NCTE How to Write a Rationale Template

(This template was created by the NCTE Standing Committee Against Censorship in 2022.
It is in its pilot year.)

1. Title, author, year (and image of cover if picturebook)
2. Target grade level and audience
3. Plot summary, genre(s), theme(s), award(s), and reviews (250 words and a few links)
4. State standards connections. Include specific strands, and potentially indicators, that can be taught using this text; address two or three standards; use the standards of your own state and cite specific standards (e.g., CCST, TEK).
5. Suggested teaching approaches. Consider links to Read/Write/Think, pairings with canonical works, links to NCTE Blog posts, and other links (about 200 words total).
6. Alternative texts for families who want options (two or three texts with one sentence each as to why it is an alternative and a link to the publisher’s website)
7. Potential for challenge:
   a. Clear, brief explanation of what topics, characters, or other elements are included in this book that could lead to a challenge (about 200 words)
   b. Links to resources for approaching those topics
8. Having read and thought about this book as a teacher, briefly describe the unique ways in which this book is valuable for the curriculum and/or for a classroom library (about 200 words).
9. Additional references (relevant links to support teachers)
Sample Picturebook Rationale

1. *Hair Love*, Matthew A. Cherry, 2019

2. Target grade level and audience

   **Target grade level:** EC-3

   **Audience:** two to eight years

3. Plot summary, genre(s), theme(s), award(s), and reviews

   **Plot summary:** The main character, Zuri, is African American and has natural hair. In the first part of the book, Zuri’s father reassures her that her hair is beautiful, and that makes her proud. The plot revolves around Zuri and her father trying multiple hairstyles for a special event until they find something that works.

   **Genre(s):** realistic fiction

   **Theme(s):** power of persistence, family love, dads and daughters, and self-acceptance

   **Award(s):** [Amelia Bloomer Book List](#)

   **Reviews**

   - Kirkus review: “Positively refreshing"
   - *School Library Journal:* “A wonderful slice-of-life tale about family support, black hair, and embracing individuality”

4. TEKS connections

   The standard is 3.6.E—The student is expected to: make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.

   The standard is 3.11.B(ii)—The student is expected to: develop drafts into a focused, structured, and coherent piece of writing by: developing an engaging idea with relevant details.

5. Suggested teaching approaches

   There are various ways to use the book *Hair Love* in ELAR—for instance, making connections from text to self, text to text, and text to world; making predictions
using the book and inferences using the short film; discussing and explaining the
author’s purpose; and sequencing and synthesizing information.

This lesson focuses on generating questions before, during, and after reading the
book Hair Love.

This lesson has students fill in an All About Me poster and create a self-portrait,
with emphasis on making hair with modeling clay. Also, students will be asking
questions before, during, and after reading.

This lesson has the teacher read the book aloud, then show a short film version.
Students then compare and contrast the book and the film using a Venn diagram.

6. Alternative texts

The Hair Book by Graham Tether shows people and animals with different hair
types.

This Is My Hair by Todd Parr inspires others to feel comfortable no matter how
their hair looks.

Hair by Leslie Patricelli states that it is important to take care of your hair even if
you have only one piece of hair.

7. Potential for Challenge

The National Coalition Against Censorship says that books with themes focusing
on race and gender expression are being challenged most frequently. This book
focuses on African American hairstyles and a father taking a nontraditional role
by helping his daughter style her hair.

8. Having read and thought about this book as a teacher, briefly describe the unique
ways in which this book is valuable for the curriculum and/or for a classroom library.

This book is special because it shows a father and his daughter having a healthy
and positive relationship. It is vital for students to read about because there are
endless negative stereotypes about Black fathers in the media. In this book, the
relationship between father and daughter is built through styling her hair, a way in
which her family expresses love. In addition, the book shows the many ways
Zuri’s hair acts and that there are many different hair textures within the African
American population.

9. Additional references: