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## Spy school books

The Great Gatsby is overrated. It's a good book! It's a big book! It's just not the best book ever, especially not the best book to teach teens the power of literature and the essence of America. If it were, teenagers wouldn't be celebrating the glamour the book is trying to deconstruct. But he's stuck in the high school literary canon, along with the oat sharpener of Oats and mice and humans. And at this point it seems like the main reason they are taught to all high schoolers is because they were taught to all teachers and no one bothered to check if it was still the best choice. My own high school was stuck near the classics, making conservative decisions that I had to supplement in my spare time. That's normal. But given little structure to find in the great books of my own era, or even the less doled of it recently, I flailed around, grabbing my mother's copies of Grisham and Crichton, spending too much time in the Palahniuk—all things I'd be female about, and not sorry, but not particularly nurtured. I found a lot of good books, often by accident, but there wasn't much of a mental model of how they fit together in the modern literary world. It took years to make a vague understanding of the last generation (or two) of literature, so I could find my way productively as an adult reader. If I could go back, I would rather give myself - and my classmates - the run and replace old standbys with books that better explore the potential of literature. A lot of this comes down to taste and it should be. The whole concept of the canon is less important to culture, especially as we see how many people have held out this canon and how many have had premature thrust into it. Several good writers are publishing more good books now, and they're also disrespectful to our obsession with a narrow series of timeless stories that actually show their age. We should be GoWinnowing the current canon to make room for new and overlooked worthwhile works. The bildungsroman Perks of Being a Wallflower has earned enough respect to join some of the required reading lists; How about Rainbow Rowell Fangirl or several books to address modern teen experiences with constant online contact, helicopter parents, and everyday life inside the neoliberal realm? Is this era and literature less worthy of our attention than a Boomer coming of age? Or is the canon actually a bit of an excuse to be lazy when it comes to building your curricula? It's not a punch against books. Well, it's a knock if you think the whole high school canon has to be the biggest possible books, in which case it's odd that you want to be forced into teenagers and not voluntarily enter when they're ready. Catcher is really a book best experienced as a teen? Not! This is best experienced as an adult evaluates Catcher's the teenage mindset, as the book was designed. A teenager can't fully appreciate the distance between the author and the protagonist. (Some may be! And more power to them, and all the books they choose to read in their own time.) It doesn't hold anything for a classic like Catcher to suggest that maybe the time to appreciate it in adulthood and not as a teenager in 2018. If you support the canon because today's teachers and schools cannot be trusted to choose the right books, then why do you trust them to teach these works in the light of social progress and changing historical prospects? Some current canons can simply become voluntary reading, as in almost every book. But some works are still really useful as a common reference point. There is an excellent place for them: college, freshman year, as part of the core curriculum. A story like Anna Karenina or Madame Bovary doesn't really come home until you've gathered more life experience, but at least you can start understanding it in college. And we're not recommending you go dumb. Some YA should join the curriculum, but so should modern adult fiction. Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything Is Illuminated teaches sound better than a clockwork Orange; Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart is a much better history lesson than Heart of Darkness; frankly anyone who wants to read The Lord of the Rings will do this on their own, while Ursula K. Le Guin's The Wizard of Earthsea is a meaningful contribution to the growing mind of expanding horizons, and an excellent lack of connection between Harry Potter and more adult fiction. (So lev Grossman's Magicians trilogy, but again, the plan for college and post-college years is best appreciated during or after his own.) What should we stay? What we hold in the current canon? The older the book, the better the situation. We don't throw away Shakespeare, which is still essential for understanding most English literature. Plus, it passes an important test: it's quite interesting, even if you're missing the bottom layer or the three reports. Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet are fun to read and stage. The Scarlet Letter is, to be honest, a gang member. All old things with a sense of humour, such as Silas Marner, help teens understand that the old one doesn't have to be irrelevant. A hundred years of solitary and House of the Spirits is quite a miracle that the paper has more than all the shortcomings of a teen's appreciation. While my high school skipped Lord of the Flies, I'm really glad I read it for the first time before I grew up. And almost any time a marginalized author has managed to cling to the canon, they deserve to keep their place. If Steinbeck and Fitzgerald stay, then Beloved and Anne Frank and Bell Jar, Frederick Douglass and Jane Austen will all stay here. I'm embarrassed by the number of adult white men I've only met other white men. I read and and it is believed that the habit begins in high school. The point is to destabilize the idea of the canon, one that propped up too many mediocre artists and ruled out too much genius as well. It's not about building a new canon. The point is to destabilize the idea of the canon, one that propped up too many mediocre artists and ruled out too much genius as well, one that feeds the monolithic idea of America that looks not like the country's actual past or present. It's not just to re-center marginalized groups (in fact, my personal suggestions are unfortunately skewed white as I still repair training for poor education), but also to encourage the peculiarities of different readers sharing different but overlapping literary backgrounds, which encourages people to stay readers throughout adulthood as they approach literature as an endless buffet rather than a fixed prize. (This buffet includes a great dessert section for comics, which should not be treated as a novelty, but as a full-fledged part of literature that is especially useful for marginalized authors and stories.) This is not a new idea; The canon has always been liquid. But it may be less viscous. In this context, here is a very personal, certainly non-canonic, suggestion on how to edit your high school curriculum. Ditch The Great Gatsby On on Road Of mice and humans (replaced by the indistinct battle) Pilgrim's Progress James Fenimore Cooper, but also that a Twain essay by James Fenimore Cooper performatively enjoyed by people who love defenestration Brave New World (but keep it 1984) Death of a Salesman Heart of Darkness, I mean, good sir it's not aged well Trial and The Metamorphosis (replaced by The Village Schoolmaster and The Great Wall of China) Siddhartha The Divine Comedy Any Ibsen , DeLillo, Bret Easton Ellis, and David Foster Wallace (except that college) All Camus or other mid-century existentialism (except the first fractional and lonely year of adulthood) all Philip Roth (unless you're a married college professor who hits on his students) All but an O. Henry story (The Gift of the Magi) because we get it already Everyth but a Sherlock Holmes story (which is not the most coke) because it's not literary, nor literary, nor Fun All Edgar Allan Poe except For The Imp of the Pervert, The Raven, and the essay where bullshit about his writing process The Raven Everything you follow up with some Stoppard that's on the edge off Anna Karenina The Brothers Karamazov The middle part of Gulliver travels so that no one remembers Candide tbh Any Ayn Rand War at Worlds Animal Farm if you're not ready to add a few chapters to the Das Kapital Keep To Kill a Mockingbird The Scarlet Letter A Tree Woman In Brooklyn beloved The Chosen One Bell Jar Invisible Man Paradise Lost Coleridge and Et. al. why not All Twain Any Wilde Any Molière Any Austen Any Márquez Any Shakespeare except for comedies All Greek stuff, Sure, all right, maybe try War Music instead of the Iliad Things Fall Apart The Handmaid's Tale Beowulf, and read Heaney's translation of the loud One-one-Vonnegut book and leave a pile of others on the teacher's desk Add (Sorry for any of these that have been standard among the better curricula. They prove I'm right.) Novels and Memoirs White Teeth by Zadie Smith, an introduction to the modern and refreshingly accessible literary strain of hysterical realism (a term coined by James Wood who really doesn't understand) Wolf Hall's Hilary Mantel Sing, Buried, Sing by Jesmyn Ward Station Eleven's Emily St. John Mandel, which celebrates art as a basic human need, without cloying about it among the ten thousand things Julia Pierpont, which includes teenage character Seinfeld's fan tikaerero and excellent model for novice writers Foundation Isaac Asimov (or just 1st and 2.) The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams is the radio series from which the books are adapted, and an influential work of audio drama Kindred by Octavia Butler a Wizard of Earthsea ursula K. Le Guin The Man, who on Thursday G. K. Chesterton A Visit the Goon Squad Jennifer Egan to demonstrate polyphony and experimental structures Of Ness Roxane Gay Bizony you're kidding, Mr. Feynman! Richard Feynman to show STEM students that they can do the words is Short Stories and Poetry Labyrinths by Jorge Luis Borges (a typical college assignment). In particular, the library of Babel, the three variants of Judas, the garden of the stick trails and Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius. Also get a copy of The Aleph instead of the aforementioned Twain takedown of James Fenimore Cooper Motherland Homelandland Homelandsexuals Patricia Lockwood to show that poetry is good in fact Senno one belongs here more than you Miranda in July Specily terrible: 272 Views of Law & Order SVU Carmen Maria Machado, a short story included in her 2017 collection of her body and other parties, and an introduction to strange fiction That trounces anything from Lovecraft The Tale of the Hunchback to the Thousand and a Night, the story cycle has three levels of stories embedded in it, one of which I suspect was inspired by the barber episode of Atlanta Theater Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Dead and Arcadia by Tom Stoppard, a satisfying follow-up to concretor's study of Hamlet and Byron. The first is a good way to facilitate surrealism, the second way to humane the giants of literature Mr. Burns, the Post-Electric Play by Anne Washburn, which plays the game on the phone in a Simpsons episode dramatizes the evolution of myth and literature angels in America by Tony Kushner, although this kind of door-plugs Gloria Jacobs-Jenkins, media, 21st century. , a remedial textbook for evaluating the comic book as its own art and literary form, its own techniques and abilities Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth Chris Ware, the Ulysses of comics, which has a number of techniques described in Understanding Comics tell a multi-generational story about the roles society assigns to men and boys in Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi, a joint introduction to the comic and part of the young adult canon Palestine Joeco SacFun Home : The Family Tragicomic Alison Bechdel Saga Vol. 1 Brian K. Vaughan Maus by Art Spiegelman, from Breaking Bad to comics, that it's clichable to recommend, but just because it's so indisputably good! I'm not a new canon or curriculum, but a collection of choices that significantly add to a high school understanding and appreciation of literature. I was inclined to the works to comment on the present or to demonstrate literary principles in a more relevant and well-rounded way than some old standby. High school students can read whatever they want in their own time, including everything in the Trench section. The changes and completely different lists are welcome, and that is actually the point. Point.

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