

***The Chosen* by Chaim Potok (Published by Ballantine Books)**

Approved for use in Honors Communication Arts I

Summary

On a smaller scale, this is simply a story about the friendship between two Jewish boys in Brooklyn during the 1940's. On a much deeper level, this is a novel about the powerful role a father plays in a son's life, the difficulties of growing up, the issues surrounding immigrants and those practicing the Jewish faith in a new land, and the dichotomy between the growth of a new nation (Israel) and the destruction and horror of World War II. While set in a tiny Hasidic community in Brooklyn, the themes of friendship, undying love between father and son, and the search for identity, are quite universal.

Connection to the Curriculum

The coming-of-age/search for identity theme is central to the CAI Honors curriculum as well as the in-depth analysis of the complexities of character. Honors students will develop a firm understanding of how to read a novel on multiple levels: for plot, for character development, for understanding of an historical period, and for a greater understanding of a particular religious community. Likewise, freshmen will find a piece of themselves in the protagonists' lives; the student will follow the characters' quests to become young men with their uniqueness intact.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing across the curriculum. 3.2- The students use the writing process.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.13- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (character traits and motives, themes, use of literary devices, etc.) in the literary text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies different types of character (protagonist, antagonist, round, flat, static, dynamic) and analyzes the development of characters.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback, irony, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, satire, allusion, paradox, etc.) in a text.

Writing:

3.2.5- The student produces a final copy in one of the following modes: narration, exposition, persuasion, and poetry.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

This story examines the generational and cultural conflicts between a Jewish father and his son who begins to have questions. In addition, Potok expresses both points of view concerning the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state. The conflicts, although many are rooted in religion, provide universal themes for discussion.

AP Connections

The development of four strong characters in this novel provides honors students an opportunity to examine the craft of characterization as a stylistic element.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities