

Name: Sophie  
Core: C

FULL NAME(?)

## Language Arts

### Summative Reading Assessment

Semester 1 2015

#### My 'Reprehensible' Take on Teen Literature

By Meghan Cox Gurdon

##### 1. Why is 'reprehensible' in quotation marks in the title?

I think that reprehensible is in quotations marks because, that is what the public thinks about her take on teen literature, and not what the author, Meghan Cox Gurdon thinks about it. ✓

##### 2. In Ms. Gurdon's opinion, which group dislikes her the most, the American Library Association or young adult authors? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

In Ms. Gurdon's opinion, the American Library Association dislikes her the most. "but from the frenzied reaction you would have thought I had called for the torching of libraries", from this quote I got from the article, you can really tell that the ALA are really mad and does not approve of what she wrote whereas the young adult authors wrote "Authors Judy Blume and Libba Bray suggested that I was giving succor to book-banners." "formulating an argument not just against 'dark' YA (young adult) book, but against the very act of reading itself". You can tell that the authors simply don't like what she wrote about the young adult books. ✓

##### 3. Reread paragraph 6. What does this extract mean? Explain each sentence.

- 1) *For families, the calculus is less crude than some notion of fictional inputs determining factual outputs; of monkey read, monkey do.* 2) *It has more to do with a child's happiness and tenderness of heart, with what furnishes the young mind.*

I think that the first sentence is talking about how fictional facts or actions and sometime determine actual real life "outputs" so whatever the person reads it get affect by the reading.

The second sentence is talking about how the "output" of the real world really depends on the person and how happy and kind they are, and that is what makes up of the mind of teenagers and kids. ✓

##### 4. Reread paragraphs 8 and 9. Do you believe that reading about harmful behaviors makes a teenager more likely to engage in the behavior? Explain.

I believe that reading about harmful behaviors can effect a teenager to engage in such behavior and it doesn't. So in other words, I am do believe it effects teenagers and it doesn't affect teenagers. I believe that it can effect a ✓

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teenager because as we are growing up, our minds have a lot of hormones our bodies are changing from a kid to a grown up and not only does your body change so does our minds. A lot of the young adults books can be related, the feeling of wanting to fit in, and not wanting to be left out. Teenagers soak everything up, it is the time where we learn from friends, parents, and book on how to act towards certain things, books sometimes can cause teenagers to be curious with certain things and could lead them into trying those certain things, such as drugs. In a way it doesn't effect a teenagers because they know there are not suppose to do drugs and have learned about in school or through a grown up. So in conclusion, I think that everyone is different, and that everyone acts different in different scenarios. Also people do different things with information, someone might know not to do it others might be curious. So there isn't a right or wrong answer here in my opinion, because everyone is different.

	Benchmark	Getting Started	Approaching Standard	Meeting Standard	Exceeding Standard
	2.5 Demonstrates comprehension of literary and informational texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Lacks understanding of content, point of view, word choice, plot, character development</li><li>•Overly short and lacking information</li><li>• Insufficient evidence to support responses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Demonstrates some understanding of aspects of the author's craft</li><li>•Demonstrates some synthesis of information</li><li>• Some supporting detail using information from the text</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Demonstrates understanding of the author's craft: content, point of view, word choice, plot, character development</li><li>•Demonstrates creative synthesis of information</li><li>• Effective supporting detail using information from the text</li></ul>	Comprehension exceeds grade level expectation. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyses texts more deeply or with greater maturity or sophistication</li></ul>

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### Summative Reading Assessment

*Ms. Gurdon's original article, "Darkness too Visible" criticized the content of popular young adult literature. Many authors, librarians, and readers disagreed strongly and loudly with Ms. Gurdon's opinions. This is her response. Note: This article has been slightly edited for an 8th-grade audience. Altered segments are italicized.*

#### My 'Reprehensible' Take on Teen Literature

Make notes here

By MEGHAN COX GURDON, Wall Street Journal

1. If the American Library Association were inclined to burn people in effigy, I might well have gone up in smoke these past few days. ALA members, mostly librarians and other book-industry folk, are concluding their annual conference today in New Orleans, and it's a fair bet that some of them are still fuming about an article of mine that appeared in these pages earlier this month.

2. The essay, titled "Darkness too Visible", I discussed the way in which young-adult literature invites teenagers to wallow in ugliness, barbarity, dysfunction and cruelty. By focusing on the dark currents in the genre, I was of course no more damning all young-adult literature than a person writing about reality TV is damning all television, but from the frenzied reaction you would have thought I had called for the torching of libraries.

3. Within hours of the essay's appearance it became a leading topic on Twitter. Indignant defenders of young-adult literature called me "idiotic," "narrow-minded," "brittle," "ignorant," "shrewish," "irresponsible" and "reprehensible." Authors Judy Blume and Libba Bray suggested that I was giving succor to book-banners. Author Lauren Myracle took the charge a stage further, accusing me of "formulating an argument not just against 'dark' YA [young-adult] books, but against the very act of reading itself." The ALA, in a letter to The Journal, saw "danger" in my argument, saying that it "encourages a culture of fear around YA literature."

4. The odd thing is that I wasn't tracking some rare, outlier tendency. As book reviewer Janice Harayda observed, commenting on my essay: "Anyone who writes about children's books regularly knows that [Mrs. Gurdon] hasn't made up this trend. . . . Books, like movies, keep getting more lurid."

5. They do indeed. I began my piece by relating the experience of a

Maryland woman who went to a bookstore looking for a novel to give her 13-year-old daughter and who left empty-handed, discouraged by the apparently unremitting darkness of books in the young-adult section. To her and many other parents, the young-adult category seems guided by a kind of grotesque fun-house sensibility, in which teenage turbulence is distorted, magnified and reflected back at young readers.

6. For families, the calculus is less crude than some notion of fictional inputs determining factual outputs; of monkey read, monkey do. It has more to do with a child's happiness and tenderness of heart, with what furnishes the young mind. If there is no frigate like a book, as Emily Dickinson wrote, it's hardly surprising that parents might prefer their teenagers to sail somewhere other than to the lands of *violence and substance abuse*.

7. But, to some, those are desirable destinations. Many of the angriest responses to my essay came from people who believe that a major purpose of young-adult fiction is therapeutic. "YA Saves!" was the rallying hashtag of thousands of Twitter posters who chose to express their ire in 140 characters or less.

8. It is true that so-called problem novels may be helpful to children in anguished circumstances. The larger question is whether books about *harmful experiences and behaviors* help to normalize such behaviors for the vast majority of children who are merely living through the routine ordeals of adolescence.

9. There are real-world reasons for caution. For years, federal researchers could not understand why drug- and tobacco-prevention programs seemed to be associated with greater drug and tobacco use. It turned out that children, while grasping the idea that drugs were bad, also absorbed the meta-message that adults expected teens to take drugs. Well-intentioned messages, in other words, can have the unintended consequence of opening the door to expectations and behaviors that might otherwise remain closed.

10. If you think, as many do, that novels can't possibly have such an effect, ask yourself: When you press a wonderful, classic children's book into a 13-year-old's hands, are you doing so in the belief that the book will make no difference to her outlook and imagination, that it is merely a passing entertainment? Or do you believe that, somehow, it will affect and influence her? And if that power is true for one book, why not for another?

<Text deleted>

11. In the outpouring of response to my essay, I've been told that I fail to understand the brutal realities faced by modern teens. Adolescence, I've been instructed, is a prolonged period of racism, homophobia, bullying, eating disorders, abusive sexual episodes, and every other manner of unpleasantness.

12. Author Sherman Alexie asked, in a piece for WSJ.com titled "Why the Best Kids Books Are Written in Blood": "Does Mrs. Gurdon honestly believe that a sexually explicit YA novel might somehow traumatize a teen mother? Does she believe that a YA novel about murder and rape will somehow shock a teenager whose life has been damaged by murder and rape? Does she believe a dystopian novel will frighten a kid who already lives in hell?"

13. No, I don't. I also don't believe that the vast majority of American teenagers live in anything like hell. Adolescence can be a turbulent time, but it doesn't last forever and often—leaving aside the saddest cases—it feels more dramatic at the time than it will in retrospect. It is surely worth our taking into account whether we do young people a disservice by seeming to endorse the worst that life has to offer.

14. Sharon Slaney, who works at a high school in Idaho, touched on this nicely in an online rebuke of her irate librarian colleagues: "You are naive if you think young people can read a dark and violent book that sits on the library shelves and not believe that that behavior must be condoned by the adults in their school life." It is that question—the condoning of the language and content of a strong current in young-adult literature—that creates the parental dilemma at the core of my essay. It should hardly be an outrage to discuss the subject.

Effigy: a roughly made model of a particular person, made in order to be damaged or destroyed as a protest or expression of anger

Lurid: shocking, in vivid detail, of an explicit nature

Reprehensible: deserving condemnation

Frigate: a heavy, armed warship

Ire: anger

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