Holes

Author’s Intro:

Louis Sachar was born in March 20,1954 in East Meadow, New York. He, originally, majored in economics at the University of California at Berkeley. At the University, he became a teacher aid at a nearby elementary school in need. This is where he got inspired to dive deeper into writing children and young adult stories. He went back to school and began practicing law and passed the Bar Exam in 1980. Sachar practiced law part-time as he continued writing children’s books. He met his wife Carla at an elementary school. She was the counselor, and ended up being the inspiration for a few of his books. He, then, became the contemporary author we all know today. His books have stood out among so many due to his unique style and creativity, because of this his novels and stories will more than likely become classics in time. Louis Sachar has won many, many awards, especially for Holes. He, first, won the John Newbery Medal in 1999 and the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature in 1998 for Holes. Following those awards, he has received many awards including the Dorothy Fisher Children’s Book Award in 2000 for Holes, Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers’ Literature in 2008, Sunshine State Young Readers’ Award for graders 3-5 and 6-8 in 2003, Land of Enchantment Book Award in 2000, etc. (FictionDB). He has written many children’s’ books and YA literature novels including, Sideways Stories from Wayside School, Wayside School is Falling Down, Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger, Holes, Small Steps, There’s a Boy in the Girl’s Bathroom, Fuzzy Mud, Dogs Don’t Tell Jokes, The Boy Who Lost His Face, and many more. What makes Louis Sachar unique is his style and creativity he injects into his stories. He once said, “I never talk about a book until it is finished.” This statement shows that he takes his work very seriously. Though, children’s stories and novels may not seem serious to adults. They have a major impact on children, especially books like Holes. Not only is the novel amazing, but the movie became a pop culture phenomenon. Sachar’s ideas and the way he portrays those ideas has an enormous effect on student’s lives. He creates iconic characters and plot lines, and brings a new life to realistic fiction. Sachar’s background in economics and law come through subtly in his children’s and YA writings, because many of them use real-life issues that occur in people’s everyday lives. This makes his writings relatable to students going through isolation, behavioral problems, and many more. He is subtle in writing, while also being a sort of whimsical and sometimes dramatic. Louis Sachar has definitely left his stamp on the contemporary YA culture. He has become a legendary mind and influencer for the 21st century youth and adults.

“The Cardturner.” *FictionDB - Your Guide to Fiction Books*, 1 May 2010, [www.fictiondb.com/author/louis-sachar~book-awards~54844.htm](http://www.fictiondb.com/author/louis-sachar~book-awards~54844.htm).

Text Intro:

Holes is a realistic fiction, Young Adult Literature novel written by Louis Sachar in 1998. The novel would more than likely be targeted for sixth or seventh grade students. This novel is about a poor 14-year-old boy named Stanley Yelnats IV, who comes from a supposedly cursed family. He stumbles across an extremely expensive pair of shoes that were a famous basketball player’s, Clyde “Sweet Feet” Livingston. The shoes were mistakenly donated to a homeless shelter for money. Stanley was accused of stealing them, and was sent to Camp Green Lake for punishment for his crime. At the camp, the young men are forced to continuously dig holes in the middle of the deserted area day and night. Each hole the boys dig must be 5 feet deep and 5 feet wide. On top of the heat exhaustion and lack of water, the inmates must also dodge the wild animals in the deserts, such as the yellow spotted lizards. Stanley realizes something is not right about why they are digging holes in the middle of the desert, and does some investigating. Throughout his investigations in the novel, he finds out some very interesting history, not only about the area, but also his own “cursed” family tree. He and his friend, Zero, at the camp also look into his case in order to help show the courts Stanley is innocent. The novel takes the audience on a historic exciting journey.

Teaching Challenges:

Though this is an amazing novel, teachers can run into a few challenges when reading this with their class. One of the biggest problems would be a lot of the subjects in the novel. Some of these subjects include homelessness, illiteracy, and racism. These things can sometimes be hard to bring up in a classroom, especially with middle school students. I think talking to the students about these problems before you start to read as a class can avoid many of those sensitive subjects. Another problem a teacher might run into when reading this novel is the language. It does use a few cuss words and foul language in the book and the movie, though there is not an overload of these words.

Teaching Resources:

<http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-management-handling-sensitive-topics>

This resource could be helpful in the classroom, because it can help the teacher learn how to go over these sensitive topics with their students. It goes over not only discussing racism and discrimination, but also religion and other differences students may face. Some students may not be aware of what is going on in their peer’s lives, so discussing topics like this with them can educate them on how judging and discrimination is an issue not only in the classroom but everywhere in our country today.

<https://www.reddit.com/r/Teachers/comments/3xlaav/how_do_you_address_curse_words_in_books/>

This website contains a blog for teachers to communicate with each other about any problems they may be experiencing in the classroom. This specific blog post allows you to see how each teacher handles cuss words in books in their own classrooms. I think it is important to get other opinions on topics like this and share ideas with one another on how to address these problems. Sharing ideas like this is a public way to help teachers from across the country regulate and control inappropriate language in their classroom.