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ENGL 112B

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Rationale

Literature is one way a teen can relate to the world around them and know they are not alone. Poetry is just one genre and my favorite. Poetry is a creative outlet that allows one to express feelings that may be hard to articulate. Which is why I think poetry is an important subject to be taught and read by young adults. Becoming a teen means new hormones racing, new life difficulties, new school experiences and learning who you are. Sometimes it can be hard to express thoughts without fear of rejection.

Poetry is also a great way to introduce reading to YA. It can be less intimating, but just as powerful. Sometimes with reluctant readers, the thickness of a book or the number of words on a page can scare a reader. Poetry takes away some of the intimidation. Instead of taking on the book chapter by chapter, it is poem by poem.

Poetry is not only a collection of poems, but it can also tell a story like any other novel. These books are written in verse. Meaning it is arranged and constructed with some sort of poetic composition. I would like to point out, that is also doesn’t have to rhyme. Like other YA novels, it can have a central theme. In my little collection, I have also chosen books that have poetic prose. These are books written in paragraphs not verse, but they have poetic language and imagery, so I included them. The books I have included are contemporary, historical fiction and one poem collection with a fantasy twist. Their stories tackle the concepts of the wider world, self-identity and historical events. I chose these books because they stood out to me. Their titles, covers and synopsis made me reach for them on the shelf.

Books Written in Verse:

Anderson. “The Realm of Possibilty by David Levithan.” YA Love, 7 Dec. 2010, yaloveblog.com/2010/12/07/the-realm-of-possibilty-by-david-levithan/.

Wood, Sarah A. “The Realm of Possibility.” Teenreads, 10 Aug. 2004, [www.teenreads.com/reviews/the-realm-of-possibility](http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/the-realm-of-possibility).

These citations talk about The Realm of Possibility by David Levithan. A novel written in verse; however, constructed a little bit different. The book revolves around 20 characters! Each chapter contains 4 different perspectives and according to Mrs. Anderson really captures “the depth of teenage emotion to create an amazing array of voices.” Because there are many voices, it can capture many different readers. Meaning many can place themselves in the book. Referencing from Sarah Woods’ review, “the interconnectedness between the poems and the characters…While the characters feel isolates and alone, they are in fact part of a vibrant, interrelated community.” This shows the plot is also exciting, imaginative and well-structured because the twenty different characters are all connected and show some kind of relationship. Speaking of relationships, the book also shows diversity to which readers can relate to the characters. Not only does it mention friendships, but also gay, lesbian and straight relationships.

Nast, Phil. “Finding Wonders: Three Girls Who Changed Science.” *NEA*, [www.nea.org/tools/lessons/70911.htm](http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/70911.htm).

Finding Wonders is a historical novel verse giving a quick summary of the lives of three woman scientists. While Finding Wonders is targeted for the younger audience, it can be read at any age. It gives a simple, but wonderfully crafted rundown of Maria Sibylla Merian a scientific illustrator, Mary Anning, a paleontologist and Maria Mitchell, an astronomer. Each of these women changed science and were pioneers in their fields. This book gives young ones, especially young girls, the inspiration to pursue careers in the STEM fields. It reminds them, that girls can do it too, all it takes is motivation and determination. This fits the Exeter quality of characters going beyond typical experiences, and the readers can then learn from the characters and apply that knowledge in their own lives. I would also say this fits the exciting plot because of the struggles these women had to face. Their common struggle, being a woman, but they each faces other difficulties; however, they overcame. The language is also informative because it based on real lives. The above citation provides a little more information about the scientists as well as links to more info and lesson plans. As mentioned this book is aimed at a younger generation; however, the cite gives a lesson plan for grades 6-12. It could be done perhaps after reading the section in which the lesson coincides. The book itself also lists its’s own bibliography. I found Women in Science – 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World to be another companion (not in verse, but also YA).

Sheahan-Bright, Dr. Robyn. “Teacher Notes.” Allen and Unwin, Sydney. PDF

The above citation, Dr. Robyn Sheahan- Bright informs about Sold by Patricia McCormick. This book is about courage and survival. A 13-old girl who lives in Nepal and is sold into prostitution under false pretenses. Sold contains a strong female character whose experiences go beyond that of normal teen experiences. Dr. Sheahan-Bright talks about the themes of the book, freedom, strength, cruelty, courage and friendship. These are themes that teens reflect upon. She also develops curriculum topics for teachers, as well as gives other resources. Sold is also an example of a book that informs truthfully about the wider world, and engages readers with difficult and challenging issues relating to global concern. Dr. Sheahan-Bright shows this by giving facts about human trafficking such as outcomes and maltreatment. She also uses quotes from the book to talk about how it portrays what is happening in the world and our communities. In terms of text complexity, Dr. Sheahan-Bright also mentions different types of prose and verses in which the book is constructed.

“Somewhere Among.” Simon & Schuster, [www.simonandschuster](http://www.simonandschuster).com/books/Somewhere-Among/Annie-Donwerth-Chikamatsu/9781481437875/reading\_group\_guide.

 Somewhere Among by Annie Donwerth-Chikamatsu is another excellent example of book written in verse. This book fits the theme of identity and discrimination. While the age group is directed at a younger crowd, older teens and adults can relate to the concepts and themes. The main character Ema is biracial, bicultural and bilingual, so the people who are of mixed ethnicities can relate to the everyday plight Ema feels. This coincides with the Exeter quality of characters reflecting your experiences. Because the book’s setting is Tokyo and the characters are Japanese, the reader gets a look into a different culture. Traditions as well as language. Therefore, the Exeter quality of themes that inform truthfully about the wider world is displayed. The above citation is a reading guide and teaching source, and so it lists the Japanese holidays and what page numbers in which they occur. Another common experience some teen/young ones may face is bullying. Ema faces exactly this. Again, the reading guide lists when Ema experiences bullying and when she responds with the same type of behavior. An activity then has the children free write about a time when they or a friend have been bullied and what can be done about it. Including who to rope in, like parents, teachers and the school.

Tara. “ Paper Hearts by Meg Wiviott.” *The Reading Corner*, 17 Feb. 2016.

Paper Hearts by Meg Wiviott is another example of a book courage and survival. It is also a historical fiction novel about two Holocaust survivors named Zlatka and Fania. The story follows these two girls as they survive the Concentration Camps and Death March. Upon Fania’s birthday, Zlatka made heart (booklet of sorts) for her and the other women in the camp signed it. The heart is laced with words of hope and messages of friendship. This alone was a huge risk and could be cause for death and thus shows the strength of resistance. Paper Hearts is an excellent example of learning about the wider world and global concerns. The citation has links to other websites, one including the Montreal Holocaust Museum where that heart is now on display. Throughout the book, there are words in Hebrew, German and Yiddish and at the back of the book, the author provides a glossary. As well as a section on what she tells is true with her own bibliography.

Books with Poetic Prose:

Clark, Amy Allen. “Sundays With Writers: Every Last Word by Tamara Ireland Stone.” MomAdvice, 14 June 2015, [www.momadvice.com/post/sundays-with-writers-every-last-word-by-tamara-ireland-stone](http://www.momadvice.com/post/sundays-with-writers-every-last-word-by-tamara-ireland-stone).

Lockhart, Rebecca. “Review: Every Last Word by Tamara Ireland Stone.” Unbound Pages, 15 June 2015, unboundpages.com/review-every-last-word-by-tamara/.

 Teens look for diverse characters in which they can relate. This includes characters of mental illness and in Every Last Word, OCD in particular. The main character also deals with scenarios and problems that teen may deal with, including wanting to fit in with the crowd. Another Exeter quality incorporated within this story are characters that go beyond typical experiences to learn and develop in their own lives. Because the main character Sam has OCD, it sheds light on common misconceptions of OCD and how it affects her. With her experience’s, readers can learn from Sam and apply growth in their own lives. Sam also deals with the daily problems in high school that teens can relate to, as well as first love. This book is under poetic prose because as Rebecca Lockhart puts it, “words are truly therapeutic, whether you are reading or writing them.” Words can heal and the main character uses writing (poetry) to express her thoughts.

Dickinson-Ellison, K Ashley. “I'll Give You the Sun: Book Review and Teaching         Ideas.” *Teaching the Apocalypse*, 24 Nov. 2015, [www.teachingtheapocalypse.com/the-apocalyptic-era-teaching--yak-lit-blog/ill-give-you-the-sun-book-review-and-teaching-ideas](http://www.teachingtheapocalypse.com/the-apocalyptic-era-teaching--yak-lit-blog/ill-give-you-the-sun-book-review-and-teaching-ideas).

While I’ll Give You the Sun is not in verse, the writing shows elements of poetic prose. The language is magical and colorful where the art comes to life. For example, as stated by Dickinson, “Noah talks in images…interpreting the world through colors and visual analysis.” Dickinson also shows how the book contains Exeter qualities. These being well structured plots. The novel jumps from the perspective of the twins as well as jumps from past to present. As Dickinson mentions, “moves seamlessly between the present and the past, revolving around a critical event that profoundly affects the lives of the twins.” The characters also reflect experiences of teen readers. It is a coming of age story that has aspects of love and sexuality. As well as trying to figure out who you are. Siblings also deal with common experiences teens face like that of applying to school, a death in the family (grief) and a few other heavy topics.

Staff, NPR. “This Weekend, Pick Up the Pieces With 'Gabi'.” NPR, NPR, 14 Dec. 2014, [www.npr.org/2014/12/14/370098154/this-weekend-pick-up-the-pieces-with-gabi](http://www.npr.org/2014/12/14/370098154/this-weekend-pick-up-the-pieces-with-gabi).

The above citation showcases Gabi, A Girl in Pieces by Isabel Quintero as well as an interview with the author. The review expresses Exeter qualities of characters who reflect experiences of teen readers. Gabi is a strong female protagonist that talks about body positivity as well as the standards society shoves on women and girls, sexuality and the differing of rules between boys and girls. With her strong voice, Gabi tells the truth and doesn’t hold back. The text is also lively, varied, informative language. Because the main character is bicultural and bilingual, the text often has Spanish phrases and words. Again, this is novel is not written in verse, but has poetic prose as well as Gabi’s poems. Her poems help her relate and express the struggles of her father, school and well life.

The link above will take you to the site and then click my name for the book talk. Below are few  Exeter qualities and why The Book Thief is an amazing read. Exeter Qualities 1 and 2: The plot is well structured, imaginative and exciting. Death tells the story, and gives you snippets of the future; then goes back to tell how it happened. So, there is a slight jump in time frames. Exeter Quality 5 and 8: The story is lively, varied, informative language that is grammatically correct. First the story is very lyrical and poetic. It also contains phrases and words of another language (German) without making it unreadable because you don’t know the language. Exeter Quality 6: Themes that inform truthfully about the wider world. This YA book is a historical fiction novel about WWII and Nazi Germany. It also shows the side that not all Germans agreed with Hitler’s philosophy.

Poem Collection:

Gilmore, Darlene, and Edwin F Stevens. Individual Learning Packet. Preswick House, 2005, www.prestwickhouse.com/samples/300962.pdf. PDF

The above citation is a lesson plan for dissecting and understanding The Rose That Grew From Concrete by Tupac Shakur. It covers Exeter qualities like varied levels of sophistication that will lead to the continued development of reading skills. For example, there is a list of vocabulary words, structure of poems and literary terms. Knowing and learning these devices help better understand the meanings behind the poems. The cite also mentions the central themes that teens can relate to, which include survival, self-discovery, friendship, love, drugs, violence, social and political views. The above themes also fit Exeter quality of possible emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with personal issues. Teens can look at these poems and strive to do better, be better. No matter what, they can reach their dreams. They don’t have to be a product of their environment if they don’t want to be. Poems can give inspiration and motivation and I think The Rose That Grew From Concrete is the perfect example of that.