

Approved for use in English III

Summary of the Work:

My Antonia presents a portrait of life on the Mid-western plains during the early 1900s. Jim Burden and Antonia Shimerda grow up during this unique period in American history when the Homestead Act brought families from varied national and racial backgrounds together on the prairies of Nebraska. Both these main characters experience life on the prairie differently, as Jim Burden is from America while Antonia Shimerda's family is the first Bohemian family to settle near Black Hawk, Nebraska.

This story traces the experiences of these two very different characters as they realize important lessons in life including the immeasurable bond of friendship and mutual understanding, the importance of one's roots, and the unending connection to home.

Rationale:

My Antonia introduces the students of American Literature to several important concepts addressed in the curriculum during their junior year. The students will learn about life in America during the early 1900s in a way that is personalized and authentic as much of the detail for this novel came from Willa Cather's own experiences growing up in Red Cloud, Nebraska, at the turn of the century.

From this novel, students will understand the influence of an author's values, cultural, and historical experience, and reflect on how these influences contributed to the literature and the sentiment of life in America during this time period. Students will analyze this novel to determine how the contribution connects to the characteristics of regional writing during the Realistic Period.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Booklist
Wilson's Senior High School 11/01/02
School Library journal
Library Journal

- * 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:

- Notable/Best Book (ALA)
- Selected for The Big Read

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 1010
- Readability Level: 7.1

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

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

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:
Approved for Adoption: 2001

Notes on the Text:

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

This novel exemplifies the immigrant's experience and struggles in America during the nineteenth century. Sensitivity to diverse cultures and racial backgrounds is necessary when reading this novel.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The novel is a superb example of regional writing and as such is a high quality example of the values and ideas that are unique to a specific time in American history. Willa Cather, one of our celebrated female authors, is known for her ability to blend poetry and prose in a way that vividly describes the landscape and people from this period.

Additional Connections:

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

Suggested for Pre-AP reading and has appeared on the AP test.