

NCTE Book Rationale Template - Annotated for Writers

Information about the Book

Title, Author, Publisher, and Year *[Section titles should be bolded throughout.]*

Include the publisher and edition (if relevant). *[Helpful information for rationale writers is provided under each section title.]*

Target Grade Level and Audience; Reading Level; Lexile Measure

Include your source(s) and avoid abbreviations when possible. If copying information from a trusted site, provide a linked citation (e.g., “retrieved from publisher website”, “retrieved from [Perma-Bound.com](https://www.perma-bound.com)”).

Plot or Book Summary; Author Information; Genre(s); Format; and Themes, Awards, Reviews

[Up to 250 words, with embedded links as needed]

A plot/book summary will help teachers by giving an overview of the book’s content. It is preferred that rationale writers create their own summary. If needed, it can be copied from a source and pasted in with a linked citation (e.g., “retrieved from [Macmillan.com](https://www.macmillan.com)”), but it should be supplemented with additional useful information created by the writer. Summaries from Amazon or other third-party booksellers are not preferred. This section is also a good place to include relevant information about the author (e.g., ethnic background, tribal affiliation, author’s pronouns).

Reviews should be sourced from a *professional* journal or book news source, and there should be at least two, when available. (Examples: Kirkus, School Library Journal, Booklist, major news sources.) Include a quote from or a brief description of the review as well as an embedded link to the full version. (Consumer reviews from Amazon, Goodreads, and other such sources should not be used.)

Plot/Book Summary:

Genre: (e.g., realistic fiction, poetry, informational)

Format: (e.g., graphic novel, novel-in verse, picturebook)

Theme(s): (e.g., coming of age, family, first day of school)

Award(s): name and year (e.g., 2024 Charlotte Huck Award® Winner, 2024 Boston Globe-Horn Book Fiction Winner, 2024 Caldecott Medal Winner)

Reviews:

Details for Classroom Use

Potential for Challenge

[About 200 words]

Provide a clear, thorough explanation with at least some specific examples – such as details, quotes, and page or chapter numbers where applicable – of topics, characters,

scenes, or other elements of the book that could lead to a challenge. An exhaustive list is not necessary but do use honest and direct language about the challenges the text may pose or be perceived to pose for readers, parents, or administrators. Examples include profanity, sexual situations, violence, cruelty to animals, fatphobia, LGBTQIA+ content, witchcraft, immigration, racism or racist ideas or language, anti-police sentiments, and abuse.

Ways the Book Is Valuable to the Curriculum, Classroom, School Library, and/or Students

[At least 250 words]

Provide your recommendations as an educator for how and where this book could be used (e.g., curriculum, classroom library, book circles, choice reading). What value does it provide to foster learning and represent students or communities? Be thorough.

Standards Connections

Provide three or more examples from your state's standards or the Common Core State Standards.

Cite the specific standards that are relevant (e.g., CCSS, TEKS). The application should be broad, with additional detail provided in the next section. Standards can be included for different subjects, such as writing, reading, science, or social studies.

Standard 1 [Language and numeric identifiers copied and pasted]

How do you see this standard being generally applicable?

[How do you see this standard being generally applicable to the text? What are some basic ways you might apply or think about how this standard relates to the text?]

Standard 2

How do you see this standard being generally applicable?

Standard 3

How do you see this standard being generally applicable?

Suggested Teaching Approaches

[Provide three or more.]

Provide a description of each approach with relevant links to sources such as Read/Write/Think.org lessons, ideas for pairings with canonical works, links to NCTE blog posts that describe teaching approaches, or educator guides. You may also write your own approaches. It is especially helpful to include details about how to teach complex topics for heavily challenged books.

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Alternative and Paired Texts

[Provide three or more.]

Provide at least one alternative text for families who want options for an individual student—something that all parents have the right to ask for. Include alternative or paired books that come from multiple perspectives for a wider variety. Each example should include a clear, detailed sentence as to *why* it is a good fit as an alternative or paired text. Include key information about elements such as themes, content, when it was written, and point of view.

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Additional Resources

[Provide three or more.]

This is not a reference list or bibliography.

Provide a few short descriptions of useful resources, along with embedded links, for teachers to use to address potential areas of challenge, support students, or share with students as supplementary information not provided elsewhere in the rationale. Please note whether the resource is teacher- or student-focused. This is a good place to include information about book challenges that have occurred and any results of those challenges, including information from the book's author(s) about bans or challenges. (Examples of relevant sources include [Book Résumés](#), news articles, YouTube videos, songs, and social media posts.) If applicable, include relevant statistics along with source citations (e.g., “x% percent of students in the US have experienced hunger in the past year, per the World Health Organization”).

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This template was updated in 2025 and approved by the Committee Against Censorship.



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