

Activity Guide
Young Adult Book Award Nominees
2007-2008



**This was guide prepared by members of the
Young Adult Book Award Committee**

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13 Little Blue Envelopes

Maureen Johnson
HarperTempest, 2005
321 pages

SUMMARY:

When 17-year-old Ginny receives a packet of mysterious envelopes from her favorite aunt, she leaves New Jersey to criss-cross Europe on a sort of scavenger hunt that transforms her life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson by Louise Rennison

Criss Cross by Lynne Rae Perkins

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants Series by Ann Brashares

Homecoming by Cynthia Voigt

One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies by Sonya Sones

The Princess Diaries Series by Meg Cabot

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Subject/Topics:** Growth (Psychology), Teenage girls, Aunts, Artists, Teenage travelers, Teenage romance, Voyages and travels, Letters, Grief/Dealing with Loss, Europe(Paris, France, Rome, Italy, Greece, England, Netherlands), Coming of Age
- **Language Arts:** Use in connection with books with themes about taking journeys or that deal with coming of age, such as *Huckleberry Finn* by Twain. Huck and Jim see new places, meet new people, and discover things about themselves and the world they live in while on their journey along the Mississippi. Similarly, Ginny sees new countries, meets new people, and comes to understand her Aunt Peg and her own life/future.
- **Social Studies/Geography:** Have students research the countries, historic places, and cultures Ginny visits. Plan a trip to a foreign country: how would you get there?, what would you see and do?, who are you likely to meet?, etc. The places Ginny visits also bring to mind historical events or people (ex: Vestal Virgins, the Colosseum). Research these events or people and present findings.
- **Psychology:** Use the book as a discussion of how one can handle the loss of a loved one, self-discovery, and coming of age.
- **Science:** Ginny visits some historically and scientifically magnificent places. Research some of the great scientists, inventors, or discoveries that are from the places Ginny visits. For example, in Amsterdam, Ginny learns about the artistic and scientific use of windmills for power. Research windmills: how they are built, how they capture wind, and how they transform wind to energy, etc.
- **Math:** In conjunction with the Social Studies above, working with a fixed budget, plan the trip – from airfare, transportation in the country, hotel/hostels, food, sightseeing, etc. Don't forget to use the currency conversion equation when figuring your budget.

- Art: Aunt Peg is an artist and the story centers around places she originally visited on her journey of artistic discovery. Research the artists named, museums/places visited, or methods of art described in the book. Write a brief report about your topic and create an original work in the style of the artist/period/medium/etc.

WEBSITES:

- Maureen Johnson Webpage - <http://www.maureenjohnsonbooks.com/index.html>
- Books-A-Million Discussion Questions for 13 Little Blue Envelopes - <http://www.booksamillion.com/ncom/books?cat=13dq>

BOOKTALK:

Seventeen-year-old Virginia “Ginny” Blackstone is used to her artistic Aunt Peg’s quirky lifestyle and flighty nature. But when Peg took off with no explanation or forwarding address--just a few postcards and notes now and then to say she’s all right, the family worried about her. Then, they receive the news that Aunt Peg has died of brain cancer, and Ginny receives a letter in a little blue envelope from Aunt Peg. In it, Peg asks Ginny to begin what amounts to sort of a scavenger hunt. Her first instructions are to take the enclosed \$1000 and buy a passport, airline ticket from NY to London, and a backpack—leaving some extra to take a cab to the airport. Not only does her beloved, dead aunt want Ginny to go traipsing around Europe on her own, but she’s also placed rules on this crazy scavenger hunt. She can only take what will fit in one backpack, no guidebooks or foreign language aids, no extra money beyond what Peg provides, and no electronic devices to communicate electronically with anyone back in the U.S. “Postcards and letters are acceptable and encouraged.” In NY she is to go to the Chinese restaurant above her old apartment and pick up something left there for her. The package contains little blue envelopes numbered 2-13 that are to be opened consecutively and only after the task in each has been completed. Thus begins Ginny’s mission to attempt to understand her Aunt Peg by retracing Peg’s European journey, and perhaps learn something about herself, too. 13 Little Blue Envelopes, combining a little bit of action, a little bit mystery, and a little bit of romance is sure to please.

Prepared by: Heather Loy, Media Specialist, Wagener-Salley High School

Caught In the Act

Peter Moore

Viking, New York

260 pages

SUMMARY:

Everyone thinks that honors student Ethan Lederer is a smart and talented guy, but a new girl helps him realize that he has been pretending to be what everyone expects rather than who he really wants to be. Unfortunately, he does not recognize that she has problems that are more severe than he realizes.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Fault Line by Janet Tashjian

Invisible by Peter Hautman

Playing in Traffic by Gail Giles

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Art: Create a visual representation of the dichotomy in Ethan's life: the perception of Ethan by others and Ethan as he perceives himself.
- Visual Literacy: Examine the cover of the book for the key elements of color, light, dark, and shadows. Does the cover accurately portray the story? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Drama: Create and present a monologue for Lydia in which she expresses her point of view
- Language Arts: Use the following questions for reflective writing or a Socratic discussion:
 - *Reality and Illusion*: To what extent is our knowledge of others and ourselves reality and to what extent is it an illusion?
 - *Truth*: How important is truth, and why? If truth is important, why do people sometimes not tell the truth?
 - *Choices*: To what extent are we the result of our own choices? To what extent are we the result of the choices or expectations of others?

Compare your predictions while reading to what actually happened. What surprises do you find? Were the outcomes predictable? If not, why not?

- Social Studies/Psychology: Research one of the topics and create an informational brochure to inform other students about this topic
 - Stalking
 - Obsessive behavior
 - Borderline Personality Disorder

WEBSITES:

- *Stalking and Other Forms of Intrusive Contact*
<http://www.human.cornell.edu/che/HD/stalking/index.cfm?CFID=3706258&CFTOKEN=60471615>

- *Caught in the Act* (teenreads.com)
<http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/0670059900.asp>
- *Borderline Personality Disorder*
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/bpd.cfm>

BOOKTALK:

Have you ever been in a relationship that started out reasonably normal and then spiraled out of control? If so, then you will understand my story. My name is Ethan Lederer, and until recently, I was a normal high school sophomore. I made pretty good grades, never got into any trouble, had a great girlfriend named Jane, and really liked acting. All of that changed when I met Lydia. Lydia transferred to my school and she was definitely not my type EXCEPT I found that she fascinated me. She dressed all in black, sort of Goth, had writing up and down her arms and her accent changed from day to day. I'm not sure how it happened, but soon I seemed to be spending most of my time with her. She seemed to recognize the real me, not the person that everyone else saw. Then things got out of control. Jane dumped me, my grades dropped, and believe it or not, I got caught cheating on a test. I began to realize that Lydia was changing - becoming possessive, clingy, and actually calling me twenty times a day. To learn what happens between Lydia and Ethan and if he can survive this obsessive relationship unscathed, read *Caught in the Act* by Peter Moore.

Prepared by: Mary Lou Elliott

Code Orange
Caroline B. Cooney
Delacorte Press, 2005
195 pages

SUMMARY:

New Yorker Mitty Blake is decidedly unmotivated about beginning his research for a project in Advanced Biology. His assigned disease is smallpox, which he knows nothing about and cares nothing about. But when he finds an antique medical book, complete with an envelope of smallpox scabs, life, as he knows it, takes a terrible turn. This biological thriller will keep readers on the edge of their seats!

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Demon in the Freezer: A True Story by Robert Preston

Double Helix by Nancy Werlin

Eva by Peter Dickinson

Hidden Talents by David Lubar

Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story by Richard Preston

House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer

Locked Inside by Nancy Werlin

Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Biology:** Investigate diseases caused by viruses and bacteria that are considered to have been eradicated. Brainstorm in small groups, and develop a scenario of the ways in which these diseases might be re-introduced into the population.
- **Health:** Research the steps the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control take to combat pandemics. How did both organizations respond to recent outbreaks of mad cow disease, avian flu, etc? How well are we being protected?

WEBSITES:

- **Medline Plus: Smallpox** <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/smallpox.html>
- **Caroline B. Cooney Biography** <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-cooney-caroline.asp>

BOOKTALK:

Mitty Blake is a mediocre, but happy-go-lucky student at his private high school in NYC. When faced with being removed for poor grades from his Advanced Biology class, where the (brilliant) girl of his dreams is, he decides to buckle down and tackle the research project he has been putting off. Smallpox...who ever heard of smallpox? His initial search for facts leads him to an antique leather-bound medical book that his mother intends to use as an interior design accent, but Mitty finds some useful information within it. He also finds an envelope containing scabs from a smallpox outbreak in 1902. The more he and his girlfriend, Olivia, learn about “his” disease, the more he fears he may be

responsible for reintroducing it back into society. This biological thriller is impossible to put down!

Prepared by: Leah Roche, Beaufort High School

Dark Angel
David Klass
Frances Foster Books, 2005
312 pages

SUMMARY:

When his older brother is released from prison after serving six years for murder, seventeen-year-old Jeff can no longer hide his family secret and suffers at home, school, and with his love life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Autobiography of My Dead Brother by Walter Dean Myers

Lucas by Kevin Brooks

The Road of the Dead by Kevin Brooks

Shadow of a Doubt by S.L. Rottman

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

Timon's Tide by Charles Butler

When Dad Killed Mom by Julius Lester

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Subjects/Topics:** Drugs and high school athletes, Behavioral changes, Family Secrets, Forgiveness, Good vs. Evil, Brain Chemistry
- **Language Arts:** Smitty is a very important character in this story. He is the gentle giant who stands by Jeff until something terrible happens. Imagine that you can write another chapter or a sequel to this book. What would you do with Smitty's character? Will Smitty ever forgive Jeff for Troy's actions?
- **Social Studies:** Social Issues – teens and crime – long-term effect on teen criminals and their families, society's view of teen criminals (forgiveness, acceptance, rehabilitation, ostracism)
- **Science:** Drugs and high school athletes; changes in behavior due to drugs or brain chemistry
- **Psychology:** Brain chemistry – does it cause people to be evil? What causes Troy to commit the crimes? Is it the same thing that causes Jeff's mother to be committed?

WEBSITES:

<http://www.embracingthechild.org/aklass.html> - An Interview with David Klass

BOOKTALK:

Do you have a secret that you'd rather not reveal? Is it something that could damage important relationships in your life? Jeff has a secret, a family secret that he'd rather keep silent. Jeff's brother Troy is a convicted murderer but is being released on a technicality after serving six years in prison. Troy's criminal past forced his family to move to this new town and start over once before. Now Jeff's parents welcome Troy home, and Jeff tries to overlook the evil he believes is present in Troy. Unfortunately,

Troy's dark side appears and Jeff and his family must face the consequences. Read *Dark Angel* by David Klass to find out what happens!

Prepared By: Michal Hope Brandon

Double Helix
Nancy Werlin
Penguin Group, 2004
248 pages

SUMMARY:

Eighteen-year-old Eli Samuels has just graduated from high school, but he is not ready to go to college. Amazingly, he lands a job at Wyatt Transgenics, which was started by Dr. Quincy Wyatt, a famous molecular biologist. He can't believe his luck! Why isn't his father happy about his new job? There seems to be some connection between his parents and Dr. Wyatt. As Eli works for Dr. Wyatt, he begins to unravel the mystery and learn some disturbing information—about himself.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer
Acceleration by Graham McNamee
Code Orange by Carolina B. Cooney
Fantastic Voyage by Isaac Asimov
Peeps by Scott Westerfeld

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Subjects/Topics: Genetics, diseases, medicine, relationships, ethics
- Science: Discuss genetics, incurable diseases, DNA, medical ethics

WEBSITES:

- Genetic Engineering and Its Dangers - <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/GEessays/gedanger.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- Medical Ethics - <http://www.mic.ki.se/Diseases/K01.316.html>

BOOKTALK:

Eli Samuels has just finished high school, and he is planning to take a year off before he goes to college. Eli applies for a job at Wyatt Transgenics and at the interview; he meets Dr. Quincy Wyatt, the famous molecular biologist who started Transgenics. Not only is Eli offered a good salary, very interesting work, but Dr. Wyatt also seems genuinely interested in him. It is almost too good to be true. Eli's girlfriend, Viv, thinks this is an excellent opportunity, but Eli's father wants him to quit the job immediately. Eli knows there is some connection between his parents and Dr. Wyatt, but his father will not talk about it. It has something to do with his mother who is in a nursing home dying from Huntington's disease. As Eli spends more time at the lab, he learns some disturbing information about himself and his family. Read *Double Helix* to solve the mystery.

Prepared by: Sally Hursey

Elsewhere
Gabrielle Zevin
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005
276 pages

SUMMARY:

15-year old Liz Hall, the victim of a hit-and-run accident, finds herself in Elsewhere after she dies. This new world looks like Earth, but some of the rules are very different.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Afterlife by Gary Soto

A Certain Slant of Light by Laura Whitcomb

The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom

The Lovely Bones: A Novel by Alice Sebold

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Art:** Elsewhere looks like Earth, but there are some big differences. Design a collage of life in Elsewhere (see if you can portray how it is different from Earth in picture form).
- **Language Arts:** In Elsewhere, people choose an avocation. Discuss the similarities and differences between *avocation* and *career*. Have students write a descriptive essay about their choice of avocation and whether it is possible to combine an avocation and a career.
Have students respond to the question: *Given the same situation as Liz's, would you have taken the Sneaker Clause?* Explain why or why not.
- **Science:** In Elsewhere, Liz discovers she has the ability to communicate with animals. The study of animal communication is known as zoo semiotics. An intriguing question: *Is the ability to communicate the exclusive possession of human beings?* Utilize the website <http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/lessons.cfm?BenchmarkID=6&DocID=388> for hands-on activities that investigate this idea.
- **Social Studies:** Different cultures throughout history have had different ideas about the afterlife. Research the Ancient Egyptians, Ancient Greeks, Ancient Romans, the Mayans, the Hindu religion, and the Jewish faith. Create a table to highlight the thoughts of these groups.
- **Math:** It is the year 2006 in Elsewhere. John F. Kennedy, Princess Diana, Tupac, and John Lennon are having a picnic. How old (in Elsewhere age) is each person? Based on their ages, explain what you think people would be doing/talking about at the picnic?

WEBSITES:

Welcome to Elsewhere <http://www.fsgkidsbooks.com/elsewhere/>

Gabriel Zevin <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-zevin-gabrielle.asp>

Elsewhere by Gabriel Zevin

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/ReadersGroups/readersGuides.asp?isbn=9780747577201&mscssid=JOCJROOKC19Q89JRH9AVMS83KQW92N8JK9>

BOOKTALK:

What happens when you die? It is an ageless question. In Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin, 15-year-old Liz Hall is the victim of a hit-and-run accident and suddenly finds herself learning the answer to that question. Elsewhere is almost a reflection of Earth—at first glance they look alike, but once there, Elsewhere is different. People age backwards/grow young, they spend time in a chosen avocation instead of a career, and they do NOT save money for their retirement. Can it be possible that a book about death would be upbeat, creative, and humorous? Yes, Zevin has done just that—and more-- as you will get a wonderful glimpse into this world and maybe even wonder, “What if?”

Prepared by: Emilie Woody

Fake ID
Walter Sorrells
Penguin Group, 2005
313 pages

SUMMARY:

Chass, barely sixteen years old, has no idea who her father is or why she and her mom are always on the run. It seems that Chass just gets settled into life in a new town, and her mom is packing their bags and changing their identities once again.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...

Club Dread by Walter Sorrells

The Perfect Shot by Elaine Marie Alphin

On the Head of a Pin by Mary Beth Miller

Finding Lubchenko by Michael Simmons

The Night My Sister Went Missing by Carol Plum-Ucci

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts: On pages five through seven, the main character and mother go through a ritual to choose a new name to use in their new town. Using your school library, follow these directions and create a new identity for yourself. Then write a paragraph introducing the “new” you.
- Social Studies / Science: Invite a member of a law enforcement agency to the class to talk about how DNA is used to identify people and what procedures are followed when investigating missing person cases.

WEBSITES:

- www.waltersorrells.com - Author of book
- www.fbi.gov - Info on fingerprinting
- www.thevaremissed.org - Info on missing persons

BOOKTALK:

Chastity Pureheart has no idea what her real name is, who her father is, or why she and her mother are always on the run. Every time Chastity and her mother take off for a new city, they follow a very specific ritual to choose a new identity. Chass, having just turned sixteen, finds herself alone in High Hopes, Alabama. Her mom has disappeared, and foul play is suspected. Chastity needs to find her mother and figure out why she ran off, and she only has six days to do this if she wants to avoid being placed in foster care. Students who enjoy mysteries or forensic crime shows will enjoy reading to find out if and how Chastity is able to locate her mother.

Prepared by: Pam Lorentz

Invisible
Pete Hautman
Simon and Schuster, 2005
149 pages

SUMMARY:

Seventeen-year-old Doug Hanson is a loner, and some even call him a freak. His obsession is working on a model railroad set using 22,400 headless matches to create a bridge. Doug describes himself as, "I'm a quiet kid, pretty much invisible." As Doug descends deeper into his private hell, the reader learns what is real and what isn't.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Rules of Survival by Nancy Werlin

Inexcusable by Chris Lynch

Breaking Point by Alex Flinn

Shattering Glass by Gail Giles

What Happened to Lani Garver by Carol Plum-Ucci

Killing Mr. Griffin by Lois Duncan

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Subjects/Topics: Popularity, mental illness, self-perception, social acceptance, peer pressure
- Psychology: Discuss self-perception, mental illness, social acceptance, and denial
- Strategies for Success: Discuss social acceptance, bullying, peer pressure

WEBSITES:

- Pete Hautman's Official Website - <http://www.petehautman.com>
- National Alliance on Mental Health - <http://www.nami.org>

BOOKTALK:

Seventeen-year-old Doug Hanson could be described as obsessed. He is obsessed with building a model train set with matchsticks, with watching and following the beautiful Melissa Haverman, who calls him a worm, and with talking to his best friend Andy Morrow, who is the exact opposite of Doug. Andy is his next-door neighbor, and he is popular, athletic, and good-looking. Doug isn't bothered by the fact that Andy doesn't talk to him at school, but only from the next-door window at night. There are secrets in Doug's life. Why is he obsessed with matches? Why is a strange man living in Andy's house? Why is Doug preoccupied with initials and carvings? Why doesn't he take his medication? Enter Doug's private world and learn what has put him in his living hell.

Prepared by: Sally Hursey

Jude
Kate Morgenroth
Simon & Schuster
277 pages

SUMMARY:

When his father is murdered, fifteen-year-old Jude's world turns upside down. He moves in with the mother he never knew, begins attending a ritzy private school, and is hoodwinked into confessing to a crime he didn't commit, ending up in prison. But that is not the end of the road for Jude.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Burn Journals by Brent Runyon

Crank by Ellen Hopkins

Last Chance Texaco by Brent Hartinger

Nothing to Lose by Alex Flinn

The Rag and Bone Shop by Robert Cormier

Shadow of a Doubt by S.L. Rottman

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Character Development/ Freshman 101: Discuss the many issues facing Jude during his young life: kidnapping, being reunited with his mother, confessing to a crime he didn't commit, going to prison, etc. How did Jude handle himself when dealing with these problems? How would YOU handle yourself?
- Human Development/ Psychology: Research instances of child kidnapping that have appeared recently in the news. According to research on these cases, what impact does this kind of childhood trauma have on a youngster? Are these long-term effects?

WEB SITES:

- Letters from Teens in Prison
<http://www.pacificnews.org/jinn/stories/4.05/090312-prison.html>
- Teen/Family Issues <http://www.focusas.com/Resources.html>
- Kate Morgenroth <http://www.katemorgenroth.com/>

BOOKTALK:

After witnessing the murder of his drug-dealing father, Jude discovers that he was kidnapped when he was three weeks old. Suddenly his life shifts from one of squalor and poverty to wealth and privilege when he goes to live with the mother he never knew, a district attorney in his hometown. As the "new kid" in his private school, he connects with an unsavory group of students, who see him as a street-smart connection to the drugs they seek. When one of Jude's "friends" overdoses and dies, his mother's boyfriend, a deputy police commissioner, convinces Jude to confess to involvement in the death, in order to help his mother win a "tough-on-crime" mayoral run. Jude finds himself in prison, and soon learns the adults he has trusted have betrayed him. Can Jude survive the brutality of prison? Can he move past the deceptions of the past to create a future for himself?

Prepared by: Leah Roche

Names Will Never Hurt Me

Jamie Adoff

Speak, 2005

186 pages

SUMMARY:

This story takes place in a suburban high school against the backdrop of the one-year anniversary of a shooting death. The text is written in a method that illustrates the experiences and intersection of four teenagers. The four main characters in the text deal with issues related to ‘fitting in’ and popularity. Each of the characters experiences a different tension such as being ignored, threatened, and rejected.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Nothing to Lose by Alex Flinn

Code Orange by Caroline Mooney

Making up Megaboy by Virginia Walter

Inventing Elliott by Graham Gardner

The Misfits by James Howe

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts Standards:
E4-R1.9 Demonstrate the ability to read several works on a particular topic, paraphrase the ideas, and synthesize them with ideas from other works addressing the same topic.
Literacy Strategy – Anticipation Guide
<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cso/standards/ela/AnticipationGuide.doc>
- Language Arts Standards:
E4-R1.1 Demonstrate the ability to read independently for extended periods of time to derive pleasure and to gain information.
Literacy Strategy – Read aloud
<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cso/standards/ela/ReadAloud.doc>

WEB SITES:

- Conceptualizing school violence
<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/nonviolence/builder.htm>
- Drama Activities <http://www.david-farmer.com/drama.htm>

BOOKTALK:

This is an excellent story for students to engage in reading around the topic of violence in schools. This book illustrates the experiences of high school students that sometime go unnoticed by adults (e.g. isolation and rejection by peers). Further, this fictional work offers a glimpse of suburban youth cast in a light of vulnerability and disconnection under the watchful eyes of adults. This text simultaneously includes similar issues related to school shootings across the nation and would be a great text to springboard discussions related to those problems.

Prepared by: Tiffany A. Flowers

Prom
Laurie Halse Anderson
Penguin Group, 2005
215 pages

SUMMARY:

Eighteen year-old Ash wants nothing to do with senior prom, but when disaster strikes and her desperate friend, Nat, needs her help to get it back on track, Ash's involvement transforms her life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Teen Idol by Meg Cabot

24 Girls in 7 Days by Alex Bradley

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts: Write a description of your "perfect" prom.
- Social Studies: Research a teenage social custom from another culture or country. Create an invitation to this event that describes the history, meaning, and activities involved.
- Math/Business: Create a budget for prom, using an Excel spreadsheet.

WEBSITES:

- <http://www.perfectproms.com/> - A website designed for high school prom advisors, prom planning committees, and prom going students.
- <http://www.writerlady.com/> - Laurie Halse Anderson's website—check out what other novels she's written and find out more about her.

BOOKTALK:

"I had been saying prom was stupid for years, and it still was, but it was different for them. They had been waiting forever for this. Dichelle, she lived with a foster family who had nothing, but everybody, even the second cousins, had pitched in to buy her a dress and shoes and a sparkly headband that looked like a beauty-pageant crown, only not as tacky. Junie had been dating the same stand-up man, Charles, since freshman year, and they were the cutest couple on the planet, and he was going into the army right after graduation, and we were all sure he was going to ask her to marry him at prom. Aisha had been working for free at a braiding shop so she could get her hair done. Monica, her mom died of cancer last year—if anyone deserved a dance, it was that girl."

I'm Ashley Hannigan, and all I want is to graduate from high school—in spite of an assistant principal who wants to put me in permanent detention. And I want to move out of my parents' wild and crazy house full of kids and never-finished home fix-up projects and live in an apartment with my hot boyfriend, TJ. I have no desire to dress up and pretend to be a princess for one night and then go back to the EZ-CHEEZ-E and put on my rat costume and deliver pizza to a bunch of screaming kids. But back to prom—my best friend, Natalia, is the prom committee chairman and she has a pink notebook full of details that will make our prom a magical night. When we find out our math teacher, who is also the prom advisor, has stolen all the money from the prom fund, I have a

moment of temporary insanity and volunteer to help Nat make the prom happen...in spite of the fact that we have no food, no location, no decorations, no music, and no money. I don't even want to go to prom and now I'm responsible for making it happen. Can I do it?.....And why do I even care?

Prepared by: Sheri Carpenter

rob&sara.com

P.J. Petersen and Ivy Ruckman
Random House, Inc., 2004
210 pages

SUMMARY:

When Sara posts an original poem on an Internet bulletin board for teen poets, the results aren't good. Everyone hates the poem except robcruise99. Soon Sara and Rob are emailing back and forth and forming a powerful friendship.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY ...

An Order of Amelie, Hold the Fries by Nina Schindler

Perfect Strangers (Love Letters Series #1) by Jahnna N. Malcolm

When It Happens by Susane Colasanti

Megan Meade's Guide to the McGowan Boys by Kate Brian

Honey, Baby, Sweetheart by Deb Caletti

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts: While reading the book, partner with a classmate and email (or write) back and forth your impressions and reactions to the novel.
- Research: Research tips on how teenagers can safely navigate the Internet. Create a PowerPoint presentation or brochure that can be shared with parents or other interested adults.

WEBSITES:

- www.teenink.com - Place for teenagers to publish original writing
- www.randomhouse.com/teen - Publisher of book
- www.safeteens.com - Online safety tips for parents

BOOKTALK:

It all starts very innocently. Sara ventures onto a poetry chat room and submits one of her own poems. Almost everyone that reads the poem hates it. The exception is robcruise99. He contacts Sara about her poem, and soon the two are emailing back and forth, and a relationship develops. In fact, the emails seem to suggest that the relationship is getting quite strong, but then Rob reveals an interesting fact about himself that might send Sara running. Teenagers tied to their computers and IM buddies will enjoy this fast-paced mystery/romance.

Prepared by: Pam Lorentz

Runner
Carl Deuker
Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
216 pages

SUMMARY:

Living with his alcoholic father on a broken-down sailboat on Puget Sound has been hard on seventeen year-old Chance Taylor, but when his love of running leads to a high-paying job, he quickly learns that the money is not worth the risk.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Heart of a Champion by Carl Deuker

The Runner by Cynthia Voigt

High Heat by Carl Deuker

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Social Studies**: Research and present two sides of a homeland security risk in your area. What area might terrorists target? What protections should be implemented to prevent an attack from happening?
- **Science and Math**: Figure the amount of explosives Chance had in his possession and what effect it might have had on the Ballard Locks or one of the bridges over Puget Sound.

WEBSITES:

- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/homeland/index.html> - The White House: Homeland Security
- www.alcoholics-anonymous.org/ - Alcoholics Anonymous Homepage
- <http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/shorephotos/> - Department of Ecology Shoreline Aerial Photos

BOOKTALK:

Chance is tired of being the adult in his family—tired of washing dishes for hours to get a little money—tired of living on canned food on an old sailboat—and tired of paying the bills when his dad drinks away what little money he makes, when he can keep a job.

Chance spends his days getting through high school as a ghost-walker—he keeps his mouth shut and does whatever schoolwork he has to do to get a passing grade. His only joy is running. He runs for miles every day after school along the shore of Puget Sound. Anything is better than sitting on a thirty-foot weather-beaten old sailboat watching his old man get drunk.

One day after his usual run, Chance is approached by a worker at the marina and offered a job. The man simply wants Chance to carry a small backpack when he runs and check a certain tree for packages. If Chance finds a package, he brings it back to his locker in the marina and leaves it there. His pay? Two hundred dollars a week. Chance needs the money to pay the bills but his mind is filled with questions. What is in the packages? Where do they come from? Who will contact him about the “special” packages he has

begun to receive? How can he get out of this business? Is he in too deep to get out....alive?

Prepared by: Sheri Carpenter

The Safe-Keeper's Secret

Sharon Shinn

Viking, 2004

240 pages

SUMMARY:

After her mother's untimely death, Fiona is determined to take her place as the village safe-keeper – where neighbors and strangers come and share their darkest secrets.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Dream-Maker's Magic by Sharon Shinn

Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine

The Edge Chronicles: Beyond the Deepwoods by Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell

The Lone Princess of Tentaleigh by Lacie Nicole Perry

Phantastes by George MacDonald

The Shadow of the Red Moon by Walter Dean Myers

The Truth-Tellers Tale by Sharon Shinn

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Subjects/Topics: Fantasy, Medieval, Secrets, Truth, Orphans

WEBSITES:

- Interview with Sharon Shinn - http://www.ingramlibrary.com/MRKNG/FD/0205/ILS_genre.html
- The Unofficial Sharon Shinn Site - <http://wwwuser.cs.rose-hulman.edu/~thomass/shinn/>
- Most complete biographical information on Sharon Shinn found via DISCUS – Biography Resource Center

BOOKTALK:

Book talks available at the following links:

- <http://booktalkingcolorado.ppld.org/Scripts/FullRecord.asp?ID=381>
- <http://wwwuser.cs.rose-hulman.edu/~thomass/shinn/#About>

Prepared by: Michelle Pope

Stealing Henry
Carolyn MacCullough
Roaring Books, 2005
196 pages

SUMMARY:

Seventeen-year-old Savannah, fed up with her violent stepfather, hits him over the head with a frying pan and takes to the road with her eight-year-old half-brother in a journey that echoes in reverse the one her mother Alice took as a young unwed mother running away from home.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

America: A Novel by E.R. Frank
Aimee by Mary Beth Miller
Shadow of a Doubt by S.L. Rottman
Lena by Jacqueline Woodson
A Room on Lorelei Street by Mary Pearson

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- **Social Studies:** Research laws on kidnapping by family members. Does the punishment and sentencing of within family kidnapping vary from kidnapping by strangers? Do judges take mitigating circumstances into account?
- **Health:** Years ago when Savannah's mother left home a pregnant unwed teen, she began a cross-country journey, raising Savannah in a car for the most part for many years. Discuss the ramifications of Savannah's pre-natal and childhood experiences on her physically, socially and emotionally.

WEBSITES:

- VOYA Interview with Carolyn MacCullough – <http://pdfs.voya.com/VO/YA2/VOYA200402AuthorTalk.pdf>
- Health Information Project – Substance abuse prevention and related health information @ the library. A listing of titles related to teen issues – great for guidance counselors and teachers developing reading/writing assignments. - http://hip.midhudson.org/hip_fictiontitles.htm

BOOK TALK:

“The night Savannah brains her stepfather with the frying pan is the night she decides to leave home for good.” So begins the wild ride of Savannah and her half-brother Henry. Before Savannah's mom, Alice, married Jack, the two were inseparable but now Alice can't see how badly things really are at home. Savannah's stepfather, Jack, saves his abuse for her – since he lost his job and is drinking more the abuse has gotten worse. Savannah fears eventually the abuse won't stop with her and that Henry will become his next victim, so she steals Henry and begins a cross-country journey to escape. After stopping in New York to stay with a friend, Savannah is warned that if she doesn't return Henry she will be arrested for kidnapping. Can Savannah find a happier home on this journey? Read *Stealing Henry*.

Prepared by: Charlene Zehner

Things Change
Patrick Jones
Walker Publishing Company, 2004
216 pages

SUMMARY:

Sixteen-year-old Johanna, one of the best students in her class, develops a passionate attachment for troubled seventeen-year-old Paul and finds her plans for the future changing in unexpected ways.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Fault Line by Janet Tashjian

Dreamland by Sarah Dessen

Breathing Underwater by Alex Flinn

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Health/Family & Consumer Science: Dating violence among teens is a problem that doesn't frequently get discussed. Read *Things Change* and list the instances where Paul abuses Johanna. What factors in Paul's life may have lead to him being abusive? What factors in Johanna's life prime her to accept his abuse?
- Social Studies/ELA: When students are researching social issues or problems, have them research statistics on teen dating violence and discover characteristics related to teen dating violence and violence resources. Have students read the novel and provide examples of the progression of a violent dating relationship. What resources could Johanna use to end this abuse relationship? What resources are available for Paul?

WEBSITES:

- Patrick Jones <http://www.connectingya.com/thingschange.html>
- *Things Change* by Patrick Jones
<http://www.walkeryoungreaders.com/books/catalog.php?key=446>

BOOKTALK:

Perfection.... it's a goal I have been working towards my whole life. See, my mother demands it – I have to have great grades, a perfect SAT score, not waste time on boys, never do anything I am not supposed to do, basically be perfect. Since I have been dating Paul, who my parents HATE, perfection is something he expects, too. Don't talk too much, don't disagree, don't spend time with my best friend, and don't have any other guy friends. If I am not perfect Paul shows me his anger, and my body and face show the bruises. I started this relationship with Paul. I asked him to kiss me. Now that we are together I had no idea what I was getting into – or how I wasn't the only girlfriend Paul hit. I love him, but can I stay with him? It keeps getting worse and worse. Read my story to see if I can make *Things Change*.

Prepared by: Charlene Zehner

Twilight
Stephenie Meyer
Little, Brown and Company, 2005
498 pages

SUMMARY:

When seventeen-year-old Bella leaves Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington, she meets an exquisitely handsome boy at school for whom she feels an overwhelming attraction and who she comes to realize is not wholly human.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Blood and Chocolate by Annette Curtis Klause
Dracula by Bram Stoker
Frankenstein by Mary Shelley
The Haunting of Alazabel Cray by Chris Wooding
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Peeps by Scott Westerfeld
The Raging Quiet by Sherryl Jordan
The Silver Kiss by Annette Curtis Klause
Sirena by Donna Jo Napoli
Sunshine by Robin McKinley
Tenderness by Robert Cormier
Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Literature: Can be used as example of modern, star-crossed lovers tale with a fantastical twist
- Social Studies: Olympic National Park, Hoh River Rain Forest, Quileute Indian Reservation

WEBSITES:

- Official Website of Stephenie Meyer - <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/index.html>
- Little, Brown and Company - <http://www.twbookmark.com/features/twilight/index.html>
- Twilight Lexicon - <http://twilightlexicon.com/>
- City of Forks, Washington - <http://www.forkswashington.org/>
- Olympic National Park - <http://www.nps.gov/olym>

BOOKTALK:

Three book talks available at
http://www.nancykeane.com/booktalks/meyer_twilight.htm

Prepared by: Michelle Pope

Uglies
Scott Westerfeld
Scholastic Inc., 2005
425 pages

SUMMARY:

Soon to be sixteen-year-old Tally Youngblood, an “Ugly,” anxiously awaits her birthday and the day when she will become a “Pretty,” move to Pretty Town (a city of non-stop partying), and rejoin her best high school friend, Peris. Her newest friend and fellow trickster, Shay, is happy with the way she looks and rebels against conforming to society’s definition of what is pretty. Shay decides to run away and Tally is forced to find her.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY...

Pretties – (the sequel) by Scott Westerfeld

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Welcome to the Ark by Stephanie Tolan

Shades’ Children by Garth Nix

Venus Envy: A history of cosmetic surgery (NF) by Michelle Goldberg

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Language Arts: After reading, compare and contrast futuristic societies found in *The Giver* and *Uglies*.
Read the introduction to the sequel, *Pretties*, and “predict” what may happen by writing your own sequel.
- Science: Discuss the technology that is created in this book (hoverboards, communication systems, interface rings, etc.), and how advancements in technology are often found in literature.
- Character Education: Read the book and discussion how Tally faces making choices and deciding which friendships she should keep.
- Health: Discuss plastic surgery in today’s society and the new trends in creating “perfection.” (Cloning and genetic studies).
- Psychology: Peer Pressure, Self-Perception, Image, Social Acceptance, Futuristic Societies

WEBSITES:

- <http://www.scottwesterfeld.com/> - Scott Westerfeld’s Web Site
- <http://www.sffworld.com/interview/203p0.html> - Science Fiction World. An interview with Scott Westerfeld.
- <http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz2380471b41590.html> - Trivia quiz on the book.
- <http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2006/02/scbwi-bologna-2006-author-interview.html> - “Cynsations.” An interview with the author.

BOOK TALK:

Tally Youngblood is a few weeks away from her 16th birthday, and she can't wait to become a "Pretty." In Tally's world, at age sixteen she can leave Uglyville and join her best friend Peris, a "Pretty," in New Pretty Town, city of non-stop partying. But first, she has to undergo the surgery that all sixteen-year-olds undergo. The problem is her new best friend, Shay, is not sure she really wants to conform to the norm and become a "Pretty." Shay is quite happy with the way she looks and tries to convince Tally to sneak away to a forbidden area where it is rumored people who have refused surgery have formed a new community, remaining as "uglies."

When Tally's long-anticipated operation day arrives, she is confronted with the frightening Special Circumstances team who want her to find Shay. Her life takes an unexpected turn when she is told she must find Shay or she will not be allowed to undergo her own surgery. Tally goes after Shay, and in the process, finds out there is more to being a "pretty" than just having surgery.

Prepared By: Mary M. Silgals, Trident Academy

Upstream
Melissa Lion
Wendy Lamb Books, 2005
149 pages

SUMMARY:

After her boyfriend is killed in a hunting accident, Alaska high-school-senior Marty, with help from her mother and two younger sisters, tries to get over her grief and begin a new life.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

Just Like That by Marsha Qualey

All Rivers Flow to the Sea by Alison McGhee

Burning City by Ariel Dorfman

Unseen Companion by Denise Gosliner Orenstein

Echo by Kate Morgenroth

Grace Happens by Jan M. Czech

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

- Subject/Topics: Grief, Death, Secrets, Alaska, Fly Fishing, Friendships
- Language Arts: Book discussion or essay focusing on how Marty deals with the loss of her boyfriend and her guilt associated with his accidental death. What changes does she undergo? How does this incident affect her future?
- Psychology: Discuss grief and guilt. Discuss how Marty comes to terms with her role in the accident. Discuss how by revealing her secret she is able to move forward.
- Science/ Ecology: Note descriptive passages of Alaska and its wildlife
- Research projects such as the whale preservation Marty assisted with.

WEBSITES:

- Author's Website - <http://www.melissalion.com/>
- Random House Author Spotlight - <http://www.randomhouse.com/author/results.pperl?authorid=57694>
- Interview with the author - http://news.bookweb.org/m-bin/printer_friendly?article_id=2889
- Reviews and author interviews - <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/0385746431.asp>
- Information and pictures of Alaska's national and state parks - <http://www.us-national-parks.net/state/ak.htm>
- Kodiak Gray Whale Project - <http://home.gci.net/~kodiakgraywhaleproject/mirror8-19-04.htm>

BOOKTALK:

Marty is starting her senior year of high school and for the first time is nervous about returning to school because she knows everyone will remember what happened last summer. They will stare at her as she sits alone without her boyfriend Steven and gossip

about what they think happened. She will not tell anyone what happened when she and Steven went into the Alaskan Bush, not her mother, not her two younger sisters, and not her father when he returns briefly from his Coast Guard duty. She won't even tell Katherine, her new friend and owner the theatre where Marty works.

She sneaks into Steven's room at night after his family moves away and remembers times they spent together. She shares stories of him and the whale preservation project with Katherine as they work at the theatre and fly fish together. She debates leaving Alaska for college to study Marine Biology, which was Steven's idea, and decides this would be a good way to put distance between her and what happened.

Then the Fish and Game Department start an investigation into what happened that day. Despite her parents' protests they are adamant about questioning Marty concerning the details of what happened that day out in the bush. What did happen that day? Will Marty finally divulge the terrible secret she has been keeping? To find out, read *Upstream* by Melissa Lion.

Prepared By: Michelle Williams

Who Am I Without Him?
Short Stories about Girls and the Boys in their Lives
Sharon Flake
Jump at the Sun/Hyperion, 2004
168 pages

Summary/Book Notes:

This text is a collection of nine short stories that vividly describe real life experiences of young African-American girls and their relationships with young boys. The stories in this text vary by topic and include issues related to verbal abuse, violence, boys cheating on girls, interracial relationships, self esteem, and issues related to respect.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...

The Fight by L. Devine

Drama High by L. Devine

Money Hungry by Sharon Flake

The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

The First Part Last by Angela Johnson

Tears of a Tiger by Sharon Draper

Curriculum Connections:

- Language Arts Standards:
E4-W1.4 Demonstrate the ability to revise writing for clarity, sentence variety, precise vocabulary, and effective phrasing through collaboration, conferencing, and self-evaluation.
E4-W2.2 Demonstrate the ability to use writing to learn, entertain, and describe.
Literacy Strategy – Written Conversation
<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cso/standards/ela/WrittenConversation.doc>
- Language Arts Standards:
E4-R1.2 Demonstrate the ability to make connections between a text read independently and his or her prior knowledge, other texts, and the world.
E4-R1.3 Demonstrate the ability to apply integrated strategies to evaluate selections from a variety of literary genres and real-world texts.
Literacy Strategy – Literature Circles
<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cso/standards/ela/LiteratureCircles.doc>

Web Sites:

- Read aloud after school activity - http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/literacy/ex_who_am_i.html
- Literature Circle Resources - <http://home.att.net/~teaching/litcircles.htm>
- Writing Activities for Teens - <http://www.ualr.edu/teenread/id99.htm>
- On-line Writing Workshop for Teens - <http://www.coolschool.k12.or.us/courses/102100/writers.html>

BOOKTALK:

Written in the backdrop of almost any high school with a diverse population, the portrayal of the characters in this text is riveting. Sharon Flake pulls off a daring attempt to create stories that reveal the true world in which young black female teenagers live. This collection of stories contains experiences that all young women can relate to and includes issues related to the dangerous and sometimes unhealthy relationships in which they engage with young men. This text reflects the often times gritty experiences young girls encounter during high school.

Prepared by: Tiffany A. Flowers