Book Rationale for *Holes* by Louis Sachar

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Title: *Holes*
Author: Louis Sachar
Publisher: FSG / Frances Foster Books
Date: 1998

Location: Connors Emerson School, Bar Harbor

Use: read aloud in fifth grade class to be followed by watching the movie, based on the book

**Complaint**
Parents do not think that books is appropriate for fifth grade class read aloud

**Summary** (from the publisher)
Stanley Yelnat's family has a history of bad luck, so he isn't too surprised when a miscarriage of justice sends him to a boys' juvenile detention center, Camp Green Lake. There is no lake - it has been dry for over a hundred years - and it's hardly a camp. As punishment, the boys must each dig a hole a day, five feet deep, five feet across, in the hard earth of the dried-up lake bed. The warden claims that this pointless labor builds character, but she is really using the boys to dig for loot buried by the Wild West outlaw Kissin' Kate Barlow. The story of Kissin' Kate, and of a curse put on Stanley's great-great-grandfather by a one-legged gypsy, weaves a narrative puzzle that tangles and untangles, until it becomes clear that the hand of fate has been at work in the lives of the characters - and their forebears - for generations.

**Honors & Awards**
1998 *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year
1999 ALA/ALSC Notable Books for Children
1999 ALA/YALSA Best Book for Young Adults
1999 ALA/YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
   1999 *Boston Globe Horn Book Award for Fiction - acceptance speech included*
   1999 *National Book Award for Young People's Literature - acceptance speech included*
   1999 *Newbery Medal for Most Distinguished Contribution to American Literature for Children - acceptance speech included*
1999 Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year
1999-2000 Maine Student Book Award Winner
Fanfare: The *Horn Book* Honor List Selected from the Books of 1998
*Instructor* Best Books of the 90s

**Reviews**

**Alternative Readings**
The following books are similar to Holes in that the stories involve a young person (or young people) who have adventures through which they encounter unusually quirky characters and that lead to the redemption of self (selves) and the rescue or salvation of others, i.e. friends, family, society. All of the books listed below have been adapted into feature-length films.

*The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper (The movie is titled *The Seeker.*)
On his eleventh birthday Will Stanton discovers that he is the last of the Old Ones, destined to seek the six magical Signs that will enable the Old Ones to triumph over the evil forces of the Dark.

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
Rescued from the outrageous neglect of his aunt and uncle, a young boy with a great destiny proves his worth while attending Hogwarts School for Wizards and Witches.

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
Four English school children find their way through the back of a wardrobe into the magic land of Narnia and assist Aslan, the golden lion, to triumph over the White Witch who has cursed the land with eternal winter.

*A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket
The first three books in the series--*The Bad Beginning, The Reptile Room* and *The Wide Window*--begin to chronicle the catastrophes and misfortunes of the resourceful Baudelaire children, as they become wealthy orphans and must elude a distant relative, the greedy and dastardly Count Olaf.

*The Spiderwick Chronicles* by Holly Black and Tony diTerlizzi
The moment the Grace family moves into the dilapidated Spiderwick Estate, strange things begin to happen. Jared, a curious, adventurous boy, quickly seeks out and finds the hidden laboratory of his great great uncle Arthur Spiderwick. He unleashes a mysterious force when he locates a field guide full of the secrets of the magical creatures that inhabit the forest surrounding the mansion. Based on the five-book series.