

them about a book that is the favourite of a YA character, or getting a new edition of the book, there are many ways to make the classics more inviting to young adults.

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### A List of YA Novels That Mention Classics

*Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer – *Wuthering Heights*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Romeo and Juliet*

*I Am the Messenger* by Markus Zusak – *Wuthering Heights*

*Beastly* by Alex Flinn - *Jane Eyre*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Phantom of the Opera*

*The Sky is Everywhere* by Jandy Nelson – *Wuthering Heights*

*When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead – *A Wrinkle in Time*

*Half Brother* by Kenneth Oppel – *I Capture the Castle*

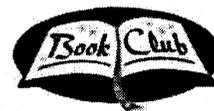
*Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky – *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Peter Pan*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Hamlet*, *A Separate Peace*

*Enthusiasm* by Polly Shulman – *Pride and Prejudice* and other Austen titles



### PROGRAMMING WITH THE CLASSICS

A key to making any book come alive for young adults is to offer programs associated with them. Developing programming for teens is not always easy as one needs to find just the right program that will appeal to teens. Classics are not necessarily an easy thing to program around since many young adults are not aware of the classics, or they think that they do not like classic literature; however, a good program can offer the opportunity to get them interested in classics and have fun in the library.



### ***Classics Book Club***

Maybe you have teens keen to read classic books or some teens that have to read a classic for school. You can turn this into a programming opportunity and even an outreach opportunity. Pick a classic of your choice or the high school selection and offer a time and place to get together to discuss the book as a group. Sometimes people do not enjoy classics because they may not understand them and a book club will give an opportunity for them to see new perspectives, ask questions, and gain a better understanding of the book. You could even encourage teens to listen to an audio book version. This is a very simple program to do—all you have to do is make sure that the library has copies of the book for the teens to use. You may also want to provide some fun snacks. This program would also not put a strain on low staffed libraries as it can be easily done by one staff member.

### ***Family and the Classics Book Club***

A popular trend in libraries recently has been mother/daughter or father/son book clubs. This could be an opportunity to promote classics by using them as the reading selections. Often parents are more involved in their children's homework than they are, and in some instances their son or daughter is reading the same book they read in high school English. There may even be a classic that the parent has always wanted to read. It is easy to turn this enthusiasm into an opportunity for a fun bonding and learning experience. Offer a book club where parents and their son/daughter can read a classic together and come together with others to discuss the book.

Programming with parents gives parents and teens a chance to bond and parents a chance to re-read something they loved or hated and see it in a new light. It also allows teens to be introduced to a classic or have a fun way to get through the one they have to read for school.

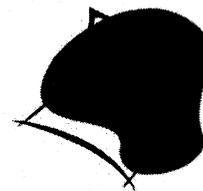
### ***Classic Book and Movie Club.***

Sometimes teens are reluctant to read but most of them love to watch movies. Here is a great way to pull them into books and classics at the same time. Each month have two activity days, or have just one a month – whatever works better for your teens. Each time select a classic novel that they are interested in and pair it with a film adaptation. You can also pick a movie and then read the book. This program will also take little planning and staff. Like a regular book club you will have to make sure that there are enough copies of the book available. You will also have to make sure that you have access to the movie as well as the rights to show it. You may also want to provide snacks such as popcorn for this program (see the Classics to Film article in this issue for movie ideas).

### ***Homework and the Classics***

Libraries often offer homework help, chats, and other resources to help teens with their

homework. Often teens have to read/ study a classic book, poem, or short story for their English classes in high school. A great way to help teens would be to find out what classic materials the local school is studying and start study groups and/or homework help. Homework help for the classics could come in something as simple as online links to resources, a specific chat thread online for questions and help for a specific book, or a homework club that can get together at the library with the librarian. Most teens are online so online resources would be used and teens are social so it may help them to talk about their book in a group environment. This could also be a good opportunity for a librarian to interact with teens and introduce them to proper paper writing and citation skills through mini-workshops worked into a classics homework group.



## **Other Programming Opportunities for Promoting Classic Books**

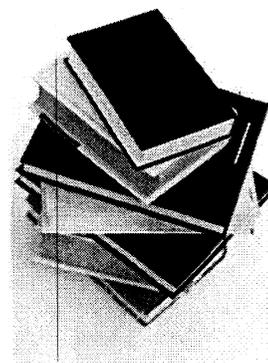
**Book talking** – sometimes the right person talking about a book can bring it to life in a way that a back cover blurb, or an Amazon review, never can. Since there seems to be a negative stigma for teens surrounding classic literature, book talking can prompt an open and honest discussion of the story. So the next time you go to a school or are at a library doing book talks, consider throwing in a book talk about one or two approachable classics that would be of interest to young adults.

**Audio booking**– you book talk books, why not audio books. Teens who are reluctant to read – especially the classic they have to read for English class – may be interested in listening to it. There are probably many that do not realize that those “old books” have been remade into audio books. This is just another opportunity to introduce them to a fun way to experience the classics.

**Have a reading** – while it really will depend on your audience, you may be able to have a reading from a classic novel, play or poem. Not all teens will go for this but there are some who might. You may have an animated staff member or volunteer or professional come into the library and have a reading. Or find a way to get teens involved! A simple reading could turn into a lot of fun!

**Let their artistic side show and bring a classic to life!** –Teens have all sorts of artistic talent such as drawing,

writing, acting, and painting. You could get teens to represent their favourite, or most recently read classic book, in the artistic form of their choice, and then allow them to display it at the library. Through art, a book trailer, a poem, or a rewriting of a classic ending, they can make it their own. You could choose to supply



materials for their creations or get them to do them at home.

***Drama club*** – The Drama club could be a longer standing program or a one-off. What you do is gauge interest and get a group of teens together to create their own theatrical adaptation of a book. If there is a theater group or drama club at the local school you could partner with them to do the same. You could do fun things such as make a redneck version of *Romeo and Juliet* or a modern version of *Emma*.

There are many possibilities for programming ideas surrounding the classics. You just need to be creative and keep your audience in mind. Offering a program that does not suit your teens will not be helpful to them and will be a waste of your time. If you know your teens that come to your branch, try to cater programming to them. After all, the above mentioned programs are meant to be simple ideas that can be adapted to suit the situation at your library.