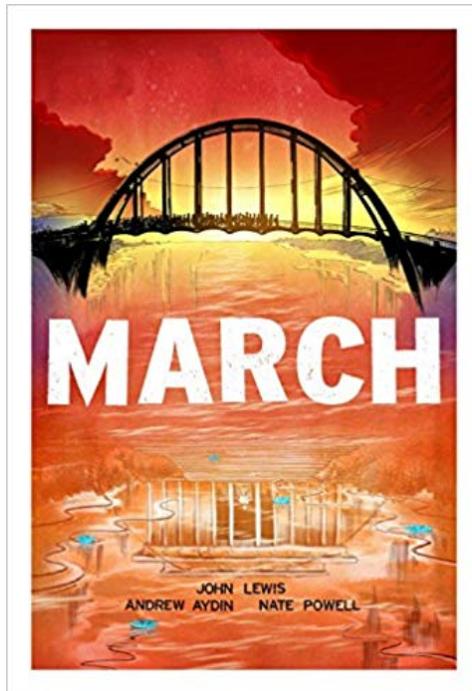


**Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
Department of English
Sophomore Summer Reading, 2019**



March (trilogy slipcase edition), by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell
ISBN-10: 1603093958
ISBN-13: 978-1603093958

Publisher’s description of March (trilogy slipcase edition), excerpted from Amazon.com:

“Discover the inside story of the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of one of its most iconic figures, Congressman John Lewis. *March* is the award-winning, #1 bestselling graphic novel trilogy recounting his life in the movement, co-written with Andrew Aydin and drawn by Nate Powell. This commemorative set contains all three volumes of *March* in a beautiful slipcase.

#1 *New York Times* and *Washington Post* Bestseller
First graphic novel to receive a Robert F. Kennedy Book Award
Winner of the Eisner Award
A Coretta Scott King Honor Book
One of YALSA's Outstanding Books for the College Bound
One of Reader's Digest's Graphic Novels Every Grown-Up Should Read”

Why has the English Team chosen this text for summer reading?

Literary Explorations 1 seeks to develop students’ skills in critical thinking and argument construction, frequently drawing on both literary and non-fiction texts from both historical and contemporary sources to explore problematic issues. Though we are decades removed from the specific events Representative Lewis recounts in this graphic memoir, the United States is still a

country that struggles with the legacy of racial discrimination and systemic bias. Students from all over Illinois, representing many different socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds come to IMSA as sophomores and must confront new, challenging social situations and responsibilities here. We feel that the *March* trilogy can assist our students in engaging in crucial conversations about the world in which we live, the experiences of others, and our responsibility to build a strong community together.

Practice annotation and careful reading.

Your teachers encourage the practice of careful annotation in all of your assigned reading at IMSA. Keep track of your impressions of the texts, the questions they raise for you, the language you find striking or difficult, and so forth. Doing so will help reinforce active reading habits and prepare you to be a strong participant in the first weeks of Literary Explorations 1.

Be prepared to encounter racist language and themes in March.

In both its visual and verbal storytelling, *March* presents its readers with material that can be emotionally challenging. Characters endure physical violence, hateful language, and other forms of abuse. Images of historical violence are re-created in the text, and while many students will have discussed these moments in school in other ways in the past, some may not have encountered such material before. We are aware that this can be difficult for students. It is often difficult for us, too. But we are also committed to interrogating uncomfortable topics thoughtfully and respectfully. One does not create meaningful change by refusing to consider difficult questions or confront ugly facts.

Students and families who would like resources about issues of racist language in the classroom and in *March* in particular are encouraged to consider:

“Straight Talk About the ‘N’ Word,” an interview with Arizona State University Professor Neal A. Lester on the legacy of the ‘N’ word in teaching (*Teaching Tolerance* magazine)

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2011/straight-talk-about-the-nword>

“Educators Shouldn’t Be Afraid to Teach the History of the ‘N’ Word,” by Andre Perry (*The Root* online magazine)

<https://www.theroot.com/educators-shouldnt-be-afraid-to-teach-the-history-of-th-1828455435>

“Making It Plain,” an interview of Representative John Lewis on the use of violent imagery and the ‘N’ word in *March*, volume 2 (via *Comics Alliance*)

<https://comicsalliance.com/march-book-two-interview-jon-lewis/>

Common Sense Media’s review of *March*, volume 1

<https://www.common Sense Media.org/book-reviews/march-book-one>

When acquiring your books, think about costs and what works best for you.

We encourage you to purchase your copy of the *March* trilogy slipcase edition from whatever bookseller you wish, new or used. If you prefer to find the three volumes at your local library, that’s great. We love libraries! Please be aware that you will need copies of the books on campus

throughout the fall. With that in mind, the English Team can provide a limited number of copies of the full trilogy on loan for students who have used library copies during the summer.

What can you expect in your English class at the beginning of the school year?

Students will be asked to discuss, debate, and identify important details and ideas drawn from the text, which will serve as springboards for in-class activities and assessments and out-of-class assignments. Students should plan to keep their copy the text on campus throughout the fall, as their teacher may reference it throughout the course.

Guiding Questions

In addition to developing questions of your own, we encourage you to consider the following questions as you read:

1. Many famous individuals write memoirs, but relatively few turn their personal histories into graphic novels. Consider the way combining visual and verbal storytelling cues changes how we as readers engage with Representative Lewis' history.
2. Pick a historical event from this text you've encountered before – in your studies, in your own reading, or in conversation with older relatives. What details about this event you thought you knew about are conveyed differently through the graphic novel format?
3. *March* is a “frame” story: that is, it is the story of John Lewis attending President Barack Obama's first inauguration and, contained within it, his reflections on the Civil Rights Movement he helped lead a generation earlier. Consider how these two stories (one more historical, and one more contemporary) interact with and complicate each other.
4. Lewis provides insights into well-known historical figures. Some of these paint persons we think we know very differently than expected. Are you inclined to trust Lewis' memory of these people, or the common cultural narrative about them?

If you have any questions about the summer reading, please contact:

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