

Theodore Boone: kid lawyer

Thirteen-year-old Theodore, the son of two lawyers, would rather be working in a law office than attending school and he tries to find a way to attend the court case of the year – a murder trial. Unexpectedly he becomes involved when he finds an unknown witness and evidence that could have an impact on the trial and he must try to protect his friends and honour while doing the right thing. John Grisham's first young people's novel would be suitable for read-aloud, literature circles, book clubs, and independent reading for grades 6-8 and could be used for research and discussion of legal and illegal immigration, law, and ethical choices and decisions.

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?

Moderately

THIS PRODUCT SUPPORTS THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF THE BC CURRICULUM:

- Communication
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

This novel supports the ELA Big Ideas of "Exploring and sharing stories helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others" and "Exploring multiple perspectives extends our thinking." Readers are exposed to an age-appropriate character who is thoughtful, knowledgeable, reflective, ethical, and engaged. The text supports the ELA 7 Curricular Competency of "Comprehend and connect" in "recognizing and identifying the role of personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives in texts." Themes like immigration and ethical decisions support the SS 6

Curricular Competency, "Make ethical judgments about events that consider the conditions of a particular time and place."

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

The novel could be used for class read-aloud, literature circles, book clubs, selective, and independent reading. The main character is consumed with anything related to the judicial system. Exposure to laws and courtroom procedures could support teachers in the development of debating structures and techniques. Storyline content such as legal and illegal immigration, law, and ethical choices and decisions could be used for research and discussion topics as well as support for many of the Personal and Social Core Competencies. The strong development of characters, setting, and plot could be used as an example of effective story structure and narrative fiction.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gender Roles, Identity & Sexual Orientation:

Theodore's classes are separated by gender.

Ethical:

When a relative of a friend confides in him, Theodore has to make choices and decisions based on ethics and the law. He tries to do this without adult input. Theodore rides his bike down the wrong way on a street. On his bike, he trespasses through people's yards to get to school faster.

Safety:

Theodore rides his bike down the wrong way on a street. He trespasses on his bike to get to school. His dad smokes a pipe in front of him.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?

Extensively

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS COMMENTS:

The novel is written at an age-appropriate level and students will be able to identify with the young, highly-driven protagonist. The narrator, Theo, is a very independent 13-year-old boy. Theo attempts to solve an important criminal issue alone, but later realizes that he is not old enough, and

therefore goes to his Uncle, and later his parents, for help. There is opportunity for readers to consider ethical decision making, and to question choices that are made in the story.

GENERAL CONTENT

CONTENT

Is the resource engaging?

Extensively

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?

Extensively

Is the content timely and important for student broad understandings?

Extensively

AUDIENCE:

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

Extensively

Can the content be differentiated?

Moderately

Can reading level be adjusted?

Moderately

Is the level of detail appropriate?

Extensively

Is the content of particular interest to male students?

Extensively

Is the content of particular interest to female students?

Extensively

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

Extensively

The plot of the story is well-developed and engaging. The text reading level cannot be adjusted, but the book is available in audio format. Students who are not at appropriate grade level in reading can still listen to and follow the story. The language is appropriate for the emotional and cognitive maturity of adolescent students.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?

Extensively

Is the resource easy to use?

Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation uniform?

Extensively

Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?

Extensively

The novel is presented with text size and font that is uniform and easy to read. The margins are standard throughout the book. The book is chunked into 22 untitled chapters that mark transitions in time and events. The story is told from the third person narrative perspective.

PRINT NOVEL

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?

Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?

Extensively

PLOT DESCRIPTION:

Thirteen-year-old Theodore Boone would rather be working in a law office than attending school. He is the only child of two lawyer parents and his life is consumed with anything to do with the judicial system. Theodore tries to find every way possible to attend the court event of the year, a murder trial.

He does not expect to become part of the trial but he discovers an unknown witness and evidence that directly impacts the proceedings. Theodore must find a way to protect his friends and honour while doing the right thing in the eye of the law.

RELATED COMMENTS:

Theo recognizes that he is over his head when a witness reveals to him information that could change the outcome of the murder trial. He struggles to make the right decision and seeks out his uncle, and later his parents, to help. He realizes that he is too young to follow through on his own. Theo loves supporting others with their legal issues. Students and adults seek out Theo for advice with their problems. He offers his expert information free of charge.

GENRE:

Mystery / Suspense

LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Complex conflict
- Rich Characterization
- Well-developed themes
- Point of view

TYPE:

Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

READABILITY:

- At intended grade level(s)

This book is the first in a series of six.