

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Approved for use in Honors English 1

Summary of the Work: Starr Carter is constantly switching between two worlds -- the poor, mostly black neighborhood where she lives and the wealthy, mostly white prep school that she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is soon shattered when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend at the hands of a police officer. Facing pressure from all sides of the community, Starr must find her voice and decide to stand up for what's right.

Rationale: The American Dream is an oft used theme designed to spur on all people towards success, no matter their race, religion, gender, or creed. This dream is becoming more and more difficult to achieve as the United States becomes more and more divided along racial, religious, and economic lines. Thomas's novel bridges those gaps with experience and commonality that is so desperately desired by this country.

In this modern-day Bildungsroman, Thomas looks at the experience of a teenager coming of age in a world of uncertainty, technology, and social media. All aspects that teens, no matter their background, must navigate in their day to day lives.

Thomas argues that this Dream is still achievable for all Americans, though the difficulty with which it is obtained varies wildly from person to person.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

“Thomas’s debut novel offers an incisive and engrossing perspective of the life of a black teenage girl as Starr’s two worlds converge over questions of police brutality, justice, and activism.” [-The Atlantic Book Review](#)

“*The Hate U Give* is an outstanding debut novel and says more about the contemporary black experience in America than any book I have read for years, whether fiction or non-fiction.” [- The Guardian Book Review](#)

"Believe the hype: *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas's extraordinary and fearless debut, really is that good." [- Christian Science Monitor Book Review](#)

Noted Distinction:

- 80 Weeks on the NYT Best Seller List
- Goodreads Best YA Debut Award
- William T Morrison Award by the American Library Association
- Coretta Scott King Award
- Nominated for the Carnegie Medal

Readability

- Lexile Score: 590
- Readability Level: 14-17

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The topic of police brutality is something that will be very challenging to broach in a predominately white classroom, where most students will never have experienced negativity towards police officers. It will be critical for teachers using this text to highlight that Thomas is not saying that the police are bad. She is arguing that the experience of African Americans is vastly different than that of your average white person.

Thomas employs language that teenagers employ in their day to day lives. This will create conversation about appropriateness of colloquial phrases and slang. The text uses no more controversial language than *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is already approved curriculum.

Connection to the Curriculum:

Honors English I is a preparatory AP Class and as such requires texts that range in complexity and controversy. Students will be beginning to learn the basics of argumentative writing and will be required to engage with texts that spur on controversy. This novel’s central theme of police brutality is something that students will have deeply held beliefs on and this will require them to defend their point of view

This text is consistently on the list of most chosen novels by high school students and had become part of the national conversation about issues of race in this country. As most of these students will be entering colleges with significantly more diversity it will be inherently beneficial for them to begin this conversation in a safe environment.

A primary learning objective will be to look at the structure of a text and identify how the author’s language creates purpose. As there is a clear thesis present, students will be able to develop their own ability to identify authorial claim, central idea, and themes throughout.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)