



Book Justification Resource

Book Rationale

Developing or using book rationales can help build a strong framework for teaching and supporting student learning and engagement. If you are required to, must defend, or just think it is a good idea to explain to your school administration and your community why you want or have specific books in your school or classroom library or why you have selected certain titles to read or share with students, a book rationale or justification is a thoughtful and strategic tool.

Data available in **NEA's Disability Awareness Booklist** can be used in conjunction with the resources and template below to help meet set criteria and/or provide any requested or required justification. The data to support the development of a book rationale or justification available in NEA's Disability Awareness Booklist includes title, author, publication year, age and grade level, summary, genre, themes, professional reviews, and awards. Available content/trigger warnings can also help identify sensitive subjects in the text or possible objections or challenges.

Rationales for both works of literature and nonfiction also typically need to answer questions such as:

- How does this work connect to the curriculum and help meet instructional objectives/learning goals?
- What key standards does this book address?
- How do topics, characters, and themes present in the work connect to students' interests and promote high levels of student engagement?
- How will students benefit from having read and discussed this work?
- How will any potential problems (possibly related to sensitive subjects, themes, language, tone, etc.) with the work be addressed?
- What are some related titles that could be used to supplement this work or serve as an alternative?

A comprehensive policy on the selection of instructional materials should be available in every school system. Different schools and school systems will have different selection standards and their own criteria and required processes for the development of school library collections and/or classroom libraries and for choosing books for instructional use. Any and all selections of literature and nonfiction for school libraries and classrooms should be made according to established policies and procedures.

Resources

[School Library Selection Criteria](#), one of the basic components of a selection policy, is available from the American Library Association as part of its [Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, and Academic Libraries](#).

If you aren't familiar with a book rationale or justification or your school or school district does not provide a format to follow, review [How to Write a Rationale](#) from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The NCTE also has a [Rationale Database](#) (you must be an NCTE member to access) that currently has more than a thousand rationales.

[Book Résumés](#), a tool from Unite Against Book Bans, is a free book résumé collection in collaboration with publishers and School Library Journal.



DRI Basic Book Rationale Template

Title:	Author:	Grade Audience/Age/Level Appropriateness:
Publisher:	Publication Date:	Summary:
Genre:	Themes:	
Reviews:		Awards/Accolades/Merit:
Learning Goals:		



Curriculum Connections / Standards:

Potential Impact on Students:

Criteria for Alternative Texts:

Sensitivities / Potential Problems:

**How Sensitivities / Potential Problems
Will Be Addressed:**