

Teacher's Rationale**School: Arrowhead****Teacher: Hunter****Title: *The Life of Pi*****Author: Yann Martel****Grade or Course: English 10****Approximate date(s) book will be used: Semesters I and II****The entire class will study this book, but students may choose an alternative.****Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for students in grade 9:**

This book is appropriate for grade 10 for two main reasons. The first main reason is because the protagonist in the book is a fifteen-year-old boy who, in order to survive, must grow up quickly. The main character, Pi, is forced to make many survival-based decisions, and at the same time he must contend with a 450-pound Bengal tiger that inhabits the same life raft that he does. Pi's fear, knowledge, and cunning keep him and the tiger alive throughout the duration of their journey together. Pi also reaches out to God to help him through this desperate time. Furthermore, the main character in this book is right in the middle of his progression from boyhood to manhood. This topic of "coming of age" is ideal and relevant to classroom activities and writing assignments as 10th graders are approaching adulthood.

This book was on the best sellers list for at least a year.

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

The literary selections reading grade 10 are used for a variety of activities. Therefore, *The Life of Pi* was chosen because it provides interesting and complex themes for students to focus on in writing assignments, and it provides a good base for class discussions on topics used throughout English 10. The main character has to confront his fears, insecurities, beliefs and attitudes about life and the possibility of death. One of the primary objectives of English 10 is to motivate students for the rest of their English classes at Arrowhead. This book does this because students can easily relate to an narrator their own age dealing with subject in a humorous, real, and sometimes emotional fashion. These subjects also provide wonderful writing material for this unit. Writing is obviously a primary focus for grade 10.

The Life

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

One problem that might arise in relation to this book is the decision that Pi makes for himself concerning religion. He decides early on in the novel, he is ten years old, that he wants to be Catholic, Hindu and Muslim. He bases his decision on the fact that, after researching each, all of them believe in God. This is a small segment of the book, approximately ten pages out of 317. The best way to handle this problem is to understand and explain the basic beliefs of these religions, as they do in Western Civilization classes taught at Arrowhead High School, and evaluate the author's purpose for including this segment in the book.

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

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

Summary of the book:

“Pi Patel, the son of a zookeeper, has a fervent love for stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family and their zoo animals emigrate from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship. Alas, the ship sinks—and Pi finds himself in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi. Can Pi and the tiger find their way to land?”

Summary by Yann Martel

Awards/Reviews for this book

New York Times Bestseller

Los Angeles Times Bestseller

Washington Post Bestseller

“If this century produces a classic work of survival literature, Martel is surely a contender.”
The Nation

“Life of Pi is a real adventure: brutal, tender, expressive, dramatic and disarmingly funny. . . . It’s difficult to stop reading when the pages run out.” San Francisco Chronicle