



Hitting the BOOKS

The Great Gatsby

"I read it in high school and didn't like it very much, but when I read it again in college, I really enjoyed all the symbolism and analysis of the novel. I taught it in my very first year of teaching and both myself and my students enjoyed it!"

Mr. Dionisio

The Giver

On the surface, *The Giver* seems to be this fantastic adventure about government control and what it means to be "free." However, the more important lesson, in my opinion, is about empathy. Through the course of the novel, many comments are made about everything being the same. This sameness creates stagnation and shrivels real personal connection between the characters. Jonas, the main character, breaks through this sameness and learns to empathize with others by sharing memories with the Giver in the novel. Through this empathy and through his realization of differences, he breaks free from his colorless world and forms real and deep connections with the people around him. It has certainly helped me remember to hope for a better tomorrow.

Ms. Lindahl

The Hate U Give

"I think we should support and celebrate living artists too, especially Black, female writers such as Thomas. This novel does not shy away from difficult topics. I think teens can appreciate that they are not being sheltered or silenced. Instead Thomas validates their feelings and struggles. Thomas discusses topics related to family, race, socio-economics, mental health, the pressures to be a part of or escape gang life, code-switching, as well as the struggle of knowing your self-worth in friendships and relationships. Thomas presents a very real issue in our society and is able to do so in a way that allows young adults to truly see the extent of its hurt. Reading a novel in which a teenager cannot only relate to the characters, but can also understand their point of view is powerful. *The Hate U Give* teaches readers how to be more empathetic to those who look, speak, or grew up differently than you. Empathy is a powerful lesson and one we need more of in today's society. The theme of the novel portrays how a person builds their moral compass. We do this by standing up for what is right. Bravery doesn't always look strong. More often than not, Bravery has shaking knees and speaks in a whispered voice. However, that should never stop someone from speaking their truth. A voice paired with an ethical heart is the most powerful weapon. *The Hate U Give* proves that our voices matter. When we finally convince ourselves this is true, that's when we will see real change. I believe *The Hate U Give* gets audiences one step closer to that truth."

Ms. Smith

