

***A Separate Peace* by John Knowles (Published by Scribner)**

Approved for use in Honors Communication Arts I and Communication Arts I

Summary

Against the backdrop of WWII raging far away in Europe, a group of privileged East Coast prep school boys begin their summer session. Isolated from the madness of war, the boys embark on a typical idyllic summer: swimming in the local river, taking advantage of a more laid back faculty and making plans for mischief. Among these boys are Gene and Finny; as classic character foils, they discover the profound meaning of friendship through many escapades and, eventually, one shocking incident. These characters, and others, form “a separate peace” as the war moves ever closer to their eighteen-year-old lives.

Connection to the Curriculum

This novel is ideal for honors freshmen as it follows a classic pattern of “coming of age” novels while delving more maturely into the complex, and sometimes darker, realm of young adult friendship. The novel is also a fine tool for following reoccurring symbols and other archetypes (particularly seasonal). Finally, *A Separate Peace* is a transition work of literature, bridging the gap between the students’ reading maturity from middle school to high school.

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. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author’s style (word choice, sentence structure) and use of literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback, irony, symbolism, tone, mood, etc.) work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

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

Literature:

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

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

Writing:

3.2.5- The student uses the writing process to develop a final copy in one of the following modes: narration, exposition, persuasion, or 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 text includes mild violence associated with adolescent boys’ behavior in a prep school setting. Readers encounter the death of a main character. This event contributes to the development of the story which leaves readers wondering what makes a true leader and what makes a true friend.

AP Connections

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:
To be completed during future curriculum development activities