

Teacher's Rationale

School: Arrowhead Union High School

Teacher(s): Freeburg

Title: *Feed* by M.T. Anderson

Grade or Course: English 12

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

Semester 1

Semester 2

This book will be (check one or more):

studied by the whole class. (But students have option to choose different text).

studied by small groups.

placed on a reading list.

placed in a classroom library.

recommended to individual students.

part of a larger study of (explain):

other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for student in this class:

Feed functions as a science-fiction, coming of age, romance, and humorous novel—all at the same time. It explores the juncture of technology, communication, and fear in a world where kids are still trying to figure out who they are, which is harder when ads pop up in your brain and almost no one talks out loud anymore; they just chat through their feeds. Today's students are standing at the same crossroads.

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

- Managing communication (inter, intra, and technological)
- Understanding satire and irony
- Reading a level-appropriate text
- Reading a high-interest book
- Identifying the role of advertising and marketing as it targets children

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle this problem:

Two potentially problematic areas regarding language appear in *Feed*. The first is the use of some swearing on the part of the narrator's teenage friends. This could potentially offend those with delicate sensibilities, but it is not beyond the pale of what the average student hears from his or her peers in an average hallway on an average day. The second is the use of many new words and corruptions (from the characters' degraded intelligence and language abilities). A great deal of future-specific slang is introduced.

Students will compile a glossary to assist them with the terms.

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:

Pat Frank, *Alas, Babylon*; Nevil Shute, *On the Beach*; Dan Brown, *Digital Fortress*; Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay*; Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*; Aly Condie, *Matched*; Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*.

Summary of the book:

In this chilling novel, Anderson (Burger Wuss; Thirsty) imagines a society dominated by the feed a next-generation Internet/television hybrid that is directly hardwired into the brain. Teen narrator Titus never questions his world, in which parents select their babies' attributes in the conceptionarium, corporations dominate the information stream, and kids learn to employ the feed more efficiently in School. But everything changes when he and his pals travel to the moon for spring break. There Titus meets home-schooled Violet, who thinks for herself, searches out news and asserts that "Everything we've grown up with the stories on the feed, the games, all of that it's all streamlining our personalities so we're easier to sell to." Without exposition, Anderson deftly combines elements of today's teen scene, including parties and shopping malls, with imaginative and disturbing fantasy twists. "Chats" flow privately from mind to mind; Titus flies an "upcar"; people go "mal" (short for "malfunctioning") in contraband sites that intoxicate by scrambling the feed; and, after Titus and his friends develop lesions, banner ads and sit-coms dub the lesions the newest hot trend, causing one friend to commission a fake one and another to outdo her by getting cuts all over her body. Excerpts from the feed at the close of each chapter demonstrate the blinding barrage of entertainment and temptations for conspicuous consumption. Titus proves a believably flawed hero, and ultimately the novel's greatest strength lies in his denial of and uncomfortable awakening to the truth. This satire offers a thought-provoking and scathing indictment that may prod readers to examine the more sinister possibilities of corporate- and media-dominated culture. Ages 14-up. (Publisher's Weekly)

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

1. National Book Award Finalist
2. Winner of Los Angeles Times Book Prize
3. New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year
4. Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor Winner
5. ALA Best Book for Young Adults
6. Michael Printz Award recipient