12+)

Similar Titles Across DRG A & B



To Kill a Mockingbird

DRG A - Darien, New Canaan,
Ridgefield, Rocky Hill,
Weston

DRG B - Avon, Fairfield,
Glastonbury, Granby

Lord of the Flies

DRG A - Darien, Rocky Hill,
Weston, Wilton

DRG B - Glastonbury,
Greenwich, Trumbull

Of Mice and Men

DRG A - Oxford, Ridgefield,
Rocky Hill

DRG B - Fairfield,
Farmington, Glastonbury,
Greenwich, Trumbull

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

DRG B - Fairfield,
Glastonbury, S. Windsor

Similar Titles Across DRG A & B

Fairfield

Monster
The Giver



Glastonbury

The Glass Castle
Speak
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes



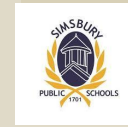
Other Titles

These titles are seen in various parts of other district's curriculum documents, including suggested reading lists for summer reading assignments.



Canton

The Glass Castle



Simsbury

Speak
Salt to the Sea
Dear Martin

A note on other districts...

Curriculum Overviews +

Curriculum Resources +

Grade Level Snapshots +

NFHS Program of Studies +

The Role of Curriculum

We are committed to providing all students the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. Clearly articulated curriculum is a systematic way to ensure that teachers provide students with equitable access to standards and key content within and across grade levels. District curriculum provides a cohesive instructional framework that supports student growth and development within the discipline and towards our mission and Vision of the Graduate.

The Philosophy of the Disciplines:

English Language Arts

We believe that through the study of English language arts, students become talented communicators and enlightened, global citizens who are able to thrive in society. A high-quality education in English language arts includes explicit, differentiated instruction in all aspects of literacy, beginning with foundational skills so that students are prepared to think critically, make meaning and communicate.

English language arts classrooms must be safe, literature-rich learning environments that provide students access to a wide array of fiction and nonfiction texts where students have choice in what they read and write, fostering ownership of their learning. Instruction must be differentiated to address students' individual needs through whole-class lessons, small-group work and individualized conferences where students practice their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills and receive actionable feedback.

To meet the needs of every student, teachers must work collaboratively to ignite all students' imagination, confidence and creativity and lead students to their highest potential.

The data on the previous slides only indicates districts where curriculum information is readily available. Many districts do not list overviews, texts lists, or partial curricular blueprints.

English I
Full Year | 1 credit

Grade 9
Humanities | Eng
Wt 3

English I is a college prep class that provides each student with exposure to the various elements of literature and the English language through the modes of reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Students will read texts that include a variety of fiction, poetry, drama and nonfiction based on thematic units. Writing is extensive and based on the writing process.

English I Honors
Full Year | 1 credit

Grade 9
Humanities | Eng
Wt 4

Students who enroll in Honors I should be avid readers. English I Honors is a college prep class with a rigorous curriculum that is quickly paced with academic depth. It is both reading and writing intensive. Students are expected to be able to engage critically, constructively and thoughtfully in the exchange of ideas, accept constructive criticism, and collaborate with peers. Aside from independent, defensible thinking, students should also exhibit specific support of controllable ideas in their writing. Self motivation and self-discipline, along with strong organizational skills, are expected. There is a high level of academic work and expectation.

Safe Talk Protocol - Created in Collaboration with Kate Roberts

SAFE TALK PROTOCOL

IF I AM UPSET, I CAN...

REFLECT

WHAT IS UPSETTING ME?

- I EXPERIENCED THIS IN MY LIFE.
- THE WAY IT WAS APPROACHED (DISCUSSION, ACTIVITY) WAS UPSETTING.
- I KNOW SOMEONE WHO DEALS WITH THIS.
- I DON'T FEEL LIKE THE OPINIONS I HAVE ARE BEING REFLECTED.

NAME IT

WHAT DO I NEED TO FEEL SAFE TO WORK THROUGH THESE FEELINGS?

- SKIP PARTS OF TEXT/DISCUSSIONS
- I JUST NEED SOMEONE TO KNOW / CHECK-IN WITH ME
- MORE INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
- OUTSIDE SUPPORT - THE BOOK ISN'T THE ISSUE

ASK

WHO CAN SUPPORT ME WITH THESE FEELINGS / THIS ISSUE?

- A FRIEND WHO GETS IT
- YOU (MY TEACHER)
- OUTSIDE SUPPORT (COUNSELING, SUPPORT GROUP, TEXT)
- PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR OTHER TRUSTED ADULT



Possible New Titles

- *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by S. Van Pelt
- *Give Me a Sign* by A. Sortino
- *Just Until* by J. Moldover
- *The Little Liar* by M. Albom
- *Hang the Moon* by J. Walls



- *One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot* by M. Cronin
- *The Future of Us* by J. Asher
- *The Serpent King* by J. Zentner
- *Restart* by G. Korman
- *Secret Book of Flora Lea* by P. Callahan Henry



Collaboration & Calibration with LMS

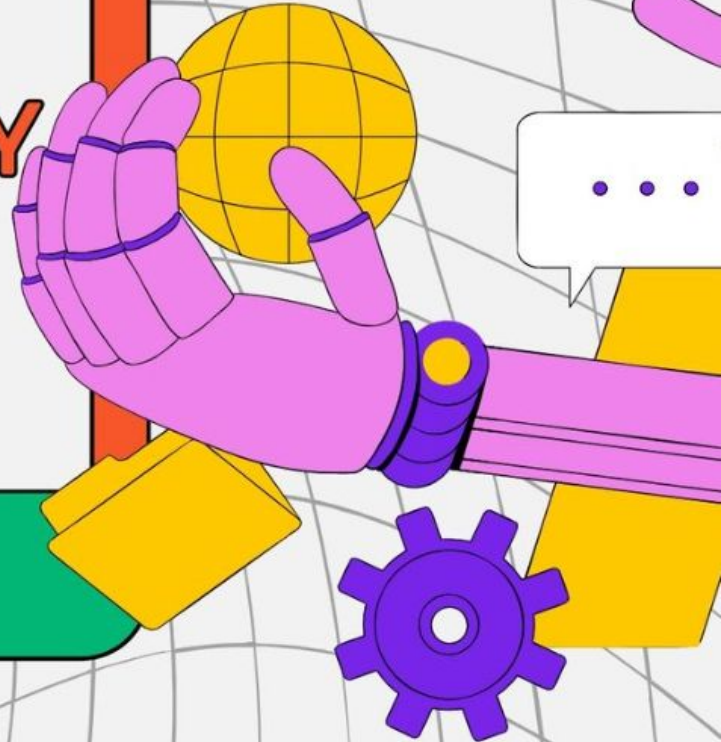
Professional Reviews and Book Review Journals

- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- Library Journal
- Kirkus
- Hornbook Magazine
- Teacher Librarian



SPRING 2025

VIRTUAL REALITY
AT POLSON MIDDLE
SCHOOL

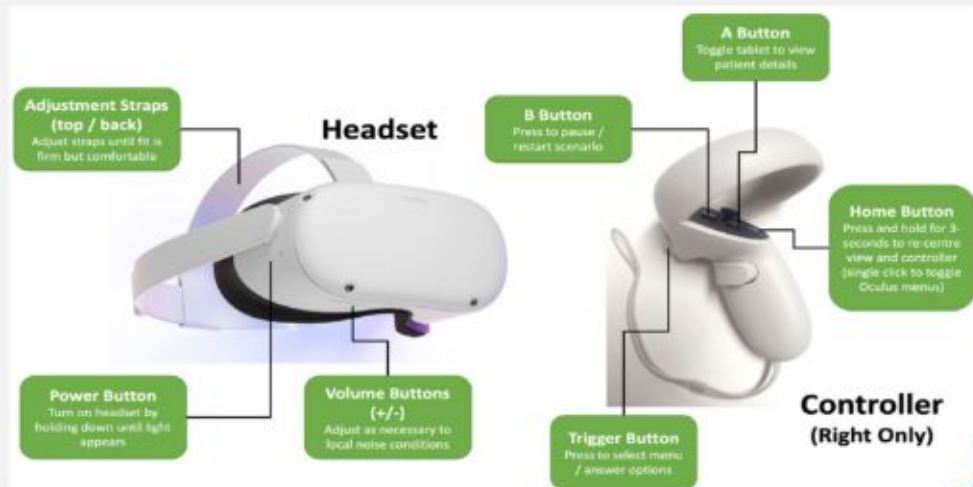


AN INTRODUCTION

In virtual reality, a simulated 3D environment enables users to explore and interact with a virtual surrounding in a way that feels like reality.

We have been utilizing 6 Meta Quest 2 headsets, secured through a grant from The Madison Foundation.

Approximately 90% of our 7th graders have used VR in the past or own a headset at home.





MY OBJECTIVES

Identify educational apps that align with our curriculum.

Collaborate with teachers.

Provide students with opportunities to synthesize VR experiences with classroom learning.

APPS WE'VE EXPLORED



01

**Eva Kor
Holocaust
Experience**

02

**Flow
Meditation**

03

Art Plunge

EVA KOR HOLOCAUST EXPERIENCE

A 360-degree tour of four pivotal locations at Auschwitz.
Survivor Eva Kor shares her haunting memories of each
location.



The Eva Experience

VIRTUAL REALITY EXHIBIT

Eva

A-7063

EVA KOR WITH 7TH GRADE SS

1



Collaborated with SS teachers to review standards & objectives of unit.
Sent e-notify to parents informing them of upcoming optional VR experience.

2



Provided students with objective & instructions and embarked on VR journey.

3



Debriefed experience and new learning with students.

4



Refined questions and assessment opportunities with teachers.

February 2025





Student Comments:

"I got a sense of how unsanitary it really was, even the area for the twins. In the pictures from class, the blood lab looked nicer, like a hospital. I thought there would be more medical gear, but it was really just syringes."

"Seeing it in color makes it feel very real. You know it happened, but the color makes you realize it."

"Even the VR makes you feel helpless like they did, because you can't move around, you have no free will."

"I was surprised they haven't found out what's in the vials they were injecting the twins with. If one of the most famous survivors wants to know what was in it, they have the right to know."

"How did human beings do this to other human beings?"

"How could you be at peace with yourself knowing you did this to another person?"

FLOW

Choose 4-minute or 8-minute guided meditation sessions
in Icelandic nature scenes.

“I feel so much calmer, like I’m ready to take a nap.”

“VR helps you go to different worlds. When you’re having a stressed day, you can feel better.”



ART PLUNGE

Step inside famous paintings and the scenes come alive around you.

Paintings include:

Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window,

Mona Lisa,

Starry Night,

The Birth of Venus,

and The Creation of Adam



[Link](#) to Art Plunge video