

Introduction to Literature Resources

These resources are intended to help teachers challenge, support and nurture the gifted students in their classrooms, many of whom may not have been formally identified, and who also may not thus far have exhibited their giftedness.

Specifically, the resources have been selected to help gifted students begin to understand and embrace their abilities while simultaneously helping teachers and classmates do so as well.

The books selected:

- ❖ Are superior children's or young adult literature. Several titles have won national or regional awards, and all are appropriate for the intended audience.
- ❖ Contain realistic portrayals of gifted students in settings and situations that reflect what we know about the lived experiences of these students. The books are intended to promote identification and hopefully reflection and discussion for gifted students (and their age peers) about the joys and challenges of giftedness. The "reflection" guide provided in this resource supports the processes of identification and reflection.
- ❖ Generally — though not exclusively — feature protagonists mirror the target audience of the North Star grant, specifically students who are living in rural and remote settings, may be impoverished, or are American Indian, as we know these students are least likely to be identified as gifted. Many of the protagonists fit all of the selection criteria, and so encounter formidable obstacles, as do many of the students reading these books.
- ❖ Generally - though not exclusively — the books end with what can be described as hopeful resolutions, as the characters in the novels (and biographies) are designed to serve as role models for readers who will benefit from seeing both fictional and real people overcome adversity rather than resign themselves to circumstance.

It should also be noted that the Lexile levels of these titles serve only as a tentative recommendation guide, given that gifted students can often read several years above their grade level. In addition to the Lexile level, the age(s) of the protagonist(s) and the subject matter should be considered when recommending or utilizing any of the books with students, whether as independent, group, or whole class suggestions or assignments.

The remaining sections of this resource will provide further guidance for classroom use:

1. A *“Book Resource Quick Guide”* that provides an overview of the Lexile level, author, publication date, suggested grade level, and details about the main character(s).

2. The *“Book Resources with Gifted Connections”*, which include:

- ❖ “Themes,” as you would expect in a traditional literature bibliography
- ❖ Publication information and a brief plot description for each title
- ❖ “Gifted connections,” that explicitly detail the aspects of the narrative that reflect the connection between the character(s) in the books and the students reading about them

3. A *generic reflection guide*, containing prompts intended to engender reflection and discussion. This guide can be adapted for varying grade levels, whether used for independent reading, literature circles, or with an entire class

4. A *complete reflection guide* for “If I Ever Get out of Here,” by Eric Gansworth. This guide could be modified or utilized as written, and again can serve as a model for those wishing to create reflection guides of their own

5. *“Notice and note,”* and *“Dialogue with a Text,”* which are additional ways to help students interpret and respond to literature.

6. *“Study guide links”*, which will point teachers to several commercially prepared resources. It’s important to note that “study guides” generally have a cognitive/literary orientation, as opposed to “reflection guides,” whose primary purpose is to serve as an “affective” curriculum. Study and reflection guides can also be used in unison.

7. *Movie URLs*. Links to movie clips meeting the criteria utilized to select the books have been included. Each title contains:

- ❖ The film title
- ❖ Length of clip
- ❖ Connections to giftedness/the grant’s target audience (creativity, twice-exceptional, rural setting, impoverished protagonists . . .)