

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

***The Things a Brother Knows* by Dana Reinhardt**

English Language Arts, 11th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The Things a Brother Knows is a novel by Dana Reinhardt that explores themes of family, identity, and the impact of war. The story follows Levi Katznelson, whose older brother, Boaz, returns home after serving in the military. However, Boaz is profoundly changed by his experiences, and Levi struggles to understand the reasons behind his brother's transformation. As the narrative unfolds, Levi embarks on a journey with Boaz to uncover the truth about his brother's time in the military and the secrets he carries. The novel delves into the complexities of relationships, the challenges of returning to civilian life after military service, and the importance of understanding and accepting one another.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM*

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

- **Unit 2: Complex Issues**
 - Essential Questions: “How does written language challenge and change an individual’s mind? What role does the writer play in challenging and changing an individual’s mind?”
- **Unit 3: Universal Human Experience**
 - Essential Questions: “How does sustained inquiry of the past inform and motivate change?” and “How do we prepare for an uncertain future?”

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RL.11.1
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.11.2
- Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama. RL.11.3
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. RL.11.5
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading. RL.11.10
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly

from a range of strategies. RL.11.11

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. RL.11.4