

### Theme: Identity

1. The theme that we chose for our text set is “identity”. Our identity is something formed individually and by the community in which we live and participate. It is what defines who we are and molds how we act and react to our daily life experiences. We chose this theme to use with fifth grade students because we felt that it is around this time that students begin to discover who they are individually compared to who they are as defined by their family, friends, etc. This year before middle school it is vital for students to understand all the different ways that our identity can be formed and all the variables that can affect it. It is important that they see both positive and negative ways that one’s identity can change based on their surroundings and influences so that then when they reach middle school they are more keenly aware of how they might be affected by their family, peers, events, etc. For these reasons, the “identity” theme is both applicable and relatable to our students. With the variety of characters and situations found in these books, every student will find something or someone they can relate to. The theme of “identity” includes discovery and exploration of oneself, the influence a society can have on an individual, and others’ perception of who we are as individuals.

We chose this theme to work with because fifth grade students because this is the beginning of when students begin to really individualize and define themselves. There are so many different variables we as people can be influenced by, and we hope that the books in this text set will help develop their awareness of who they are and what they will be going through. Not only that, but this is a theme that continues throughout literature at various levels, therefore being something the students can continue to explore throughout their academic career and beyond. We were able to find many books that centered on this theme, but there are many more as well at almost every level. This means that the text set could be expanded and books could be added to it in order to include students at a greater difference than just two grade levels from the class grade level. The

characters from the books chosen include a variety of ages and genders, so as to be appealing to all students. There is also a variety in genres, reading levels, and multicultural influences. We thought this was important to help the students' thoughts about identity expand beyond what they know and recognize in their own lives, while also finding books that would be relatable to our ethnically diverse students. Overall, we feel that the applicable theme and wide variety would make this a very appealing text set for our fifth grade students.

**When we reach adolescence, it becomes harder to figure out our identity, or who we are.**

This is the biggest idea of our theme, and will be available on the blackboard for students to reflect on throughout the unit. All of the books in our text set will give our students a different insight to this essential understanding. Within this overall theme are several broad ideas that we would like our students to understand from reading this set of books. They include:

- Who we are is defined by our experiences, both good and bad
  - *Diary of a Young Girl*
  - *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*
  - *A Year of Impossible Goodbyes*
  - *Persepolis: A Story of A Childhood*
  - *The Field Guide*
  - *Bridge to Terabithia*
  - *Me, Frida*
  - *American Born Chinese*
  
- The way we see ourselves depends on how others see us
  - *Arilla Sundown*
  - *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*
  - *The Face on the Milk Carton*
  - *The Bean Trees*
  - *The Adrian Mole Diaries*

- *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*
- *FireGirl*
  
- We can change the identity given to us by others
  - *Alanna: The First Adventure*
  - *The Giver*
  - *Holes*
  - *An Audience for Einstein*
  - *The Princess Diaries*
  - *Criss Cross*
  - *Esperanza Rising*
  - *Among the Hidden*
  - *Jacob Have I Loved*
  - *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*
  
- The identity we are given by society only exists if we allow it to
  - *The Rough Face Girl*
  - *The Star of Kazan*
  - *Eragon*
  - *Grandpa Green*

## **Books Summaries and Rationale**

### **Instructional Books**

Alanna: The First Adventure— A young girl wants to become a knight in a male dominated world. She disguises herself as a boy and sets off for the capital city of Tortall to become a page. Here, Alanna encounters a King's uncle bent on the throne, a King of Thieves who sees right through her disguise and a life as a page that is much more difficult than she ever dreamed.

The Giver— In a seemingly perfect society, Jonas is bored with his memory free existence. Until he turns twelve, and is handed his assigned job as the Receiver. Then he learns the true meaning of memories and decides to give them back to those they truly belong to.

Diary of a Young Girl— The year is 1940 in Nazi occupied Germany. Anne Frank is 13 years old, and only just now discovering who she is. This book discusses her interpretations of the war and her discovering who she is as a girl, a Jew, and a daughter trapped in the secret annex.

Journey to the River Sea-- Maia is a young orphaned girl who dreams of exploring the world outside of her orphanage. When her distant relatives from Brazil come to claim her, Maia is plunged into a world of mystery, high society along the Amazon, and more room to explore the world than she ever dreamed possible.

Arilla Sun Down— Arilla is a half black half Native American girl struggling to understand her biracial identity and trying to find her place in her family . As if that wasn't bad enough, her family moves to Ohio where she has to start over and figure out who she wants

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to be in this new place without being overshadowed by her popular older brother.

Holes— Stanley Yelnats has the unfortunate opportunity to always be in the wrong place at the wrong time. When a pair of stolen sneakers turn up in his backpack, he is sent to Camp Green Lake, where all they do is dig holes. After some discovery of who he is, Stanley fixes his family's curse, saves his friend Zero, and ends up wealthier than he ever imagined.

### **Read Alouds**

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian— Junior is tired of life on the reservation, and seeks a way out of it. When he decides to begin attending the all white school just off the reservation, however, he discovers how hard it is to change who you are, based on the people you are with. Based on Sherman Alexie's experiences in middle school, Junior's tale is funny, and a little sad, as you journey with him through being white sometimes, and Indian the rest of the time.

Why I read this book aloud: This book addresses some major race issues, involved in Junior's decision to go to school off the reservation, that should be addressed as a class. It also discusses some racial stereotypes attached to the Native American culture that I believe will be best handled, and rejected, as a class rather than on an individual basis. It is a very short read, however, which makes it all the better for reading aloud as a class.

The Rough Face Girl— This is the Algonquin Cinderella story. *The Rough Face Girl* teaches us to embrace who we are, in order to find who we are within.

Why I read this book aloud: This book is a simple picture book that very quickly addresses the theme of identity. Not only can we pick this book apart with its similarities to our version of the Cinderella story, but it also gives us a jumping off point, so to speak, for a unit about identity, and discovering who we are.

The Wall: Growing up Behind the Iron Curtain— This is the true story of a boy who named Peter who grew up on the communist side of the “Iron Curtain.” As a young boy he was proud to wear his red scarf and stand for Stalin, but as he begins to reach adolescence, some parts of the curtain begin to crack and fall away, allowing western knowledge to creep into his life, making him question everything he knows and believes in. This story chronicles his journey in finding the balance between what he has always known and what he is learning, and the impact that that journey has on who he becomes.

Why I read this book aloud: This book is marked as a read-aloud because it covers some pretty intense themes, vocabulary, and a time in history that the students are probably not familiar with. For example, the phrase the “Iron Curtain” is one that is key to understanding parts of the story (including the title), but isn’t something that can just be looked up in a dictionary if the students’ do not already know its meaning. It would also generate some really deep and thoughtful grand discussions about how where we are from and outside sources shape our identity.

### **Classroom Library**

The variety found in our classroom library will allow that the theme can appeal to and reach various students, supporting and challenging them at their reading level. The range of genres, plots, protagonists, and supporting characters make it so that it attracts a wide range in audience. All of the books focus on some sort of identity struggle, instigated by family, friends, and/ or oneself.

The books in the library have characters from multiple different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds so that there is no one standard or “normal” situation being portrayed, but rather there is a sense of inclusivity and acceptance of various different backgrounds, moral and religious beliefs, etc. We felt that this was important because those things help to shape our individual identities, and we didn’t want our students to only get one perspective of what that might look like.

Finally, the books range from more recently published titles to stories that we read in our childhood or that we would consider classics for this age group. Many of the books we chose are award-winning as well. We hope that this set will provide our students with a variety of sources to explore the theme of identity, as they, too, begin their personal journeys of defining themselves.

<b>IDENTITY</b>					
Title/Author	Publisher and Date Published	Novel or Picture Book?	Genre	Multicultural, Award Winning	Level and Leveling System
<b>Instructional Books</b>					
<i>Alanna: The First Adventure</i> By Tamora Pierce	Atheneum (2002)	Novel	Adventure/Myth	2003 Yalsa Popular Paperback for Young Adults	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Fry
<i>The Giver</i> By Lois Lowry	Ember (2006)	Novel	Science Fiction	1994 Newbery Medal, 1994 Mythopoeic Fantasy Award Nominee for Children's Literature, 1996 Garden State Book Award for Teen Fiction Grades 6-8, 1996 Rebecca Caudill Young Reader's Book Award, 1995 Grand Canyon Reader Award for Teen Book	12 and up/7 <sup>th</sup> Grade and up, Amazon
<i>Diary of a Young Girl</i> By Anne Frank	Random House(1993)	Novel	Autobiography		4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Fry
<i>Journey to the River</i>	Penguin Group	Novel	Adventure		Ages 8

<i>Sea</i> By Eva Ibbotson	(2003)				and up, Book Cover
<i>Arilla Sun Down</i> By Virginia Hamilton	Scholastic, Inc. (1995)	Novel	Fiction	Multicultural	700L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Holes</i> BY Louis Sachar	Random House Children's (2000)	Novel	Satirical Fiction	"National Book Awards – 1998". National Book Foundation, "Newbery Medal and Honor Books, 1922-Present". Association for Library Service to Children	5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Amazon
<b>Read Alouds</b>					
<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian</i> By Sherman Alexie	Little, Brown Books (2007)	Novel	Realistic Fiction	Multicultural, 2007 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, 2008 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, 2009 Odyssey Award, 2010 California Young Reader Medal	600L, 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Rough Face Girl</i> By Rafe Martin	Puffin (1998)	Picture Book	Fairy Tale	"Multicultural, 1995 Virginia State Reading Association Young Readers Award, Golden Sower Award, 1994, 1994-5 Georgia Children's Picture Storybook Award, IRA Teacher's Choice Award, 1993, Child Study Children's Book Committee "Children's Book of the Year 1993", 1993 Association of Booksellers for Children, Booksellers' Choice Award, Pick of the Lists, American Bookseller, 1993-94 Texas Bluebonnet Award Master Reading List, Utah 1995 Children's Picture Book Award Nominee, Children's Book Award Nominee, North Carolina Library Association"	540L, 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain</i> By Peter Sis	Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (2007)	Picture Book	Autobiography	2008 Caldecott Honor Book, New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Books of the Year, Parents' Choice Award Winner, Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Blue Ribbon Award, Publishers Weekly Best Children's Books of the Year, VOYA's Nonfiction Honor List, Robert F. Sibert Award, Capitol Choices Noteworthy Titles for Children and Teens	R, Fountas and Pinnell

Classroom Library					
<i>An Audience for Einstein</i> By Mark Wakely	Mundania (2005)	Novel	Science Fiction		720L, 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Year of Impossible Goodbyes</i> By Sook Nyui Choi	Random House Children's (1993)	Novel	Historical Fiction	Multicultural, Judy Lopez Book Award by the National Women's Book Association, 1992, Selected for "Best Books for Young Adults" list by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Selected for "Best Books for the Teen Age 1992" list by the New York Public Library for young people, ages 12–18, American Library Association Notable Book, Selected for "Bulletin Blue Ribbon for 1991" by the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, A "Hungry Mind Review" Book of Distinction, State Book Awards Master Reading Lists: States of Alabama, Kansas, Maine, Utah, Vermont, Illinois, Georgia, and Indiana, School Library Journal List of "One Hundred Books Too Good to Miss", 1998.	R, Fauntas and Pinnell
<i>The Star of Kazan</i> By Eva Ibbotson	Penguin group (2006)	Novel	Speculative Fiction		Ages 8 and up, Back of Book
<i>The Princess Diaries</i> By Meg Cabot	HarperCollins (2008)	Novel	Comedic Fiction	2001 American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, 2001 American Library Association Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, 2001 New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age, 2002 International Reading Association/Children's Book Council Young Adults' Choice, 2002–2003 Volunteer State Book Award (Tennessee), 2003 Evergreen Young Adult Book Award (Washington)	920L, 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Face on the Milk Carton</i> By Caroline B.	Bantam Books (1990)	Novel	Fantasy		6.2, Microsoft

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<i>Persepolis: A Story of A Childhood</i> By: Marjane Satrapi	Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group (2004)	Novel	Autobiography	Multicultural, New York Times Notable Book, Time Magazine “Best Comix of the Year”, San Francisco Chronicle and Los Angeles Times Best-seller	380L, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Criss Cross</i> By Lynne Rae Perkins	HarperCollins (2008)	Novel	Fiction		820L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Bean Trees</i> By Barbara Kingsolver	Harper and Row (1988)	Novel	Travel Fiction		900L, 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Esperanza Rising</i> By Pam Munoz Ryan	Scholastic, Inc. (2002)	Novel	Historical Fiction	Multicultural, Pura Belpre Award, American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, IRA Notable Book for a Global Society, NCSS/CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, Smithsonian Institution Notable Book for Children, Jane Addams Children's Book Award Winner, Willa Cather Award Winner, Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist, New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year 2000	750L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Adrian Mole Diaries</i> By Sue Townsend	HarperCollins (2010)	Novel	Realistic Fiction		780L, 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Field Guide</i> By Tony DiTerlizzi	Simon and Schuster (2003)	Novel	Fantasy		600L, 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Eragon</i> By Christopher Paolini	Random House Children’s (2003)	Novel	Fantasy	2004 Book Sense Book of the Year	710L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Among the Hidden</i> By Margaret Peterson Haddix	Simon and Schuster (2000)	Novel	Science Fiction		800L, 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>Confessions of a Teenage Drama</i>	Candlewick Press (1999)	Novel	Comedic Fiction		710L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade,

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<i>Queen</i> By Dyan Sheldon					Lexile
<i>Jacob Have I Loved</i> By Katherine Paterson	HarperCollins (1990)	Novel	Historical Fiction	1981 Newbery Medal	880L, 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Bridge to Terabithia</i> By Katherine Paterson	HarperCollins (1987)	Novel	Speculative Fiction	1978 Newbery Medal	6.1, Microsoft
<i>FireGirl</i> By Tony Abbott	Little Brown Books (2007)	Novel	Realistic Fiction	2007 Golden Kite Award for Fiction	N, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade, Fountas and Pinnell
<i>Me, Frida</i> By Amy Novesky and David Diaz	Abrams, Harry N., Inc. (2010)	Picture Book	Biography	Multicultural, 2011 Belpre Illustrator Honor Book	3.6, Microsoft
<i>Grandpa Green</i> By Lane Smith	Roaring Book Press (2011)	Picture Book	Realistic Fiction	A Caldecott Honor Book, New York Times Best Illustrated Book, A Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book, Silver Medal Society Of Illustrators, An Amazon Best Book, Kansas City Star Top 100 Books, A Barnes & Noble Best Book, A SLJ Best Book, Seven Impossible Things Top Ten, A Time Out New York Kids Best Book, Junior Library Guild Selection	360L, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade, Lexile
<i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> By Brian Selznick	Scholastic, Inc. (2007)	Novel	Mystery/Suspense	2008 Caldecott Medal	Q, 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Fountas and Pinnell
<i>American Born Chinese</i> By Gene Luen Yang	Square Fish (2008)	Graphic Novel	Comic Book, Legend/Myth	Multicultural, 2007 Michael L. Printz Award,[2] the 2007 Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album: New, the Publishers Weekly Comics Week Best Comic of the Year, the San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year, the 2006/2007 Best Book Award from The Chinese American Librarians	530L, 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, Lexile

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				Association, and Amazon.com Best Graphic Novel/Comic of the Year. It also made the Booklist Top Ten Graphic Novel for Youth, the NPR Holiday Pick, and Time (Magazine) Top Ten Comic of the Year	
TOTALS	Note: Some of the publication dates listed are reprint dates.	4 Picture Books, 1 Graphic Novel, 26 Novels	14 Genres	18 Award winning, 8 Multicultural	6 Leveling Systems