

Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds

English Language Arts, 10th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Our story, told in free verse poetry, takes place at first in the bedroom that Will, our protagonist, once shared with his brother. That same brother was recently shot and killed, and Will discovers a loaded gun in his brother's drawer. He decides to take the gun and use it to get revenge on his brother's murderer. He steps onto the elevator of his apartment complex, and as he goes down each floor, the elevator door stops and opens, a new ghost from Will's past joins him on the way down. Will they be able to convince him to do the right thing? Or will Will continue the cycle of violence?

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Environment and Identity**
 - Essential Question: "How do adversity and environment influence an individual's behavior and identity?"
- **Unit 4: Conscientious Objections**
 - Essential Question: "To what extent do multiple viewpoints influence our perception of societal issues? To what extent do those issues become our responsibility?"

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RL.10.3
- Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. RL.10.5
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature. RL.10.6
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). RL.9-10.4