

**ARROWHEAD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
LITERATURE TEXT ADOPTION RECOMMENDATION**

DEPARTMENT Language Arts

SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011

CLASS English 11

REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS Sarah Johansen, Jennifer Passler, Kathy Nelson, Emily Knippel, Stephanie Janigo, Mike Feuerstahler

RECOMMENDED TEXT Last

American Man

AUTHOR Elizabeth Gilbert

PUBLISHER Viking Adult

COST \$10.20

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TEXT BEING REPLACED

AUTHOR

PUBLISHER

COST

COPYRIGHT

OTHER TEXTS REVIEWED

NAME OF TEXT

AUTHOR

PUBLISHER

COPYRIGHT

NAME OF TEXT

AUTHOR

PUBLISHER

COPYRIGHT

RATIONALE FOR LITERATURE TEXT PURCHASE (check all that apply)

- Previous texts are worn
- Previous texts are outdated
- There was a change in curriculum
- Text rotation
- Other Please explain: _____

The following has been taken into consideration in the selection of this literature text.

CONTENT

- Meets state and national standards
- Meets local Power Standards
- Aligns with course curriculum
- Integrates with other content areas
- Reflects a cultural and pluralistic society
- Appropriate for age group
- Provokes critical discourse
- Reflects board policy for selection of materials

Please explain any areas not checked and/or elaborate on the qualities of the book chosen.

ARROWHEAD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
TEACHER'S RATIONALE FOR LITERATURE IN THE CURRICULUM

DEPARTMENT Language Arts

CLASS English 11

GRADE LEVEL(S) 11

TEACHER COMPLETING FORM Sarah Johansen

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.
- studied by small groups.
- placed on a reading list.
- recommended to individual students.
- part of a larger study of (explain):
- other (explain):

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

Last American Man is a non-fiction text that is taught during the Nature unit in American Literature. The book addresses the idea that Americans have lost their primary connection to nature, a force that shaped early Americans' development. Students will find the protagonist's viewpoints intriguing and unique, as he chooses to live his life in a way that most modern Americans have forsaken.

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

The book is a connection to the past, in the protagonist's view that nature has shaped American development, and an interesting look at present-day America. The protagonist, Eustace Conway, addresses the idea that Americans have lost touch with their roots and that the country has become lost in modern convenience. He advocates living in the wilderness, or at least finding a way to reconnect with nature. The book fits perfectly into the Nature themed unit of American Literature. It offers an opportunity to discuss America's relationship with nature in the past, present, and future. The book is also a biography, which gives students experience in reading a new genre.

Indicate types of concepts in this book that might be questionable to some readers:

(for example: explicit sexuality, violence, profanity, etc.)

The book contains minor profanity (in quoting some of the characters). The narrator offers some controversial ideas in how Americans should live their lives. Some students may disagree with the protagonist's extreme viewpoints.

Recommendation for parent notification: Yes No

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

There are no issues that should arise due to the nature of the text. The teacher will facilitate discussions in which students are allowed to express their reaction to the text.

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:
Walden- Henry David Thoreau, The Call of the Wild- Jack London

Summary of the book:

Last American man is the true story of Eustace Conway, who left his comfortable suburban home at the age of 17 to move into the Appalachian Mountains, where for the last 20 years he has lived off the land.

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

From Publishers Weekly: "By the time Eustace Conway was seven years old he could throw a knife accurately enough to nail a chipmunk to a tree." Such behavior might qualify Eustace as a potential Columbine-style triggerman, but in Gilbert's startling and fascinating account of his life, he becomes a great American countercultural hero. At 17, Conway "headed into the mountains... and dressed in the skins of animals he had hunted and eaten." By his late 30s, Eustace owned "a thousand acres of pristine wilderness" and lived in a teepee in the woods full-time. He is, as Gilbert (Stern Men) implies with her literary and historical references, a cross between Davy Crockett and Henry David Thoreau. Gilbert, who is friends with Conway and interviewed his family, evidences enormous enthusiasm for her subject, whether discussing Conway's need for alcohol to calm down; his relationship with a physically and emotionally abusive father; or his horrific hand-to-antler fight with a deer buck he was trying to kill yet she always keeps her reporter's distance. At times, Conway's story can be wonderfully moving (as when he buries kindergartners in a shallow trench with their faces turned skyward to help them understand that the forest floor is "alive") or disconcerting (as when, in 1995, he's uncertain about Bill Clinton's identity). Gilbert has a jaunty, breathless style, and she paints a complicated portrait of American maleness that is as original as it is surprising.

Once approved, a copy of the Rationale for Literature in the Curriculum should be posted on the AHS web page.

Department Chair/Department Liaison Signature

Date

This form must be completed and on file with the district administrator before purchasing materials.

4/05