

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

Book Report, May/June 1999. pp.66-67 - **highly recommended**

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, September 1998. p.29

Cricket Readers Recommend. Cricket, July 2003. p.16

Horn Book, September/October 1998. pp.593-594 - **starred review**

New York Times Book Review, November 15, 1998. p.52

Publishers Weekly, July 27, 1998. p.78. - **starred review**

School Library Journal, September 1998. p.210. - **starred review**

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.