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Young Adults, Adventure, & the Supernatural

Life is adventure. Without adventure, humans would be sedentary beings without real purpose. An adventure begins with an idea and ideas begin through imagination. Stories of adventure in YA literature are often filled with trials and tribulation that feed the imagination of the young adult reader. This allows readers to grow through new experiences seen in the respective story. Adventures in real life and text alike allow the mind to wander, stretch its legs, and have some fun with the world around us.

Adventurers such as Frodo from *Lord of the Rings* and Goku in *Dragonball* are the inspiration for thousands around the world because of the courage and strength they show. Personally, Goku shapes the type of man I am today. For those who don't know Goku, he is the embodiment of purity, strength, and loyalty. Although both are completely fictional, characters like this help instill confidence in today's youth through tales of quests, epic battles, and much more.

Young adult literature loves playing in the supernatural, often employing mythical creatures or embellished powers to enhance an already eccentric storyline. *Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban* allows millions of kids to believe magic is real because of the way they craftily blend the fiction of magic to the harsh realities of child Harry and his friends. Goku's powers allow kids to believe they can fly one day (I still haven't completely ruled out the possibility). The point is that if nothing else, stories such as these help a young adult learn to identify what exists within the realm of reality, and what is purely fictional.

Life is about the adventures we take and who we take them with. Books like these help us realize the importance of adventure from a young age, which is why adventure stories in YA literature are crucial to the development of an outgoing and well-rounded individual. YA literature is also the perfect genre to implement stories of grandeur and adventure because it is the age most young adults begin to go off and have adventures of their own.

Works Cited

1. Grossman, Lev. *The Magicians: a Novel*. Penguin Books Ltd, 2009.

Quentin Coldwater and his best friend Julia are invited to apply to a school of magic called Brakebills. Before they know it, they've discovered a fantastical world they must travel to in order to save magic itself. *The Magicians* is a particularly helpful book for young adults because it explores themes of adventure through the supernatural. This book exemplifies exeter qualities three and four because of the existence of a strong female protagonist in Alice who goes well beyond the typical experiences of teens. The book has also been made into a fantastic show which I watch regularly.

2. Lewis, C. S., and Pauline Baynes. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

The Chronicles of Narnia is a series of stories about children from Earth who find a magical world filled with mythical beasts called Narnia. Most children (like this one) grow up reading *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The children in the book get to go on adventures inside the magical world of Narnia. This book is particularly helpful for young adult readers because it explores the fantastical world of Narnia, allowing the young reader's explore their imagination. This book represents exeter quality four through the "use of fictional experiences to learn and develop in their own lives".

3. Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

The Giver is a dystopian novel written by Lois Lowry that explores life in a supposed Utopia. A twelve year old boy by the name of Jonas is named "The Giver" and is to be given all of the memories of the past - good and bad. Jonas quickly realizes this was not a job he really wanted. This book is helpful for young adult readers because it enables the reader to enter a different world that is eerily similar to our current reality. This book does a fantastic job of highlighting good vs. evil and hitting upon exeter quality six by having "themes that inform truthfully about the wider world so as to allow readers to engage with difficult and challenging issues relating to immediate interests and global concerns." After reading this book as an adolescent, the importance of this story is not lost upon this young adult.

4. Meyer, Stephenie, and Megan Tingley. *Twilight*. Little, Brown and Company, 2005.

A misfit high-school student, Bella Swan, is impartial about her move from sunny Arizona to rainy Washington state. That is until she meets the handsome and mysterious Edward Cullen. Edward and his large vampire family are do not drink blood and are kind. Bella and Edward fall deeply in love despite the danger the relationship poses to Bella's life due to Edward's nearly maddening lust for her blood. *Twilight* is first and foremost a love story - and as such was not my top pick on movie nights. After watching multiple times I realized, as romanticized as the whole story is, even the relationship of "soul mates" Bella and Edward has its challenges. Their love is forbidden - they have a Romeo/Juliet aspect to them. Their story touches upon many themes of love such as the importance of sacrifice, the ability of love to overcome lesser desires (i.e. Edward's bloodlust), and bravery to dive in even though one may get hurt (or in Bella's case, killed). Their story exemplifies exeter qualities three, four, and seven through their strong female protagonist and characters that go through atypical fictional experiences in a way that allows for the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth.

5. Ohba, Tsugumi, et al. *Death Note*. Viz, 2005.

Death Note is a life-changing story. Light Yagami is in the top of his high school class in Japan. One day, a mysterious notebook falls from the sky in front of Light. After a short time, he realizes when a name is entered into the book, that person dies of a heart attack - or in whichever way it is specifically detailed in the notebook. Death Note is a fantastic choice for young adult readers because it explores exeter qualities one, two, four, six, and eight. This story is fantastic because of the way it makes the reader think as we follow along with the two super-genius main characters up until their dramatic end. This is one of the few (if not only) story with exeter quality eight that I have chosen.

6. *Paterson, Katherine. Bridge To Terabithia. New York: HarperCollins, 1977. Print.*

After reading this in middle school, my memory of certain details may be a little off, but i'll never forget *Bridge to Terabithia*. Two unlikely friends come together through friendly competition in school. Soon they find themselves in the magical world of Terabithia through a bridge they find together in the woods. This is the story of the new king and queen of Terabithia. Reading this book in middle school was one of the highlights of my entire scholastic career. This book is valuable because it explores the possibility of an alternate universe existing right beside our own reality. This plays to the imagination of young adults everywhere.

7. Pike, Christopher, et al. *Remember Me*. Hodder Childrens, 2010.

This book is written from the point of view of Shari Cooper, a recent high school graduate who has just died but doesn't know it yet. The last thing she remembers is going out onto the balcony for some air at the graduation party, and then she woke up in her bed and her family and friends are all ignoring her. Soon she learns that she has died, and her death is being ruled a suicide, but she knows that it must have been a murder. While attending her own funeral in ghost form, the ghost of a student that died the year before, Peter, shows up and joins her. The two soon become close and comfort each other. Peter helps Shari unravel a tangled web of

secrets that lead to her murderer while Shari helps Peter find peace with the fact that he took his own life. Through entering the dreams of the living, they are able to save her murderer's next victim, Shari's brother, and provide peace of mind to her family. ("Remember Me (Book Series)."
Wikipedia <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remember_Me_\(book_series\)>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remember_Me_(book_series)>)).

8. Rowling, J. K., and GrandPré Mary. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999.

Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban is the story of Harry Potter in his third year at Hogwarts. Harry and friends Ron and Hermione learn more about his past and his parents as an unlikely godfather comes out of the woodworks. Harry Potter is one of the best young adult literature series in existence. Of the many exeter qualities the Harry Potter series exemplifies is exeter quality seven. There are many different aspects of Harry's life from which a young adult can learn and form their own ideas.

9. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994. Print.

The Fellowship of the Ring is the initial offering of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Frodo Baggins is tasked with destroying the most powerful ring ever created after it is passed down to him by his uncle Bilbo Baggins. The only problem is, Frodo has quite the trek ahead of him. Reading the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy is a right of passage for many young readers, as it was for me. Fantastic stories of adventure, triumph, and tribulations await any young reader lucky enough to find one of the epic books. *The Fellowship of the Ring* exemplifies exeter quality six as there are multiple facets of the story occurring simultaneously throughout Middle Earth.

10. Toriyama, Akira, et al. *Dragonball*. Viz Media, 2017.

Dragonball is a Japanese Manga series that follows the life of Son-Goku, a

saiyan from Planet Vegeta who was sent to Earth in a spaceship as a baby. Goku was initially sent to Earth to destroy it, but after bumping his head as a child and losing his memory he ends up making a multitude of friends and goes on to save the Earth on multiple occasions. Through his travels and adventures, Goku teaches lessons of humility, love, courage, respect, and more. The *Dragonball* series is exeter quality number four. The characters go well beyond any typical experience on a regular basis and use these fictional experiences to help the reader learn and develop in their own lives.