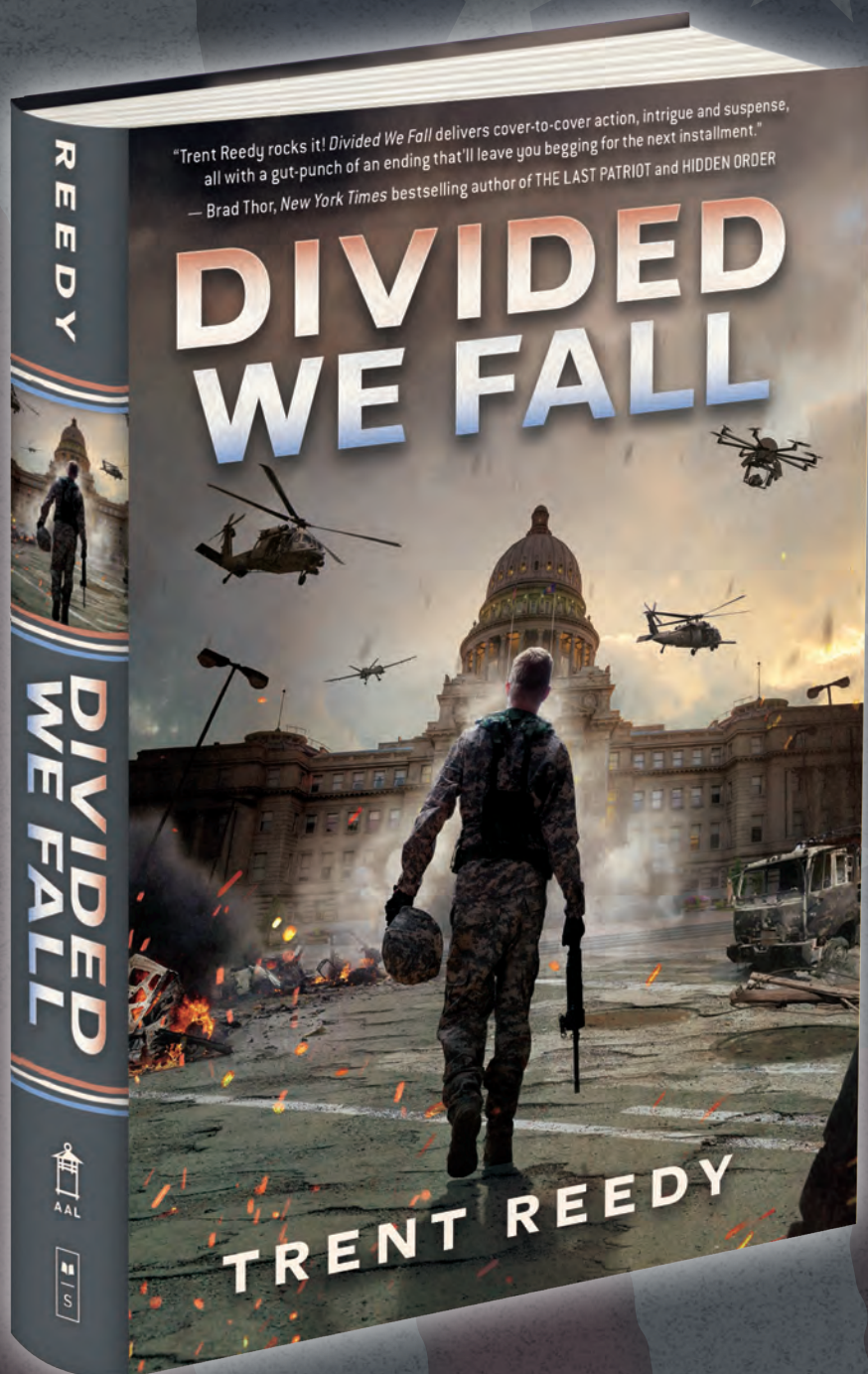


DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grades
9 & up



★ **"Tackles pressing issues with prescient clarity...terrifying in its plausibility."**

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Gives readers an action-filled story that will also make them think."

—*Booklist*

"Will leave you begging for the next installment."

— Brad Thor, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Hidden Order* and *The Last Patriot*

"Brilliant, thrilling, heartbreaking...an important new voice in YA fiction." — Jonathan Maberry, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Extinction Machine*, *Rot and Ruin*, and *Fire and Ash*

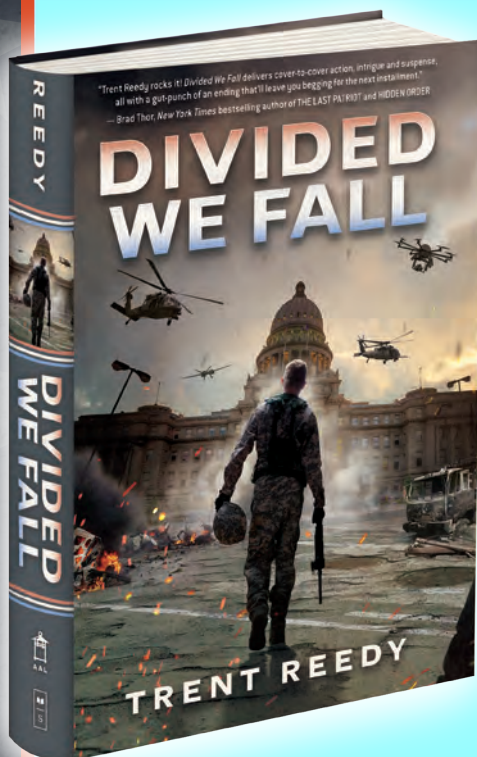
"Tense, heart-wrenching, and all too believable."

— Tamora Pierce, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Battle Magic* and *Terrier*

 SCHOLASTIC

Meets Common Core State Standards—SEE INSIDE

About the Book



“May God forgive me. May God forgive us all.”

Seventeen-year-old Private First Class Daniel Christopher Wright is a typical high school senior. He plays football, rides bulls in rodeos, listens to country music, attends parties, and has a serious girlfriend. When he joined the Idaho National Guard, he only wanted to serve his country and honor his dad, who was killed in Afghanistan.

But all that changes one weekend in Boise, Idaho. The federal government has passed a law requiring all citizens to carry a national ID card containing medical records and a satellite-trackable chip. The Idaho state assembly and governor, who consider this an unconstitutional invasion of privacy, have voted to nullify the law. When the governor summons the Guard to Boise to manage a group of protestors, Danny's gun accidentally goes off. In the ensuing melee, twelve people are killed and nine wounded, and outrage erupts on college campuses and in cities across the nation.

Events rapidly spiral out of control. When the president sends the U.S. Army to apprehend the soldiers involved in the protest, and the governor orders the Idaho National Guard to seal the borders against them, Danny is forced to make an impossible choice between loyalty to his state and loyalty to his country.

A compelling, provocative choice for mature students to read and discuss

Introduce *Divided We Fall* into your classroom — but be prepared, this book does not shirk from the tough political debates of our time.

What happens when one mistake by a young National Guardsman triggers a showdown between the governor of Idaho and the president of the United States? And what would it be like to be that young Guardsman, an ordinary high school student suddenly in the national spotlight, caught up in events he never could have imagined? *Divided We Fall*, the first in a trilogy, is fast-paced and riveting, and appeals to even the most reluctant reader.

Though the novel is fiction, the themes are timely and real in today's America. Issues of patriotism and duty haunt the young protagonist, and cause readers to think about the responsibilities that come with the freedoms Americans enjoy. What would happen if these responsibilities were in conflict? Read and discuss with students the passage

beginning on p. 68 where Danny's American Government teacher, Mr. Shiratori, is talking about the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution (federal law trumps state law) versus the controversial concept of *nullification* (the right states can claim not to enforce a law they consider unconstitutional). These fundamental debates about power in America are frequently in the news today. This book can help your students understand them through a story they can relate to.

Other themes deal with family, friendship, courage, and guilt. Danny's story could belong to any young adult who wants to make a difference, but isn't equipped to deal with the big issues in life. It involves rebellion, secrecy, death, the news media, and the chaos they can cause.

Throughout this guide, we note wherever an activity helps students toward achieving specific **Common Core State Standards**. See the back page for more information.

About the Author



Trent Reedy served in the Iowa National Guard from 1999 to 2005, including a year's tour of duty in Afghanistan. Based upon his experiences there, he wrote *Words in the Dust* (2011), about an Afghan girl with a cleft lip, which won the Christopher Award and was chosen for Al Roker's Book Club for Kids on the *Today* show. His next novel was *Stealing Air* (2012), a Junior Library Guild Selection. His book *If You're Reading This* will be published in September 2014. Look for the next installment in the *Divided We Fall* trilogy in Spring 2015.

Trent lives with his wife in Spokane, Washington. Please visit his website trentreedy.tumblr.com.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

*What provided the inspiration for *Divided We Fall*?*

I saw in my head an image of a young soldier guarding the border of his state, in a stand-off between his state and the rest of the country—forced to choose whether he should honor his oath to the United States or to his home state. I had a near-instant understanding of the protagonist, his friends, and the circumstances they were growing up in. I had never experienced such an immediate and powerful need to write a novel. I wrote the prologue and the first handful of scenes as soon as I returned home that day.

The first major life influence on *Divided We Fall* was my service as a combat engineer in the Iowa Army National Guard and my service in Afghanistan. I enlisted in order to take advantage of the college tuition assistance that the Guard offered, so that I could learn to become a writer. I did not anticipate what a profound effect my military experiences would have on my writing.

Divided We Fall is also inspired by my lifelong horrified fascination with the shootings on the Kent State University campus on May 4, 1970, when Ohio Army National Guardsmen fired on unarmed students, killing four and wounding nine. Back then, the soldiers and leadership involved suffered few penalties, and the soldiers enjoyed a great deal of support from both the state and federal governments. I wondered how American society would react if a similar event happened today.

Current events have also been a tremendous influence on the novel. The book deals with a number of legal and constitutional issues. For a while, I was concerned that the book was too farfetched. But with the October 2013 government shutdown, occasional talk of secession, and attempts at the nullification of gun-control laws in several states, today's news and the concepts in the book have started echoing each other.

Passages between chapters include excerpts from radio broadcasts, Sunday political talk shows, social media status updates, television interviews, and other media.

Why did you decide to include these?

The novel's main character, Danny Wright, has little interest in American politics. Yet *Divided We Fall* is a story of profound national confrontation and change. To help the reader get an idea of the impact of Danny's story across America, I included what I call "media noise" sections.

These sections give the reader a sense of the constant media bombardment that we experience today—a stream of reporting, photos, videos, and opinionated commentary at all times, all shared, commented, and amplified on social media, until the social media chatter itself sometimes becomes the news. I realistically portray what such momentous events would look like in our technology—and information—saturated lives.

The book is set in the very near future. Why did you choose that time frame?

Fiction has often used depictions of the future to comment on contemporary society. The problems that trigger the events in *Divided We Fall* are happening now. I set the novel in a near future with a very similar political climate to today.

Divided We Fall shows a country slowly fracturing along political lines. What do you think is the best way to approach political differences among Americans?

I think many Americans today are committed to the idea of working to get their political party to completely defeat the other party. I don't want to tell people how to vote or how to manage their political lives. But I do wonder if we would be better able to solve our shared problems if we would be more willing to give a little ground in the name of compromise, if we would tone down the militaristic language, and if we'd think twice before posting that snarky political meme to Facebook. As with so many things, real change begins in the heart of the individual.

What kind of research did you do for the novel?

The military scenes in *Divided We Fall* are based on my knowledge and experience from my own service. I also drove around scouting out locations in Idaho and the Washington/Idaho border, and some streets in Boise. This helped me get a better understanding for the look and feel of the places Daniel Wright inhabits.

A lot of my research also involved reading. I wondered if, besides the Confederacy, America had ever dealt with states simply refusing to abide by federal law. I found answers in a book about the South Carolina nullification crisis of the 1830s, which, aside from the Civil War, was the most serious nullification episode in history.

Since one of the many problems my character Daniel Wright faces is conflicting orders from his chain of command in

the federal government and his commanders in Idaho, I researched other National Guard soldiers who had been forced to choose which loyalty to honor. I read about how Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered soldiers from the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the Little Rock Nine from attending school with white children, and how later President Eisenhower federalized all Arkansas National Guard soldiers. In 1957, the Guard soldiers obeyed the president, but what if they had refused? What if future National Guard soldiers, faced with a similar dilemma, refused to obey the call to federalize?

I kept asking the "what if" questions. What if a state's National Guard refused to obey the U.S. president's orders? What if a state outlawed a federal law? What if two well-meaning sides of a disagreement couldn't find a way to a compromise, until the only remaining course is war?

So will this book appeal to liberals or conservatives?

I was determined not to write propaganda for the left or the right. Most liberals and conservatives are basically good people, trying to do what they think is best for the country.

The book's title hints at the fact that an America divided cannot succeed. I believe many Americans spend too much time, energy, emotion, and money trying to get their political team to win, rather than working on the best ways to make real improvements to the country.

What do you hope readers will take away from Divided We Fall?

Divided We Fall deals with incredibly timely issues. I've been asked if this is a conservative or liberal book, but that's the wrong question. The novel suggests that such a division is what will bring about our fall. I hope that *Divided We Fall* will generate relevant discussion not only about issues that Americans argue about, but about that argument, that divide, itself.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

The novel contains the following quote from Ronald Reagan: "Government big enough to give you everything, is also powerful enough to take it all away" (p. 12). Engage the class in a discussion about the meaning of this quote. Then ask them to consider the quote and the title of the novel and make predictions about possible themes and content of the novel.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Literature: Key Ideas & Details RL. 8-10.1.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

FAMILY

Compare and contrast JoBell's and Danny's families. How does the family life and socioeconomic status of each affect his or her aspirations for the future? Discuss the role of a father in a young adult's life. Who is Danny's father figure? Describe Danny's relationship with his mother and discuss his need to protect her. How is his determination to bring his mother home more important to him than following the orders of the governor and the president?

FRIENDSHIP

Describe Danny's friends. How are they typical teenagers determined to enjoy their senior year in high school? In what ways is Danny different from his peers? Other than JoBell, who is Danny's closest friend? Why does Danny break his oath of secrecy and tell Sweeney what happened in Boise? Does Sweeney betray Danny by sharing his secret? Discuss how Danny's friends try to protect him. What is their role in helping Danny rescue his mom? Debate the future of Danny and his friends. Will their friendship prevail past high school?

PATRIOTISM

Define patriotism from Danny's point of view. How does his idea of patriotism differ from JoBell's? Explain what Schmidty means when he says, "I don't know why you signed up with the National Guard. This ain't the same country that your father died defending" (p. 12). Why is Schmidty cynical about the government? How is Danny naïve about patriotism and duty? What is his mother's

attitude toward duty and patriotism? How does Danny question the meaning of patriotism as the rebellion in Idaho worsens? Discuss ways that teenagers might show patriotism and duty to country without getting involved in conflict.

FREEDOM

Explain the old adage, "The truth will set you free." How does Danny feel free after his mother and friends know the truth about his involvement in the rebellion? What freedoms are citizens guaranteed under the First Amendment of the Constitution? Specialist Sparrow says, "We fight to protect [the protestors'] freedom of speech and they wanna give us trouble" (p. 33). Debate whether Guards like Sparrow really care about the First Amendment. Explain what Danny means when he says, "We can't just let them [the Feds] trample our freedom" (p. 278). Why does Mr. Shiratori, the Government teacher, caution Danny about freedom and his involvement in the incident in Boise?

REBELLION

Discuss the reasons for the rebellion in Boise. How does it grow from an innocent citizens' protest to a conflict between the state and federal governments? Discuss the role of the Idaho National Guard in keeping peace among the protestors. At what point do the governor of Idaho and the president of the United States become "domestic enemies"? How is Danny caught between the two? What are Schmidty's and JoBell's attitudes toward the rebellion? Explain what Danny means when he says, "I fired the shot that ended the United States of America" (p. 1). Why does the governor pass a law to create the Idaho Civilian Corps?

COURAGE

Define courage. Debate whether Danny has the courage it takes to serve in the military. Sheriff Crow tells Danny, "You're a good kid. A good man. You got guts" (p. 155). How does Danny display "guts" and courage by the end of the novel? JoBell assures Danny that he is strong enough to handle everything. Yet she wants him to quit the Guard. How does she send him mixed messages about courage and duty?

GUILT/REGRET

Describe Danny's feelings of guilt after the incident in Boise. How do these feelings cause him to question his decision to join the Idaho National Guard? How does Sergeant Kemp try to help Danny deal with his guilt? At what point does Danny think that things would be better if he turned himself in?

POLITICAL RHETORIC

Interpret the following quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: "Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people" (p. 111). Apply the quote to the various television and radio news programs reporting on the "Battle of Boise." How and why does the truth as Danny tells it to us get corrupted by the media? Which news outlets offer the most accurate reporting? The most balanced? Why is it important for citizens to listen to all views before forming their own opinions about any political issue? What is the difference between rhetoric and fact? How might a viewer tell the difference? Finally, ask students to state their opinion regarding the political dispute between the governor and the president.

Correlates to Common Core Language Standards in Reading: Literature: Key Ideas & Details RL. 8-10.1, 8-10.2, 8-10.3; Craft & Structure RL. 8-10.6; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 8-10.1, 8-10.3; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 8-10.4, 8-10.6.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Discuss the definition of irony. Then have students write a one-page paper that explains the irony in the names "Freedom Lake," the town where Danny lives, and "Revolution," the bull that Danny rides in the rodeo. Allow students time to share their papers in class.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 8-10.4; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.2.

Read aloud the Aesop fable "The Four Oxen and the Lion" <http://aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?2&TheFourOxenandtheLion>.

As a class, discuss the moral of the story. Then have students write a short paper that draws a parallel between the fable and the novel. How is the title of the novel especially pertinent?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Literature: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RL. 8-10.9; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.2.

Instruct half of the class to write a front-page news story called "The Battle of Boise" for the *Idaho State Journal*, and half to write the story for *The Washington Post*. Remind them to include Who, What, When, and Where. Include quotes from Governor Montaine, President Rodriguez, Brigadier General McNabb, and persons taking part in the protest. How are the stories written for Idaho readers different from the ones written for a national audience?

Correlates to Common Core Standards Language Arts in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.3; Production & Distribution of Writing W. 8-10.4.

SOCIAL STUDIES

JoBell's father wants his family to discuss current events at every meal. Ask students to watch the nightly news for three days, and identify current national debates. Topics may include Gun Control, Immigration Reform, Voter Rights, Government Surveillance, and Health Care Reform. Then instruct students to use five resources that offer positions from different sides of one issue. Have students debate the issues over "dinner." Assign one student to role-play JoBell's father. Instruct them to cite their sources when making their points.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Key Ideas & Details RI. 8-10.1; Craft & Structure RI. 8-10.5, 8-10.6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 8-10.8; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 8-10.1, 8-10.2, 8-10.3; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 8-10.4, 8-10.6.

In class, read and discuss the Constitutional Charter of the Guard: <http://www.arng.army.mil/aboutus/history/Pages/ConstitutionalCharteroftheGuard.aspx>. Ask students to select one article of the charter and write a paper that applies it to the action of the Idaho National Guard at the "Battle of Boise." Cite specific scenes from the novel to support points. Allow time in class for students to read their papers aloud.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Key Ideas & Details RI. 8-10.1; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration 8-10.1; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.1, 8-10.2.

SCIENCE

The sergeant issues thermal cloaks to the men as protection from the drones that the federal government might use as surveillance. Have students read about drones on the following website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/military/rise-of-the-drones.html>. Then have them write and illustrate an article for a science magazine that explains drones to a younger audience. Instruct them to raise issues related to privacy. Distribute the articles to science teachers to use with their students.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.2; Production & Distribution of Writing W. 8-10.4

HEALTH AND SAFETY

"Under Idaho law, if you're an Idaho resident, and purchase locally manufactured weapons, federal gun control laws do not apply to you" (p. 19). Ask students to read and analyze the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the gun laws in their state. Then have them write an opinion paper titled "Right to Bear Arms: An Individual's Right and Responsibility." Ask them to consider recent local, state, and national incidents of gun violence. How do these incidents influence their arguments?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 8-10.1, 8-10.2; Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 8-10.7

ART

Ask students to visit the following website and discuss the illustrations in the "State Mission" series that represent the domestic purpose of the National Guard: <http://www.nationalguard.mil/resources/photo%5Fgallery/states/index.htm>.

Then ask them to illustrate a poster that best represents the "Battle of Boise." Write a paragraph that describes the artwork. Take photographs of the posters and develop a class PowerPoint presentation called "The Guard and the Battle of Boise." Share with other classes via your school's website.

Correlates to Common Core Standards in Language Arts in Writing Production & Distribution of Writing W. 8-10.3, 8-10.6; Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 8-10.5.

MUSIC

Divide the class into small groups and have them read about and listen to protest songs on the following website: <http://kdhx.org/music/news/40-great-protest-songs-a-to-z>. Then have them select the protest song from the past that is most fitting to the conflict in Boise. Instruct them to learn the song and perform it in class. Ask them to justify their choice.

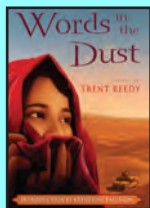
Correlates to Common Core Standards in Language Arts Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 8-10.2; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 8-10.4.

VOCABULARY

The vocabulary in the novel isn't difficult, but students should be encouraged to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them taking clues from the context. Such words may include: *complacent* (p. 34), *augment* (p. 45), *confiscated* (p. 47), *colossal* (p. 48), *tantamount* (p. 74), *contingency* (p. 93), *incursions* (p. 94), and *turrets* (p. 99). After they have defined the words, ask them to look up the meaning in a dictionary. How well did they do?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards – Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use L. 6-8.4.

Other Books by Trent Reedy



Words in the Dust

Arthur A. Levine Books

Hardcover: 978-0-545-26125-8 • \$17.99

Paperback: 978-0-545-26126-5 • \$6.99

Ebook: 978-0-545-57806-6 • \$6.99



Stealing Air

Arthur A. Levine Books

Hardcover: 978-0-545-38307-3 • \$16.99

Paperback: 978-0-545-38308-0 • \$6.99

Ebook: 978-0-545-46989-0 • \$6.99

Audio versions also available from Scholastic Audio.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS REFERENCED IN THIS GUIDE

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL. 8-10.1 – Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL. 8-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL. 8-10.3 – Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure

RL. 8-10.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL. 8-10.6 – Analyze how differences in the point of view of the characters create such effects as suspense.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL. 8-10.9 – Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of event, or character types from myths, traditional stories, etc.

Reading Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

RI. 8-10.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure

RI. 8-10.5 – Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.

RI. 8-10.6 – Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI. 8-10.8 – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.

Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L. 6-8.4 – Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL. 8-10.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL. 8-10.2 – Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate the motives behind its presentation.

SL. 8-10.3 – Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL. 8-10.4 – Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details.

SL. 8-10.5 – Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and interest.

SL. 8-10.6 – Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W. 8-10.1 – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W. 8-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W. 8-10.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W. 8-10.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W. 8-10.5 – With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing.

W. 8-10.6 – Use technology, including the Internet to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W. 8-10.7 – Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W. 8-10.8 – Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others.

Divided We Fall by Trent Reedy • Ages 14 and up • 384 pages • 978-0-545-54367-5 • \$17.99

Books may be ordered from your local bookstore or usual supplier.

Teachers and librarians may order from

Scholastic, 2931 East McCarty Street, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

Call toll-free 1-800-SCHOLASTIC.

Fax orders toll-free to 1-800-560-6815.

Discussion guide written by Pat Scales, Children's Literature Consultant, Greenville, South Carolina



ARTHUR A. LEVINE BOOKS



www.scholastic.com

SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.