

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Weaver/Holibaugh	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	Red Scarf Girl	Genre:	Autobiography
Author:	Ji-Li Jiang	Pages:	272
Publisher:	Harper Trophy	Copyright:	1997

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

The author tells about the happy life she led in China up until she was twelve-years-old when her family became a target of the Cultural Revolution, and discusses the choice she had to make between denouncing her father and breaking with her family, or refusing to speak against him and losing her future in the Communist Party.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Reading Applications 7

9. Evaluate a topic from a variety of texts to determine validity and relevance.

Reading Applications 8

8. Organize content from different sources on a single topic.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

School Library Journal Gr 5-9--This autobiography details the author's experiences as a teenager during the Cultural Revolution. Though wanting to be devoted followers of Chairman Mao, Jiang and her family are subjected to many indignities because her grandfather was once a landlord. Memoirs of the period are usually larded with murders, suicides, mass brainwashing, cruel and unusual bullying, and injustices. Red Scarf Girl is no exception. Where Jiang scores over her comrades is in her lack of self-pity, her naive candor, and the vividness of her writing. The usual catalogue of atrocities is filtered through the sensibility of a young woman trying to comprehend the events going on around her. Readers watch her grow from a follower into a thoughtful person who privately questions the dictates of the powers that be. She witnesses neighbors being beaten to death, her best friend's grandmother's suicide, the systematic degradation of her father, and endless public humiliations. At one point, Jiang even enters a police station to change her name in a confused attempt to dissociate herself from her branded and maligned family. She makes it very clear that the atrocities were the inevitable result of the confusion and fanaticism manipulated by unscrupulous leaders for their own petty ends. Ultimately, her resigned philosophy attaches no blame: this is what happens when power is grossly abused. The writing style is lively and the events often have a heart-pounding quality about them. Red Scarf Girl will be appreciated as a page-turner and as excellent discussion material for social studies curricula.

Review #2

Booklist starred (Vol. 94, No. 3 (October 1, 1997))

Gr. 6-10. Ji-li Jiang was a model little Communist. Devoted to Chairman Mao, firm in her desire to be the best possible student so that she could further the aims of China, Ji-li was secure in her place as one of the foremost students in a Shanghai school, and just as happy as the eldest daughter of a theatrical family. Then in 1966, when Ji-li was 12, her world turned upside down. Chairman Mao launched the Cultural Revolution and suddenly everything formerly good was bad--including excellent students, such as Ji-li. To make matters worse, Ji-li's grandfather was a landowner, another black mark against her family. Jiang's simple narrative voice is always true to the girl she was as events in China swirled into chaos. She captures both the confusion she felt as the ground under her feet constantly shifted and her sincerity in trying to do the right thing for her ostracized family and her country. The book's climax, in which Ji-li is forced to choose between her future and her father, whom the government wanted her to denounce, will affect readers, who have been carefully led to this point by Ji-li's chronicle of humiliations, beatings, and relocations. Young people who have little knowledge of Chinese history may have trouble at first understanding a society so different from ours, but Jiang's engrossing memoir transcends politics and becomes the story of one little girl trying to survive the madness.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Please Stop Laughing at Me**

Author: **Jodee Blanco**

Title: **other biographies**

Author:

Title: **Surviving Hitler**

Author: **Andrea Warren**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Violence

Actions of a cultural revolution

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 12+

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 12/10/07

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults