

## Approved for use in English II and English III

### Summary of the Work:

The novel *Fools Crow* tells the story of the Blackfeet People during the 1880s when their way of life was threatened by the encroachment of the white settlers. The main character is a young Pikuni man who experiences coming of age during a time when the decisions of manhood include the choice of adapting to the changing way of life or fighting to maintain one's identity and tradition. This work includes the historical experiences of the Pikuni people using the voice and perspective of their people.

### Rationale:

*Fools Crow* is appropriate for students at this level in two critical ways: it is an authentic portrayal of the Blackfeet culture and history and it relates highly developed characters whose experiences demonstrate an adherence to not only the values accepted by contemporary society but also the values accepted across a variety of cultures and eras.

James Welch was himself an enrolled member of the Blackfoot tribe and provides the authority expected in a work containing a blend of fiction and historical fact. The students quickly become engaged in this story because of the Native voice, the connection to historical fact, and the incorporation of the Montana landscape.

The characters' experiences throughout the story call into question the responsibility of one's choices and the impact these choices have on not only them, but other members of their community. The main character's experience of adapting from adolescence to adulthood allows students to connect to their own questions of responsibility and identity.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Booklist

Library Journal 1986

Roots and Branches

\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- See Titlewave for Awards.

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 1100
- Readability Level: 7.2

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 1993

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

*Fools Crow* requires a level of maturity expected of sophomore students. The novel includes issues of sexuality, violence, loss, and racial difference. However, the novel balances these issues with characters who are reflective of strong moral values including taking responsibility for one's actions, maintaining respect for the welfare of family and community, and accepting natural consequences for harm caused to others. The novel portrays an acceptance of justice based on a clear sense of good and evil.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

The novel connects to the curriculum by supporting the concept of the hero journey, providing instruction that promotes an understanding of the historical and social themes in literary works, and demonstrating the essential understandings related to the American Indian as designated by Montana OPI.

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

Appears in suggested reading selection by the College Board.

