

Looking for Alaska

John Green

Miles Harter goes to Culver Creek Boarding School to experience the Great Perhaps referred to by the poet Francois Rabelais. It is there that the first friends he ever made give him his nickname, Pudge. Pudge manages to be philosophical about the meaning of life at school, but he also uses this captivating first-person narrative to explore the nature of friendship, loss, sexuality and experimentation.

Subjects: English Language Arts
Grades 11-12

Evaluation Date: May 2010



Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

Literature circles, whole class, read aloud / discussion

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical and Legal

In the section 'one hundred twenty-eight days before', students are smoking underage - this is repeated throughout the novel. In 'one hundred twenty-seven days before', students are described as drinking underage and smoking marijuana. Underage characters drink and buy alcohol with fake identifications throughout the novel.

Humour

In 'forty-nine days before', Miles and Alaska watch a porn video together; it is described in some detail. The idea of pornography is critiqued by the characters.

Safety

In 'one hundred twenty-seven days before', Miles is kidnapped from his dorm room, duct-taped, and thrown into the lake in his boxer shorts. He could have drowned, but made it to shore. Most of the pranks in the novel contain safety issues such as fireworks and contacting escort services. At the beginning of the 'after' section, the main characters discover that Alaska has died in a car accident that occurred as a result of her drinking and driving.

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



Extensively

Throughout the novel, the characters use profanity, but it suits their personalities and contributes to the book's believability. The characters engage in underage drinking and smoking, and there are references to marijuana use. Some teachers and students will be unsettled by the frequent references to sexuality.


GENERAL CONTENT

Content

Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?


 Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?


 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

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


 Extensively

PRINT NOVEL

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

 Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?

 Extensively

Plot description

Miles Harter goes to Culver Creek Boarding School to experience the 'Great Perhaps' referred to by the poet Francois Rabelais. It is there that the first friends he's ever made give him his nickname, 'Pudge'. Pudge manages to be philosophical about the meaning of life at school, but he also uses this captivating first-person narrative to explore the nature of friendship, loss, sexuality and experimentation.

Related Comments

Author John Green explores many resounding issues that are significant to adolescents: sexuality, smoking and underage drinking, drinking and driving, drug use, and suicide. He eloquently introduces themes such as coming of age, socio-economic status, and the search for meaning. Suitable and appealing for both male and female students, the well-structured 'before-and-after' plot will encourage even reluctant readers to finish the novel.

Genre

- Contemporary

Type

- Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reading Level

- At intended grade level(s)

GRADES AND SUBJECTS

Subjects

- English Language Arts: 11-12
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ADDITIONAL INFO

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2005

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