

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: