

“I do believe something magical can happen when you read a good book”  
J.K. Rowling

*The Joy Luck Club*

“I loved the fact that this was a book about women. This shows how women have such a different role in life than men. It also shows how women have and are still struggling to some degree. There are many things to identify with in this novel. These women experienced the beauty of their past and the difficult choices their mothers had to make. It shows how women had to raise their children alone often under very difficult situations, which is so relevant to today, and they still taught them the best they could. The women in this novel lived through some very difficult periods in their lives, but still found the beauty of friendship to carry them through those difficult times. They still found joy. Many stories from the past are passed down the generations, often with a lesson to learn. These women left their home and migrated to America. They wanted to teach their children the richness of their own heritage and also be successful in America. Early on they could not speak the language, or understand how to have their basic needs met. What a challenge for them, but they still found joy. Reading stories from my own great-great-grandmothers reminds me of the characters in the novel. My own grandmothers crossed the Atlantic and buried some of their children in the ocean. They did not have to learn a new language, but it still was very different here in America. Hardships were common; they had husbands die and even abandon them. Some crossed the country in covered wagons, often with little food to eat. Some buried their babies on those vast plains, just covering them with rocks, because some babies froze to death on the trip across our country. Like the women in *The Joy Luck Club*, they still found ways to find joy in their lives and to teach their children how to be happy and peaceful – those difficult times I’ve read about along with the stories passed down from my great-grandmothers are what make me strong today. Even when difficult things happen in life, which they will, it is important to find joy.”

Ms. Baker

*The Great Gatsby*

“Not only is it filled with rich and meaningful symbolism, it contains complex characters who also represent many of the different points of view in our society. In the 1920’s, life was all about consumerism and how all sorts of new things and gadgets could make your life easier and more enjoyable; *The Great Gatsby* reflects on that point of view and how that perception of the 20’s comes straight from a life of privilege. We are told over and over again by commercials and other forms of advertisement that certain products are what we need, when they are actually only things we may want. *Gatsby* teaches us to find a balance between what we want and what we truly need.”

Mr. Zak

*To Kill a Mockingbird*

“I love its exploration of humanity. Especially its portrayal of kids coming to terms with that humanity which is neither good nor bad but somewhere in between, which I think everyone can relate to. Especially our students. At some point in all of our lives we all have to leave behind our childhood innocence, and I think this book really shows the importance of the people around us in forming who we will become after that, and how we will choose to act. Plus who doesn’t love summer hijinx, a mysterious shut in neighbor, and the unerring goodness that is Atticus Finch.”

Ms. Fleming

