

## Film Approval Request

**School:** Kawmeeh

**Department:** English

**Course:** Honors English

**Grade Level:** 8th

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**Title:** *Field of Dreams*

**Year:** 1989

**Director:** Phil Alden Robinson

**Rating:** PG

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**Summary of Plot:** "If you build it, he will come." That's the ethereal message that inspires Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) to construct a baseball diamond in the middle of his cornfield. At first, "he" seems to be the ghost of disgraced ballplayer Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta), who materializes on the ballfield and plays a few games with the awestruck Ray. But as the weeks go by, Ray receives several other messages from a disembodied voice, one of which is "Ease his pain." He realizes that his ballfield has been divinely ordained to give a second chance to people who have sacrificed certain valuable aspects of their lives. One of these folks is Salingeresque writer Terence Mann (James Earl Jones), whom Ray kidnaps and takes to a ball game and then to his farm. Another is Doc Graham (Burt Lancaster), a beloved general practitioner who gave up a burgeoning baseball career in favor of medicine. The final "second-chancer" turns out to be much closer to Ray

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**Rationale for Usage:** To compare and contrast the novel *Shoeless Joe* and *Field of Dreams*. *Shoeless Joe* is the novel in which *Field of Dreams* is based.

## Novel-Review Checklist

**Title:** 1984

**Author:** George Orwell

**Grade Level:** 12

**Reviewer(s):** Megan Kaplan

### **Content/Scope/Theme of the Novel:**

The science fiction novel was written by George Orwell in 1949 and tells the story of “the future” in 1984. A man named Winston Smith is living in Oceania and is a member of the ruling class, but is still being controlled by Big Brother. Smith works for the Ministry of Truth where he alters the events that have occurred previously in history to match the party’s point of view. Smith begins to realize that his views differ from the totalitarian government that he is being forced to live under as he writes in his journal about his views and past events from his own life. He falls in love with a woman named Julia whom he meets at work, although he is at first concerned that Julia is a spy. After he realizes that she is antigovernment as well they fall in love and begin a relationship. O’Brien, who is serving as spy, eventually catches Winston and Julia in their love affair and their dislike of the government. The punishment inflicted is brainwashing and torturing which is only over after Winston declares that he wants the same to happen to Julia. O’Brien now knows that Winston will believe in the government and the reader is left with a broken man.

This novel fits in well with the British Literature curriculum for the twelfth grade, because it allows the students to have a sampling of the change in the style of British literature from 1818 which Frankenstein was written. This novel will also lend itself to discussions about nationalism, the dangers of technology and manipulation. These themes can be used in conjunction with various articles and other sources to fulfill many of the core curriculum standards. Also this implementation will allow the students to make connections from the literature they are reading in the classroom to their own lives

### **Point of view or bias of the author:**

Orwell wants the reader to understand the dangers of being manipulated by society and allowing others to influence a person’s opinions. He also discusses the dangers of technology which can relate to the lives of students today.

### **Accuracy and documentation:**

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### **Ethnic/culture/gender representation:**

This novel is British literature and it explains how Orwell sees the future in 1984.

### **Language/Sexual Content:**

There is some mention of sexual content, such as when Smith mentions having sex with a prostitute, but there are no graphic details. Smith also discusses having sex with Julia in the novel, but it is not graphic or inappropriate. There is no gratuitous sex in the novel and the language is appropriate for our students.

**Is it for the beginner with no background in the subject?** (If extensive background in the subject is required, please note this): This novel can be given and understood by a beginner, but it will be looked at in terms of the time period in British Literature

**Style**

**Is the writing**                                      **Clear**                      **Confusing**                      **Lively**                      **Dry**

**Is there oversimplification to the point of being unclear, inaccurate or misleading**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Is the organization logical:**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Quality of the index and/or cross-references:**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Is the information readily accessible**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Comparison**

**Does this book present new material for this grade range:**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Does it cover basic material better than extant standard works:**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**Briefly describe the potential appeal to intended audience:**


\_This is a more recent novel in comparison to what the students are currently studying in Grade 12 and this fact will help engage them in the text. Also, this novel discusses and references themes that are significant in their students lives today.

**Recommendation**

**FOR GENERAL PURCHASE FOR SCHOOL**                                      **Yes**      **No**

**NOT RECOMMENDED**                                      \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Rational/Comments/Areas of Concern:**



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Signature of Reviewer

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Date

## Novel-Review Checklist

**Title:** *In Cold Blood*

**Author:** Truman Capote

**Grade Level:** 11

**Reviewer(s):** D. Bobertz, L. Romero

### **Content/Scope/Theme of the Novel:**

*In Cold Blood* is crafted like a modern-day tragedy, on the scale of one of the Greek dramas from classical antiquity, and deals with many of the same universal themes: murder, vengeance, and the pursuit of justice. This, for Capote, was the power of his new literary genre, the nonfiction novel: to take events from the contemporary world and elevate them to epic storytelling proportions, enabling them to transcend their specific historical moment and reflect on broader truths about humanity. Capote assembles the disparate facts and perspectives about the Clutter case into a narrative that speaks profoundly on the nature of human life and death, criminality, American society and the pursuit of individual happiness -- reinventing in the process many of our modern-day forms of mythology (for example, the myth of the American dream). Other themes include: Loss of Innocence, Undermining the American Dream, the Banality of Evil, Family, Self-image, Socio-economic status.

### **Point of view or bias of the author:**

Capote presents this true crime story as an epic non-fiction novel told in the style of "New Journalism". Flipping through The New York Times on a November morning, he had come across a brief article outlining the murders with only the barest details ("Wealthy Farmer, 3 of Family Slain"), and imagined the case could be the subject of his next project, a long-form work of nonfiction. By mid-December, he was on a train to Kansas, eager to see what more he could uncover.

### **Accuracy and documentation:**

*In Cold Blood* is considered an example of "New Journalism," a genre that was pioneered in the 1960s and 70s by Capote as well as Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, and Joan Didion, among others. (Capote, however, disliked this branding, referring instead to his work as a "nonfiction novel.") The New Journalists were the first to employ literary techniques – or techniques adapted from fiction writing – to present their nonfiction narratives. The result was a new brand of in-depth, novelistic coverage of real-world events, presented from the perspective of individuals experiencing them firsthand (including the writer him/herself, who carried out extensive field research in order to capture the complete picture of events).

### **Ethnic/culture/gender representation:**

The Clutter killings are symbolic of a class conflict, highlighting the discrepancy between the affluent, middle-class, predominantly white citizens of Holcomb and the underprivileged, working-class, mixed-race (in the case of Perry) killers. Theft is the only form of economic mobility that Perry and Dick have ever known, as neither of them have had a chance at a proper education or a solid career (Dick, we learn, could not afford to attend college, and Perry was forced to help his father earn their basic subsistence in Alaska). Economic insecurity is at the root of the murders on every level: it forms the initial motive for the break-in (to steal the contents of Herb Clutter's safe), and later on causes Perry to feel ashamed, for "crawling on my

belly to steal a child's silver dollar" (240), a sentiment which is ultimately to blame for the fatal turn the robbery takes.

**Language/Sexual Content:**

Capote's reporting is true to journalistic standards and presents the facts that he unearths through his research and interviews as they truly are without censoring them. There is a few instances of mild sex, profanity, and violence presented in the novel as it actually happened. None of it is presented for gratuitous effect and when it is presented it is for solid journalistic reasons such as developing the case and the character of the defendants.

**Is it for the beginner with no background in the subject?** (If extensive background in the subject is required, please note this): This is the first non-fiction novel ever written and since it created this genre, no other study of the genre as a prerequisite is necessary. The case is presented with background information so that anyone could pick up the book and begin to read it.

**Style**

<b>Is the writing</b>	<b>Clear</b>	<b>Confusing</b>	<b>Lively</b>	<b>Dry</b>
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<b>Is there oversimplification to the point of being unclear, inaccurate or misleading</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Is the organization logical:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Quality of the index and/or cross-references:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Is the information readily accessible</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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**Comparison**

<b>Does this book present new material for this grade range:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Does it cover basic material better than extant standard works:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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**Briefly describe the potential appeal to intended audience:** This is a revolutionary and riveting account of non-fiction that will introduce students to a new world of literature and journalism alike as it did for the world when it was first published.

**Recommendation**

**FOR GENERAL PURCHASE FOR SCHOOL**

**Yes    No**

**NOT RECOMMENDED**

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**Final Rational/Comments/Areas of Concern:**

This novel is currently available in the UHS library.

Dana Bobertz, Laurie Romero

Signature of Reviewers

1/6/16

Date

## Novel-Review Checklist

**Title:** *Shoeless Joe* (Previously called *Dream Field*; AKA *Field of Dreams*)

**Author:** W.P Kinsella

**Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Honors

**Reviewer(s):** Deana Buchanan

**Content/Scope/Theme of the Novel:** "W. P. Kinsella plays with both myth and fantasy in his lyrical novel, which was adapted into the enormously popular movie, 'Field of Dreams.' It begins with the magic of a godlike voice in a cornfield, and ends with the magic of a son playing catch with the ghost of his father. In Kinsella's hands, it's all about as simple, and complex, as the object of baseball itself: coming home. It also about the choices we make as well as coming to grips with one's past and the power of believing in dreams. Kinsella spins baseball as backdrop and metaphor, and, like his predecessors, uses the game to tell us a little something more about who we are and what we need." (<http://www.hmhco.com>)

**Point of view or bias of the author:** The point of view of this story comes from a middle aged farmer who raises his family in Iowa. He has grown up with baseball his entire life. The audience is never given a name of the man telling the story. He is a hardworking "handy" type. His hard work is rewarded in a way he doesn't expect, helping him to heal from a choice he made many years before.

**Accuracy and documentation:** Although the story is fictional, it is realistic, and the historical characters, and the history that surrounds them are accurate.

**Ethnic/culture/gender representation:** n/a

**Language/Sexual Content:** n/a

**Is it for the beginner with no background in the subject?** (If extensive background in the subject is required, please note this): Yes

### Style

Is the writing	Clear	Confusing	Lively	Dry
Is there oversimplification to the point of being unclear, inaccurate or misleading			Yes	No
Is the organization logical:			Yes	No
Quality of the index and/or cross-references:			Yes	No
Is the information readily accessible			Yes	No



**Comparison**

**Does this book present new material for this grade range:** Yes No

**Does it cover basic material better than extant standard works:** Yes No

**Briefly describe the potential appeal to intended audience:**

The novel is a rich, nostalgic look at one of our most cherished national pastimes, but, more importantly, a remarkable story about parents and children, love and family, second chances, the importance of choices, and the inimitable joy of finding your way home.

**Recommendation**

**FOR GENERAL PURCHASE FOR SCHOOL** Yes No

**NOT RECOMMENDED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Rational/Comments/Areas of Concern:**

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Signature of Reviewer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date