



# OPPORTUNITY MATTERS 2025 BOOK CLUB **LEADER HANDBOOK**



COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITY MATTERS  
**BOOK CLUB**

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# About the Opportunity Matters Book Club

In 2021, the Council for Opportunity in Education ignited a powerful movement with the launch of the Good Trouble Book Club. This groundbreaking initiative was designed to embolden TRIO students, inviting them into transformative dialogues inspired by the courageous footsteps of civil rights icons like the esteemed John Lewis. Through captivating reads such as Lewis' "Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America" or the gripping "March Trilogy," students delved deep into the essence of activism, envisioning their roles in shaping not just their lives but the very fabric of the nation's future.

The summer of 2021 witnessed a symphony of intellect and inspiration as COE orchestrated riveting talks by renowned figures, delving into the profound themes resonating from the pages of these pivotal works. From the esteemed COE President Emeritus Arnold Mitchem to luminaries like Comcast Internet Essential's Fernando Cárdenas, Thurgood Marshall College Fund President Harry Williams, and the esteemed U.S. Congresswoman Gwendolyn Moore, students were immersed in a tapestry of wisdom and insight.

Bolstered by the resounding success of the Good Trouble Book Club, the Council seized the opportunity to transcend boundaries and evolve the initiative into an annual spectacle of empowerment. In a glorious rebranding effort, the Opportunity Matters Book Club emerged, with a beacon of guidance in the form of the esteemed national book club chair, Deloris Davis Grant, a distinguished English teacher and passionate TRIO alumna.

The pinnacle of 2023 was marked by an electrifying essay and art challenge, crafted by the visionary Dr. Davis, where students unleashed their creativity and intellect, shaping their voices into potent instruments of change. Their masterpieces, a testament to resilience and vision, were showcased at the prestigious 2023 COE Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.,

immortalizing their voices in the annals of history.

As the flames of the Opportunity Matters Book Club blaze brighter with each passing year, it's imperative to pay homage to the luminaries who kindled this beacon of hope. Local TRIO programs like the Upward Bound initiatives at Boise State University and Rutgers University served as the bedrock of inspiration, under the visionary leadership of Joshua Engler and Jackasha Wiley respectively.

Furthermore, the journey from vision to reality was paved by the unwavering commitment of remarkable individuals like former COE Board Chair Deborah Northcross, whose dedication to disadvantaged students echoes through the corridors of time. Alongside her, stalwarts like Cherryl Arnold and Joan Becker lent their expertise and passion, sculpting the dream of opportunity and equity into a tangible reality.

In the saga of the Opportunity Matters Book Club, their names shall forever be etched as beacons of inspiration, guiding generations toward a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow.

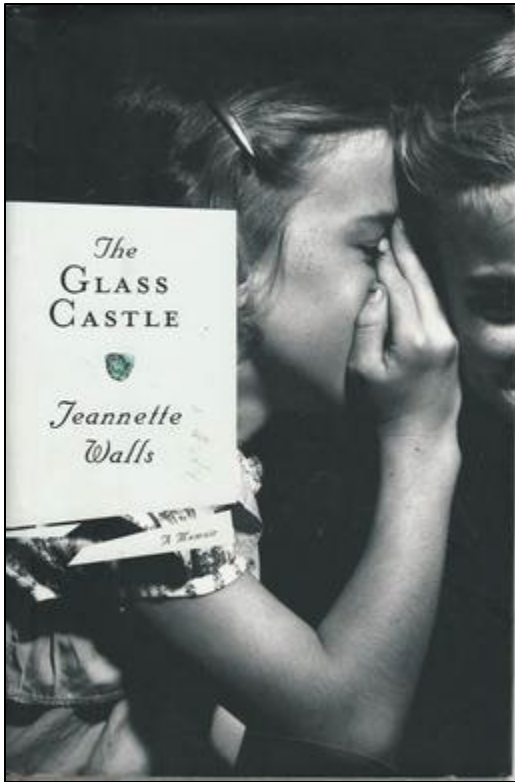
### *Opportunity Matters Book Club Purpose*

- Amplify student voice by giving participants a platform to reflect, discuss, write, and create around themes that shape their lives and communities.
- Build a national community of readers and thinkers across TRIO programs, fostering connection, dialogue, and shared learning.
- Cultivate critical thinking and self-reflection by engaging students with powerful texts, historical narratives, and contemporary issues.
- Encourage creative expression and academic excellence through writing, art, and multimedia challenges that allow students to showcase their talents.
- Uplift stories of resilience, activism, and opportunity to help students see themselves as part of a legacy of leaders who transform society for the better.

### *Learning Outcomes*

- Students will demonstrate improved critical reading, writing, and discussion skills by engaging in reflective dialogue, literary analysis, and creative or analytical responses to the readings.
- Students will strengthen their self-identity and leadership capacity by examining the journeys of historical and contemporary changemakers and identifying ways they can influence positive change in their communities.
- Students will develop cultural and social awareness by exploring diverse perspectives, narratives, and histories that expand their understanding of inclusion, activism, and opportunity.
- Students will produce a culminating project (essay, art, multimedia, or advocacy proposal) that expresses their learning, amplifies their voice, and demonstrates their ability to apply book concepts to real-world action.

## Content Awareness Statement



This year's statement discusses “The Glass Castle,” authored by Jeannette Walls. The book is Jeannette Walls’ 2005 memoir about her turbulent, nomadic childhood and the resilience she developed while being raised by eccentric and deeply flawed parents. It highlights how, despite poverty and instability, Walls ultimately built a successful life of her own, symbolized by her father’s unfulfilled dream of constructing a “glass castle.”

COE strongly recommends that this content awareness statement be shared with and signed by the participants of your book club or, if the participants are under 18, signed by a parent/guardian.

Find a sample content awareness form for minors and adults in the Appendix.

# Overview

## *Book Summary*

The Glass Castle is a memoir in which Jeannette Walls recounts her unconventional and often chaotic upbringing in a nomadic family led by brilliant yet deeply troubled parents. Moving from desert towns to a struggling West Virginia community, Walls and her siblings endured poverty, hunger, instability, and their father's alcoholism, yet also experienced moments of adventure, imagination, and fierce family loyalty. As she grows older, Jeannette begins to see her parents more clearly—loving them while recognizing their inability to provide a stable life—and ultimately chooses a different path, building a future defined by independence, education, and resilience. (The Glass Castle, 2005)

## *Book Club Leader Handbook*

The Book Club Leader Handbook has been designed to provide the tools needed to help facilitators and students analyze the book for various themes and social contexts while also creating a guided space for personal reflection. The handbook offers helpful information such as how to purchase the text as well as ideas for marketing and community engagement. Additionally, the Book Club Leader Handbook contains a detailed study guide that breaks the book into manageable segments with clear outlines of content, themes, and characters. Questions have been provided for each chapter breakdown to help generate group discussions. Finally, given the book's mature themes, the handbook includes national resources to help address topics related to mental, emotional, and social health.

## *Communities of Practice*

COE maintains a special Book Club Community of Practice to provide a space for members who are actively participating in a book club for TRIO program participants. This community allows for the exchange of resources and the sharing of innovative strategies for engaging students in a national discussion about coming-of-age stories.

collaborate, share best practices, and access free resources to facilitate a book club for your program. Access the Book Club Community of Practice by going to the following [link](#) at coenet.org. If you are unfamiliar with how to access the COE Communities of Practice, review our [Quick Guide](#) for detailed instructions.

## *Student Poetry Challenge*

The Student Poetry Challenge provides an opportunity for both pre-college youth and adult TRIO students to respond to selected essay prompts related to topics and themes from the book *The Glass Castle*. The Study Guide self-reflection questions are designed to help students pre-write and prepare for the final poetry challenge, which will be available separately. Final poems are chosen using the selection criteria outlined below. Accepted submissions will be published on coenet.org.



### *Identify Where to Purchase the Book*

- Amazon: [Paperback](#), [Audio](#)
- Simon and Schuster: [Paperback](#)
- Overdrive through Public Libraries (Free Resource): [E-book](#), [Audio](#)

### *Identify How to Pay for Books*

- TRIO grant funds, as appropriate (books can be considered as a supply).
- Ask program alumni or other supporters to sponsor a book for a student.
- Request donations to purchase books from local organizations such as Rotary Clubs, County Commissions, etc.
- Write for small external grants from literary councils, humanities councils, etc.

### *Review Book Club Leader Responsibilities*

- Determine who will be the Book Club Leader.
- Identify if the Book Club Leader, an appointed staff member, or a student will fulfill the duties of leading a book club session.
- Read the book or designated chapters and review the study guide before discussions. Prepare relevant local referral resources for mental, emotional, and social health.
- Be creative and coordinate book-related activities to reinforce students' learning (e.g., local guest speakers, field trips, etc.).
- Confirm the book club meeting location/time and notify members.
- Send reminders to all participants of the meeting time and place.
- Assign sections in the book to be read and/or discussed according to Study Guide chapter breakdowns.
- Encourage students to participate in the Opportunity Matters Book Club National Speaker Series, which kicks off in Fall 2025.
- Evaluate learning outcomes through a student satisfaction survey, Book Club Leader survey, and project director surveys.

### *Recognize the Importance of Flexibility*

- *Students who have not read the chapter/book* | Let them attend anyway. Not everyone can finish the assigned readings, but non-readers may still have valuable insights.
- *Disagreements about the book* | Be gracious! There is never any one way to experience or interpret a book. Differing opinions make the best discussions. Just do not allow the discussion to become overheated.
- *Students who would rather socialize* | Be gentle, but firm. Insist that discussion be limited to the book. Some clubs hold book discussions first and hold "social" activities, if desired, afterward.
- *Dominating personalities* | Never easy. "Let's hear from some others" is one approach. Some book clubs pass an object around the room; students talk only when they hold the object. If a student continues to dominate, a friendly in-person conversation might help.
- *Finding the Right Fit* | If a student is struggling to adapt to the expectations of behavior for the book club, and all previously referenced strategies do not prove successful, evaluate if there is another way the student can still benefit from the content of the text. For example, if group discussions are uncomfortable or met with a dominating personality, the student could read the book independently and respond to the personal reflection questions. Another method of engagement may include permitting students to express themselves through other creative methods, such as art or poetry. If the referenced strategies do not help create the right fit for the student, the Book Club Leader may need to consider asking the student to engage in another TRIO program service rather than the book club.

### *Generating Excitement for Engagement*

The world is full of distractions! You will need to create hype to engage students in your book club. Determine what your club will offer to make it a unique and fun experience and use that information to motivate students to participate

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## *Advertising*

- Use various mediums of communication to reach students. The strategies listed below offer insight on into spreading the word about your club. Remember, school/campus-wide advertising may not only encourage current students to participate in your book club, but it may also serve to recruit new students to join your TRIO Program!
- School/Campus-Based Advertising Strategies
- Create eye-catching posters, signs, or table cards and place them in high-traffic areas such as cafeterias, dining halls, gyms, or residence halls. Consider using QR codes for registration and/or to provide a link to a video of the author.
- Design appealing bulletin boards or video screen displays.
- Place advertisements on your school's social media platforms and/or website.
- Place an ad or do an interview for the school/campus radio or TV station.
- If working with high school students, ask if you can place information on a school call-out system.

## *Program-Based Advertising Strategies*

- Use the program utilized social media platforms to share information about your club and why students should get involved. Be creative!
- For pre-college youth programs, host a book club preview session during a school visit. Provide a brief glimpse of the book and author to highlight what your club will be offering to make the club an exciting experience.
- For college-level or adult programs, host a social activity or workshop to do a book club preview.
- Send a postcard inviting students to participate. Make it colorful and keep the content short. Consider using a QR Code to link to your sign-up and/or to preview a video by the author or a promotional video

created by program staff.

## *Establishing Your Book Club Atmosphere In-Person*

- Attempt to secure a consistent location for your book club meetings.
- When possible, make the meeting space feel comfortable and welcoming without the standard structure of a classroom.
- Give book club members an idea of what to expect ahead of time: how often you will meet, how long the meetings will be, and any other need-to-knows.
- Make expectations for behavior and participation clear during your first session.
- Conduct icebreakers to help students get to know one another and begin the journey of developing a sense of community among the group.
- Offer refreshments to help create a relaxed and casual environment. This also provides an opportunity for students to socialize and strengthen relationships before or after the meeting.
- Invite guest speakers to help facilitate book club sessions.

## *Establishing Your Book Club Atmosphere Virtually*

- When considering a virtual club, choose a platform that students feel comfortable using.
- Determine if students have the technology needed to participate in virtual discussions.
- Keep virtual student numbers small. Limit the online group to less than 10 students to provide an opportunity for each student to participate in discussions. This may require conducting more than one virtual club to encompass all students who wish to participate.
- Give book club members an idea of what to expect ahead of time: how often you will meet, how long the meetings will be, and any other need-to-knows.
- Make expectations for behavior and participation clear during your first session.
- Conduct icebreakers to help students get to know one another and begin the journey of developing a sense of community among

the group.

- Create connections among students by offering interactive virtual activities and/or engaging guest speakers.

#### *Allow Students to Take Ownership of the Club*

The most successful book clubs allow students to develop a sense of ownership and identity. This may be achieved by:

- Allowing students to choose a name for their club.
- Providing the opportunity for them to create a club logo, posters, banners, and/or digital content.
- Giving students the opportunity to establish club rules and expectations.
- Proving students with the opportunity to lead a book club session.

#### *Engaging Others*

Book clubs are encouraged to invite prominent local community leaders to facilitate book club discussions. You may want to collaborate with

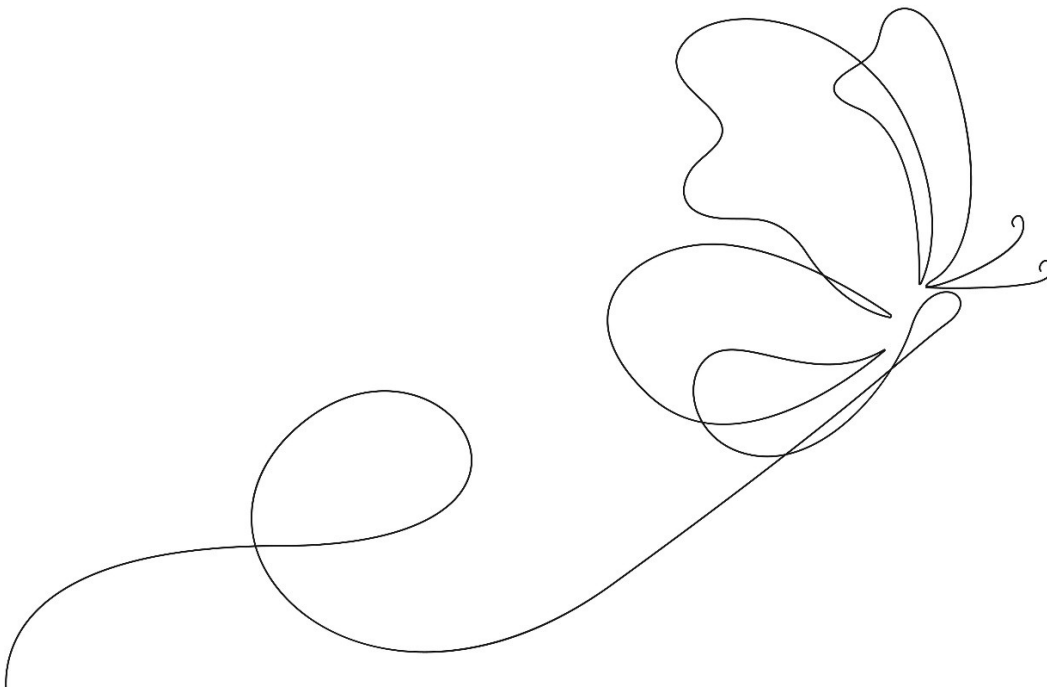
other book club

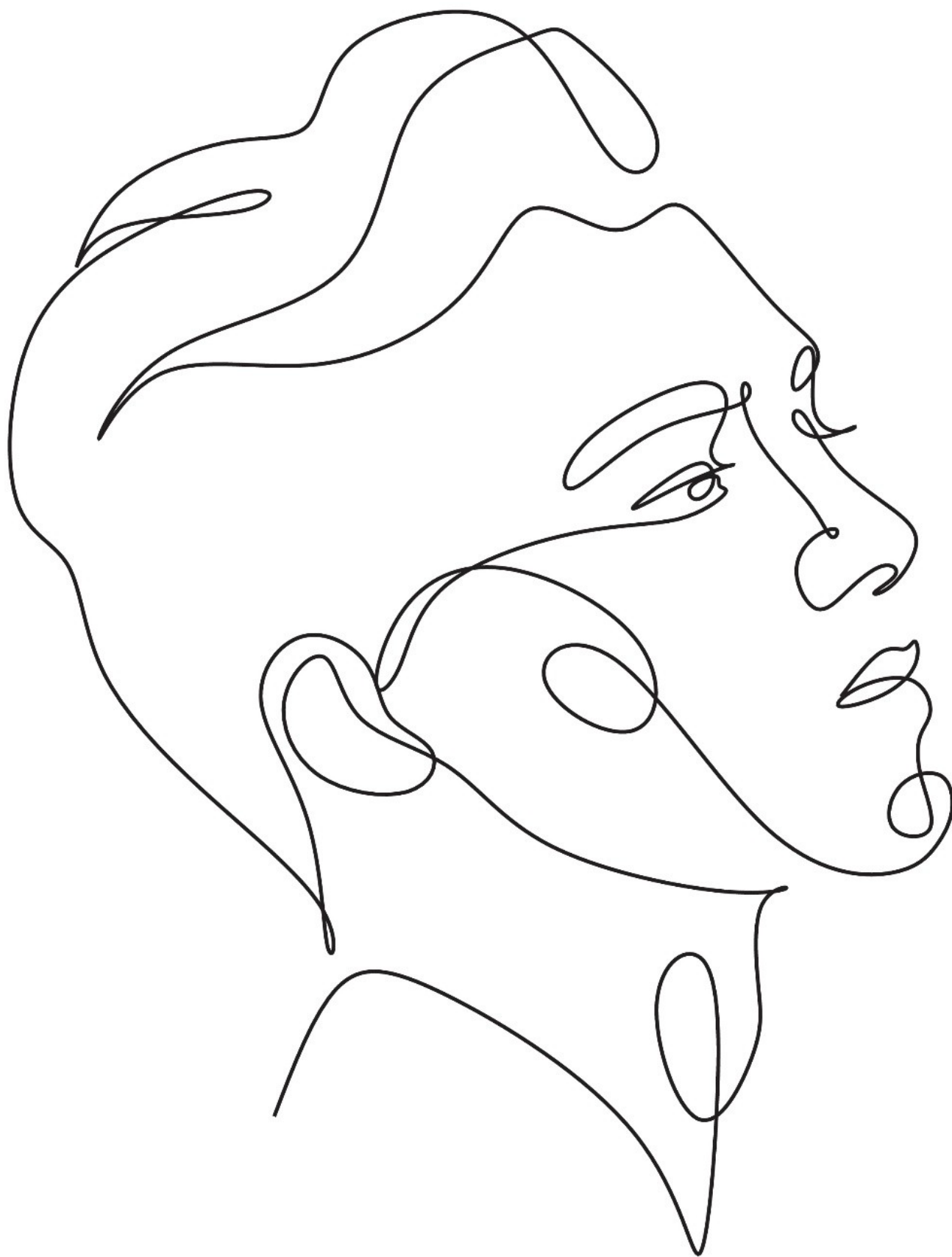
chapters in your community to maximize the audience for the local leaders. Make sure you follow any institutional protocols for inviting elected and other officials to your campus. Involving prominent local officials is also a wonderful way to get publicity for your book club.

- Mayor
- School Superintendent
- State Legislators or Members of Congress
- Librarian
- City Council Member
- College or University President

You can ask the facilitator to read and be prepared to discuss all assigned chapters for the scheduled meeting or focus on just one chapter. Chapter-specific questions, as well as questions focused on broader themes, can be found in the Study Guide portion of the handbook.

When publicizing your book club, [utilize the COE press release template](#).





### *Before The First Book Club Meeting*

- ☐ Review the Book Club Leader Handbook and Study Guide.
- ☐ Confirm the book club meeting days, location, and time.
- ☐ Identify who will lead the club.
- ☐ Engage students to participate.
- ☐ Order books.
- ☐ Plan the flow of your meeting and outline any related activities that you will use to reinforce student learning.
- ☐ Send invitations to local guest speakers.
- ☐ Notify book club participants about the meeting date, time, and location.
- ☐ Read chapters and prepare for each book club session.

### *During Book Club Meetings*

- ☐ Share expectations for behavior and participation.
- ☐ Facilitate discussion using the question prompts in the Study Guide.
- ☐ Monitor student interactions and provide guidance as needed.
- ☐ Allow time for personal reflection using the writing prompts in the Study Guide.
- ☐ Remind students about the next session and assign chapters.

### *Following Book Club Meetings*

- ☐ Send Thank You notes to guest speakers.
- ☐ Evaluate learning outcomes through a student satisfaction survey, leader survey, and project director surveys.
- ☐ Celebrate the success of your club!





Study and Discussion of *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls



# Tips for Facilitating a Book Club Discussion

- Consider a guided practice to help students identify elements of a good book club discussion through observation and preparation while fostering an environment of trust and independence.
- Toss one question at a time out to the group.
- Select several questions from those provided or questions you develop, write each on an index card, and pass them out. Each student (or team of 2 or 3) takes a card and answers the question.
- Use a prompt (prop) related to the story. It can help stimulate students' thinking about some aspects of the story. It is an adult show & tell. (Think maps, photographs, paintings, food, apparel, a music recording, a clip from a film adaptation.)
- Pick out a specific passage from chapters—a description, an idea, a line of dialogue—and ask students to comment on it. (Consider how a passage reflects a character, the work's central meaning, or students' lives or personal beliefs.)
- Distribute handouts to everyone to refresh memories or to use as talking points. Identify the primary characters and summarize the plot.
- Observe students to determine what is going well and identify improvement areas.
- Establish shared discussion norms as a group. Co-create expectations for how participants will listen, share, disagree respectfully, and support one another. When students help shape the norms, they are more invested in upholding them.
- Start with a low-stakes icebreaker connected to the book's themes: Ask an opening question that invites personal reflection (e.g., “Describe a time you had to be resilient” for *The Glass Castle*) to help students ease into deeper dialogue.
- Assign rotating student roles. Roles such as Discussion Leader, Connector (ties text to real world), Passage Finder, Summarizer, or Question Creator promote ownership and keep all students engaged.
- Encourage “text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world” connections. Prompt students to link passages to their own experiences, to other books or media, and to current events or social issues.

This deepens meaning and relevance.

- Use the “Socratic circle” or “fishbowl” method. Place a smaller group in the center to discuss while others observe—then switch. This allows for active listening, reflection, and peer modeling of thoughtful dialogue.
- Model and teach active listening skills. Encourage students to respond to each other—not just to the facilitator. Phrases like “I’d like to build on what \_\_\_\_ said” promote collaborative thinking.
- Pause for quick writes or reflection moments. A brief journal entry or 3-minute reflection can help students gather their thoughts before sharing, especially beneficial for introverted or hesitant participants.
- Invite multimodal responses. Allow students to respond not only through discussion, but also through drawing, poetry, spoken word, or music connections. This honors diverse expression and processing styles.
- Incorporate student-generated questions. Dedicate one meeting to only questions written by participants. Students are more invested when they explore what they are curious about.
- Close with a takeaway or exit ticket. Ask students to share one insight, one question, or one way the reading inspired them. This reinforces reflection and helps facilitators plan future sessions.

# Instructional Strategies and Learning Outcomes for Educators

Some pre-college TRIO programs (Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Talent Search) may choose to use the materials in the Study Guide as a supplement for educational course work during Saturday sessions or summer programs. The information provided for Instructional Strategies and Learning Outcomes was designed to help those programs tie instruction within the program to commonly used classroom education standards. For the purposes of this study guide, information is based on the Georgia Department of Education standards for English 9-12. Due to each state having its own

Instructional Strategies and Learning Outcomes, please tailor the information to meet the education standards for your given state as needed.

- Discuss manipulations of time and how the experience of a story would change if, for example, a novel was told in linear time instead of through flashback.
- Choose text segments to demonstrate concepts such as flashback, foreshadowing, and parallel plot.
- Provide narrative writing opportunities that require the construction of specific plot structures.
- Provide opportunities for comparison and contrast of passages that are suspenseful, comic, or otherwise create an emotional/tonal response.
- Engage students in discussing their cultural identity in relation to the text.
- Include experiential learning opportunities that generate thoughtful reflection and discussion on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Provide multiple opportunities for discussion and analysis of visual and written texts.
- Choose appropriate examples for comparison and contrast that have easily identifiable aesthetic elements in common or in opposition.
- Review the elements of plot structure and characterization, emphasizing how plot and

character shape theme.

- Discuss and practice identifying the difference between the main idea and the theme. (For example, the main idea in *Romeo and Juliet* may be the love affair between the protagonists, but the theme will be larger than the individuals, addressing fate, chance, the wisdom of youth vs. age, etc.)

## Anticipated Learning Outcomes for a Classroom Setting

### *Reading*

- Practice close and critical reading.
- Recognize and identify literary elements for analysis (such as diction, tone, and figurative language).
- Distinguish between the theme(s) of a text and the main idea of a text.
- Identify and analyze the elements of characterization, including the character's actions, words, thoughts, appearance, and the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other characters toward that character.
  - Identify and analyze the elements of plot.

### *Speaking*

- Draw inferences from the text to support textual analysis.
- Support all claims with textual evidence of how the text uses details to support key ideas.
- Distinguish between the theme(s) of a text and the main idea of a text.
  - Identify and analyze the elements of the plot.

### *Writing*

- Summarize without editorial bias.
- Exhibit knowledge of common literary devices and their applications.
- Analyze the development of a theme or idea using literary devices, i.e., written essay and/or peer discussion.
  - Understand how other literary elements, such as imagery and figurative language, contribute to the tone.

### *Listening*

- Analyze the development of a theme or idea using literary devices i.e., written essay and/or peer discussion.
- Identify and analyze the elements of characterization, including the character's actions, words, thoughts, appearance, and the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other characters toward that character.
  - Identify and analyze the elements of the plot.
  - Analyze multiple motivations of characters.
  - Accurately identify the tone of a text.
- Understand how specific instances of diction contribute to the tone.
- Understand how other literary elements, such as imagery and figurative language, contribute to the tone.



# Book Club Study Guide

## Review of Chapters One and Two

The following form is for facilitators of the book study. The information below will assist the facilitator in providing a clear path for each book study.

Date of Meeting	
Budget	
Facilitator/Facilitators	
Materials Needed	Copy of Book/PDF of Chapters
Chapters Covered	1-2 (“The Woman on the Street” and Part 1 of “The Desert”)
Sensitive Content	Poverty, Hunger, Abuse, Trauma, Neglect, Bullying, Alcoholism
Themes Addressed	Poverty, Education, Housing Insecurity, Family Dynamics, Social Demographics, Resilience
Key Characters	Jeannette Walls, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, Brian Walls, Lori Walls,
English Standards	Writing, Speaking, and Reading
Literary Terms	Setting, Characters, Quotes
Facilitator Questions:	<p>How does Jeannette’s tone in the opening scene (seeing her mother digging through trash) shape your expectations for the memoir?</p> <p>What role does fire play in Jeannette’s early memories? What might it symbolize?</p> <p>How would you describe the Walls family’s parenting style? What are the pros and cons of their approach?</p> <p>What do you think motivates Rex and Rose Mary to live the way they do? Do you see it as a choice or a necessity?</p> <p>How do the children adapt to their unstable lifestyle? What strategies do they use to cope?</p> <p>What is the significance of the “Glass Castle”?</p>

On the following page, there is a quick snapshot of these sections of the book. Please refer to the small summary to answer the above questions and then use it to help with your self-reflection.

## **SUMMARY:**

In Chapters 1–2 of *The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls introduces readers to her unconventional upbringing through vivid childhood memories. The story begins with a striking scene of adult Jeannette seeing her mother scavenging in New York City, prompting a reflection on her past. As a child, Jeannette suffered a severe burn while cooking alone at age three, revealing early signs of neglect. Her parents, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, are intelligent but deeply flawed. Rex is a charismatic dreamer with a drinking problem, and Rose Mary is an artist who resists traditional responsibilities. The family lives a nomadic life, constantly moving to escape debt and authority, often living in poverty and unsafe conditions. Despite the instability, Rex fills their lives with adventure and promises, including the dream of building a “Glass Castle,” a symbol of hope that never materializes. As Jeannette grows, she begins to see the gap between her father’s grand visions and their harsh reality, while she and her siblings develop resilience, independence, and a strong bond with one another.

Answer the questions below in whatever manner makes sense to you. You can answer in sentence, picture, or paragraph form.

## **SELF-REFLECTION**

1. **Jeannette is burned while cooking at age three.**
  - Have you ever been in a situation where you were expected to do something beyond your age or ability? How did it affect you?
2. **The Walls family leaves the hospital without paying.**
  - What do you think about the way Jeannette’s parents handle rules and authority? Do you agree or disagree with their choices?
3. **The Walls family moves frequently and lives in poverty.**
  - How can a life of constant change and instability affect your sense of home or identity?
4. **Rex Walls promises to build the “Glass Castle.”**
  - Have you ever held onto a dream or promise that gave you hope? What did it mean to you?
5. **Jeannette and her siblings often must take care of themselves.**
  - What does independence mean to you? When have you had to rely on yourself?
6. **Despite their struggles, the Walls children show resilience.**
  - Can you think of a time when you had to be strong in a difficult situation? What helped you get through it?
7. **Jeannette begins to question her parents’ choices.**
  - Have you ever seen someone you admire in a different light? How did that change your relationship or perspective?
8. **The Walls children often rely on each other for support and protection.**
  - Who do you turn to when you need support? How do your relationships with friends or family help you through challenges?
9. **The Walls children try to find joy and creativity in the midst of hardship.**
  - Can you think of a time when you found happiness or inspiration during a difficult situation? What helped you to see the positive side?
10. **Jeannette’s parents have very different values from most of society.**
  - Have you ever felt like your values or beliefs were different than those around you? How did you handle it?

# Book Club Study Guide

## Review of Chapter Two

The following form is for facilitators of the book study. The information below will assist the facilitator in providing a clear path for each book study.

Date of Meeting	
Budget	
Facilitator/Facilitators	
Materials Needed	Copy of Book/PDF of Chapters
Chapters Covered	2 (Part 2 - “The Desert”)
Sensitive Content	Poverty, Hunger, Abuse, Trauma, Neglect, Bullying, Alcoholism, Sexual Misconduct
Themes Addressed	Poverty, Education, Housing Insecurity, Family Dynamics, Social Demographics, Resilience
Key Characters	Jeannette Walls, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, Brian Walls, Lori Walls,
English Standards	Writing, Speaking, and Reading
Literary Terms	Setting, Characters, Quotes
Facilitator Questions:	<p>How does Jeannette’s relationship with her father begin to shift in this segment of the book? What specific events cause her to question his reliability or promises?</p> <p>What does the Glass Castle symbolize at this point in the story? Has its meaning changed?</p> <p>How does the brief period of stability in Phoenix affect the children’s sense of normalcy?</p> <p>How does the leadership role that Jeanette plays among her siblings affect her relationship with her parents?</p> <p>How does Rex’s alcoholism impact the family dynamics? How do the children respond differently to his actions?</p> <p>How do the Walls children begin to form their own moral compass, separate from their parents’ values? What moments show them questioning or rejecting their parents’ choices?</p>

On the following page, there is a quick snapshot of this segment of the book. Please refer to the small summary to answer the above questions and then use it to help with your self-reflection.

**SUMMARY:**

In these chapters, the Walls family's instability continues as they move from place to place, often in the middle of the night to avoid paying bills or facing consequences. Jeannette and her siblings become increasingly aware of their parents' inability—or unwillingness—to provide a stable home. The family eventually settles in Battle Mountain, Nevada, where for a brief time, life seems more manageable. Jeannette and Brian explore the desert, attend school, and even enjoy some structure. However, this stability is short-lived.

Rex loses his job, and the family's financial situation worsens. The children begin to experience more severe hunger and neglect. Jeannette's admiration for her father starts to waver as his drinking becomes more destructive. Despite this, she still clings to the dream of the "Glass Castle," the elaborate home Rex promises to build. Meanwhile, Rose Mary continues to prioritize her painting and personal freedom over her children's needs, often dismissing their suffering as part of life's adventure.

The family's situation deteriorates further when they move to Phoenix to live in Grandma Smith's house after her death. Initially, things improve, there is more food, a stable home, and Jeannette even gets her own room. But Rex's drinking and erratic behavior return, and the house falls into disrepair. The children begin to take on more adult responsibilities, and Jeannette becomes increasingly determined to take control of her future.

Answer the questions below in whatever manner makes sense to you. You can answer in sentence, picture, or paragraph form.

### ***SELF-REFLECTION***

1. **The Walls children often must hide their struggles from others.**
  1. Have you ever felt like you had to hide something difficult you were going through? How did that affect you?
2. **Rex continues to promise to build the Glass Castle**
  1. Have you ever held onto a dream or promise that did not come true? How did you deal with the disappointment?
3. **Rose Mary chooses to focus on her art instead of working a steady job.**
  1. How do you balance personal passions with responsibilities in your own life?
4. **Rex Walls promises to build the "Glass Castle."**
  1. Have you ever held onto a dream or promise that gave you hope? What did it mean to you?
5. **Jeannette begins to see the difference between dreams and reality.**
  1. How do you balance hope and realism in your own life?
6. **Jeannette still defends her parents despite their flaws.**
  1. Why do you think people stay loyal to those who hurt or disappoint them?
7. **Jeannette starts to take pride in her ability to be independent.**
  1. What is something you have done on your own that made you feel proud or capable?
8. **Despite everything, Jeannette continues to hope for a better future.**
  1. What motivates you to keep going when things are tough? What hopes or dreams give you hope?



# Book Club Study Guide

## Review of Chapter Three

The following form is for facilitators of the book study. The information below will assist the facilitator in providing a clear path for each book study.

Date of Meeting	
Budget	
Facilitator/Facilitators	
Materials Needed	Copy of Book/PDF of Chapters
Chapters Covered	3 (“Welch”)
Sensitive Content	Poverty, Hunger, Abuse, Trauma, Neglect, Bullying, Alcoholism,
Themes Addressed	Poverty, Education, Housing Insecurity, Family Dynamics, Social Demographics, Resilience
Key Characters	Jeannette Walls, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, Brian Walls, Lori Walls, Maureen Walls, Erma (grandmother)
English Standards	Writing, Speaking, and Reading
Literary Terms	Setting, Characters, Quotes
Facilitator Questions:	How does living in Welch affect Jeannette’s view of her parents?  What do Rex’s actions in Welch reveal about his internal struggles?  How does Rose Mary justify her behavior, and how does Jeannette respond?  What does the unfinished foundation of the “glass castle” represent at this point in the story?  How does the community in Welch respond to the Walls family, and what does that say about poverty and stigma?  What role does education play in Jeannette’s sense of hope and possibility?

On the following page, there is a quick snapshot of Chapter 3. Please refer to the small summary to answer the above questions and then use it to help with your self-reflection.

## ***SUMMARY:***

In this chapter, the Walls family moves to **Welch, West Virginia**, Rex's hometown, hoping for a fresh start. However, Welch proves to be one of the most difficult places they have lived. The family moves into a small, rundown house with no indoor plumbing, heat, or proper insulation. The children face bullying at school and increasing isolation. Despite the harsh conditions, Jeannette remains determined to succeed and begins to take more control over her life.

Rex's alcoholism worsens, and his behavior becomes more erratic and destructive. He often disappears for days and spends what little money the family has on alcohol. Rose Mary continues to prioritize her art and personal freedom over her children's needs, refusing to work even when the family is starving. The children begin to take on adult responsibilities, scavenging for food and finding ways to survive.

Jeannette becomes more independent, taking a job at a local newspaper and saving money to escape Welch. She and her sister Lori begin to make plans to move to New York City. Despite the dysfunction at home, the siblings remain close and support each other. Jeannette's growing awareness of her parents' failures fuels her determination to build a better life for herself.

These chapters highlight the deepening contrast between the Walls children's resilience and their parents' irresponsibility. Jeannette's internal conflict between love for her family and the need to escape becomes more intense, setting the stage for her eventual departure.

## ***SELF-REFLECTION***

1. **The Walls children face bullying and isolation in Welch.**
  1. Have you ever felt like an outsider in a new place or situation? How did you adjust?
2. **The family's living conditions in Welch are extremely poor.**
  2. How do your surroundings affect your mood, motivation, or sense of self?
3. **Jeannette starts working and saving money to leave home.**
  3. What goals are you working toward right now? What motivates you to keep going?
4. **Rex's alcoholism continues to hurt the family.**
  4. Have you ever had to deal with someone whose behavior affected you negatively? How did you cope?
5. **Jeannette begins to see her parents more clearly and critically.**
  5. Have you ever realized something new or surprising about someone close to you? How did it change your relationship?
6. **Education becomes a path to freedom for Jeannette.**
  6. How do you view education in your own life? What role does it play in your future?
7. **The Walls children begin planning their escape from Welch.**
  7. Have you ever had to make a difficult decision to improve your life? What gave you the courage to do it?
8. **Jeannette starts to understand that love and disappointment can exist at the same time.**
  8. Have you ever loved someone who let you down? How did you deal with those mixed emotions?
9. **The siblings begin to take control of their own futures.**
  - What steps are you taking – or would like to take – to shape your own future?

# Book Club Study Guide

## Review of Chapter Four

The following form is for facilitators of the book study. The information below will assist the facilitator in providing a clear path for each book study.

Date of Meeting	
Budget	
Facilitator/Facilitators	
Materials Needed	Copy of Book/PDF of Chapters
Chapters Covered	4 (“New York and Thanksgiving”)
Sensitive Content	Poverty, Hunger, Abuse, Trauma, Neglect, Bullying, Alcoholism, Death, Mental Health
Themes Addressed	Poverty, Education, Housing Insecurity, Family Dynamics, Social Demographics, Resilience
Key Characters	Jeannette Walls, Rex and Rose Mary Walls, Brian Walls, Lori Walls, Maureen Walls, John Taylor
English Standards	Writing, Speaking, and Reading
Literary Terms	Setting, Characters, Quotes
Facilitator Questions:	How does Jeannette’s relationship with her parents shift over time? What moments mark those changes?  How does Jeannette’s move to New York represent a turning point in her life?  How does Jeannette’s move to New York represent a turning point in her life?  How does Rex’s declining health affect Jeannette’s perception of him?  What does the Thanksgiving scene at the end of the book symbolize for the Walls family?

On the following page, there is a quick snapshot of Chapter 4. Please refer to the small summary to answer the above questions and then use it to help with your self-reflection.

## ***SUMMARY:***

As Jeannette enters her late teens, she becomes increasingly determined to escape her family's cycle of poverty and dysfunction. She works hard, saves money, and eventually moves to **New York City**, where she begins a new life. Lori, her older sister, joins her first, followed by Brian and Maureen. In New York, the siblings find stability and independence, securing jobs and apartments. Jeannette earns a scholarship to Barnard College and begins building a career in journalism.

However, their parents eventually follow them to New York, choosing to live homeless rather than conform to societal expectations. Rex and Rose Mary squat in abandoned buildings and refuse help, continuing to live by their own rules. Jeannette struggles with guilt and conflicting emotions, especially as her father's health declines due to alcoholism.

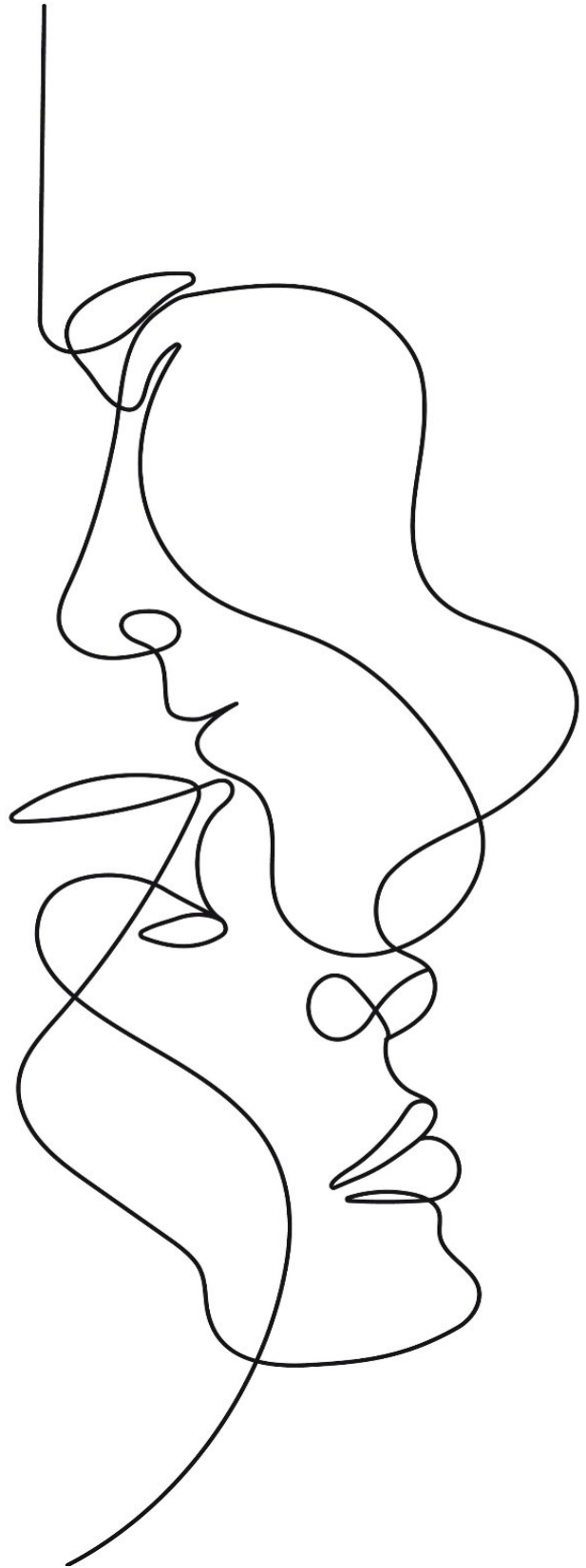
Rex gives Jeannette a meaningful gift before he dies: his social security card, symbolizing his acknowledgment of her independence and his pride in her success. After his death, the family drifts further apart. Maureen suffers a mental breakdown and moves to California, while Rose Mary continues to live on the streets by choice.

The memoir ends with a bittersweet family gathering, where Jeannette reflects on her journey—from a childhood of instability to a life of self-reliance and achievement. The final chapters emphasize themes of **forgiveness, resilience, and the complexity of family love**, showing how Jeannette comes to terms with her past without letting it define her future.

## ***SELF-REFLECTION***

1. **Jeannette's move to New York marks her shift from survival to self-determination.**
  - Have you ever made a decision that helped you feel more independent?
2. **Jeannette wrestles with loving her parents while protecting herself from their dysfunction.**
  - ☐ Have you ever felt torn between loyalty and self-care?
3. **Rex's final gift symbolizes his flawed but enduring love.**
  - ☐ Have you ever received something meaningful that changed how you saw someone?
4. **Jeannette builds a life that contrasts sharply with her past.**
  - ☐ What kind of future do you imagine for yourself, and what steps are you taking toward it?
5. **Jeannette must balance empathy with the need to protect her own well-being.**
  - How do you decide when to help someone and when to set boundaries?
6. **The Walls children learn strength through hardship, each in their own way.**
  - What is one challenge you have faced that taught you something important about yourself?
7. **Jeannette's memoir transforms painful memories into insight and meaning.**
  - What role does storytelling play in helping us understand our past?
8. **Jeannette's story encourages readers to reconsider assumptions about poverty, family, and resilience.**
  - Did any parts of her story reflect your own experiences or change your perspective?
9. **The memoir invites readers to engage with the author's choices and insights.**
  - If you could ask Jeannette one question about her journey, what would it be—and why?





## About the Author



Jeannette Walls is an award-winning American author and journalist whose life story has inspired millions of readers worldwide. Born on April 21, 1960, in Phoenix, Arizona, Walls is best known for her bestselling memoir *The Glass Castle*, a gripping account of her unconventional childhood marked by poverty, resilience, and a fierce pursuit of hope. Her ability to transform personal hardship into a story of strength, reflection, and forgiveness has positioned her as one of the most influential memoirists of the 21st century. Walls' early years were shaped by the unpredictable, free-spirited lifestyle of her parents, Rex and Rose Mary Walls. Alongside her siblings, Lori, Brian, and Maureen, she spent her childhood moving from town to town across the American Southwest—from Arizona to Nevada and California—often living in rundown homes, trailer parks, and sometimes the family car. Eventually, the Walls family settled in Rex's hometown of Welch, West Virginia, in the heart of Appalachia, where they lived in a dilapidated house without heat, plumbing, or steady income. These formative experiences—filled with both

trauma and moments of imagination and wonder—became the foundation of her most celebrated work. Despite the instability surrounding her, Walls grew up with a deep appreciation for learning, creativity, and storytelling. At 17, she made the courageous decision to leave West Virginia and move to New York City, where she worked tirelessly to support herself. Through grants, scholarships, loans, and a job at a Wall Street law firm, she earned her bachelor's degree with honors from Barnard College in 1984—an achievement that exemplifies perseverance and the transformative power of education.

Walls began her journalism career with an internship at a Brooklyn newspaper before becoming a full-time reporter. She went on to write the popular "Intelligencer" column for *New York Magazine* and later served as a gossip columnist for *Esquire* and MSNBC.com, where she became widely recognized for her writing and media presence. Her work earned national attention, and she frequently appeared on outlets such as *The Today Show*, CNN, and *The Colbert Report*. In 2007, at the height of her visibility as a journalist, Walls made the bold decision to leave MSNBC and pursue writing full-time, committing herself to telling stories that illuminate the human condition. Published in 2005, *The Glass Castle* became a cultural phenomenon. The memoir spent more than seven years on *The New York Times* Best Seller list and has sold over four million copies, resonating across generations for its honesty, emotional depth, and nuanced portrayal of family love and pain. It received numerous honors, including the American Library Association's Alex Award, the Christopher Award, and the Books for Better Living Award. The memoir was later adapted into a 2017 feature film starring Brie Larson as Jeannette, Naomi Watts as Rose Mary, and Woody Harrelson as Rex. Walls continued her literary career with *Half Broke Horses* (2009), a "true-life novel" based on the life of her grandmother, Lily Casey Smith, which was named one of the ten best books of the year by *The New York Times Book Review*. She later published the critically praised novels *The Silver Star* (2013) and *Hang the Moon* (2023). Her fiction, much like her memoir, explores themes of family, identity, hardship, courage, and the pursuit of one's dreams—often spotlighting strong, complex female characters navigating adversity with grit and grace.

Today, Jeannette Walls is not only celebrated for her literary achievements but also admired for her humility, authenticity, and commitment to empowering others through storytelling. She has become a sought-after speaker on resilience, personal truth, and overcoming adversity, inspiring audiences from high school classrooms to national leadership conferences. Her willingness to confront—and publicly own—her past continues to break stigmas surrounding poverty, trauma, and family instability. Walls lives on a 205-acre farm in Virginia with her husband, fellow writer John J. Taylor, where she continues to write and share her journey with readers. For many, especially first-generation students and those who have experienced childhood hardship, Jeannette Walls embodies the belief that one's beginnings do not dictate one's destiny. Her story reminds us that courage, education, and self-belief can turn even the most difficult chapters of life into a powerful source of purpose and possibility.

# About the COE Opportunity Matters National Book Club Chair

Deloris Grant

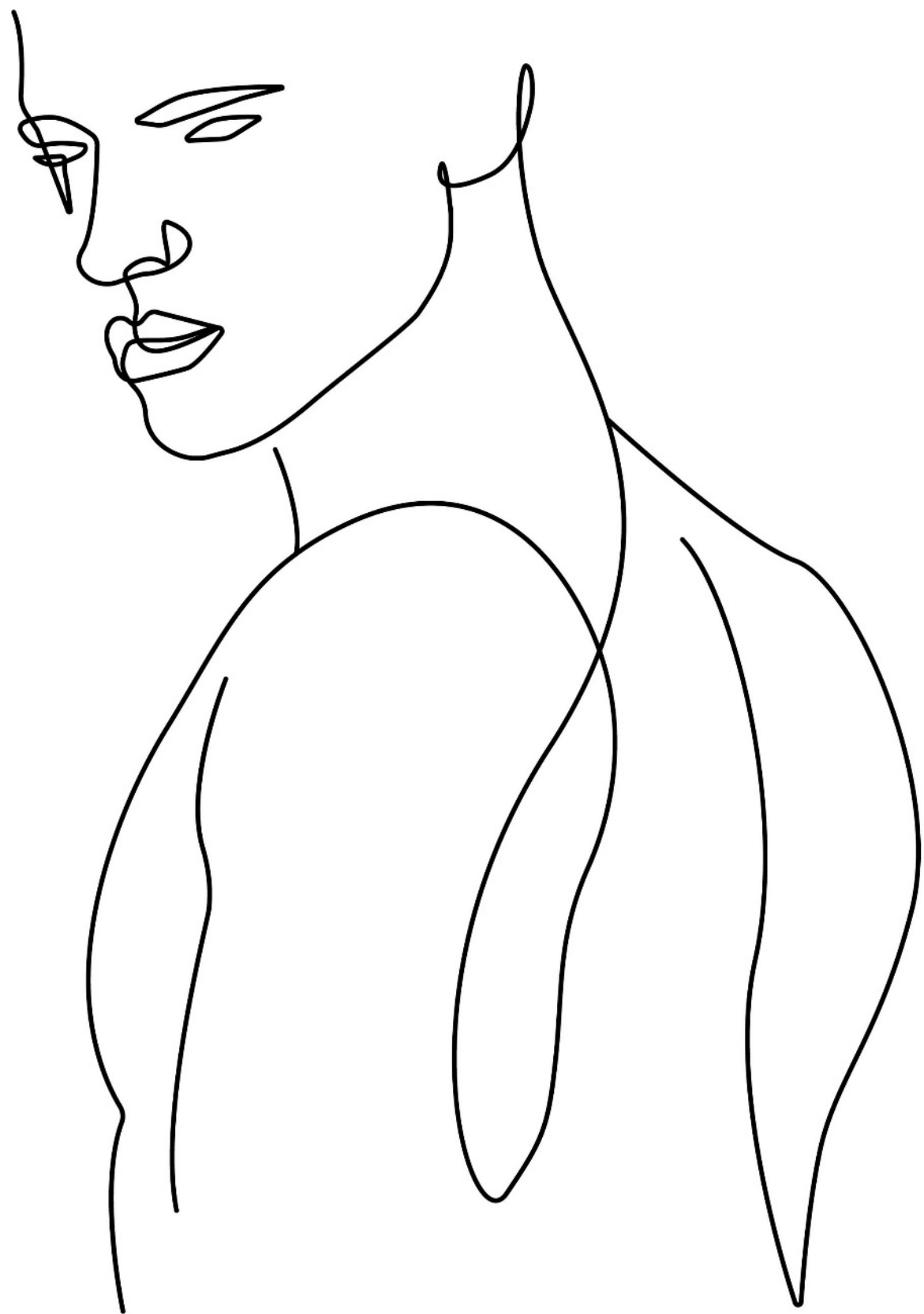


The national book club chair is Deloris Davis Grant. Dr. Grant is an English and drama teacher at Central Falls High School, inspired by the arts and dedicated to academic excellence. Dr. Grant is an alumna of Central Falls High School and Rhode Island College with a BA in English and a Master of Arts in Teaching English, as well as an Honorary Doctor of Education. Dr. Grant is the troupe leader of the CFHS International Thespian Society and a member of the English Speaking Union, which sponsors the National Shakespeare Oration Competition. Dr. Grant currently serves as a clinical teacher and supervises student teachers from several local colleges and universities. Dr. Grant also collaborates on theater projects with many local theaters to develop speaking and listening skills in her classroom. Her participation in the arts is emblematic of her dedication to the theater arts, which the RI Film Commission has also recognized. Dr. Grant has received the Young Dreammaker Award for her work with student artists and is a recipient of the 2017 YWCA Women of Achievement Award. Dr. Grant has been involved in the theater all her life and has touched the lives of countless students, families, and colleagues. Deloris

Grant is an adventure traveler traversing 90 countries.



Glossary



## Definition of Terms Referred to in the Study Guide

**aardvark** – a nocturnal African mammal that eats ants and termites

**Adobe house** – a house made from sun-dried earth and straw bricks

**addled** – to confuse or muddle somebody, or become confused or muddled

**adversaries** – opponents or enemies in a conflict

**antiseptic** – controlling infection; dull

**arroyos** – a dry creek or stream bed that temporarily fills and flows after rain

**audacious** – bold and daring

**berth** – a built-in bed on a ship or train

**benighted** – unenlightened intellectually, socially, or morally

**bituminous** – containing or relating to asphalt or tar

**blowsy** – untidy in appearance

**bodega** – a small grocery store, especially in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood

**banshee** – in Gaelic folklore, a female spirit whose wailing signals an impending death in a household

**blasphemy** – disrespectful talk about sacred things

**botched** – done badly or carelessly

**broach** – to bring up a subject for discussion

**calcified** – to become rigid and unchanging

**cajoled** – to persuade by flattery or promises

**cantankerous** – easily angered and difficult to get along with

**caprice** – a sudden change of mind or behavior

**caryatid** – a sculpted female figure used as a column in architecture

**cathouse** – a brothel

**cojones** – courage (slang; also an offensive term for testicles)

**Conestoga wagon** – a large, covered wagon used in the 18th–19th century

**corrugated** – folded into parallel ridges and troughs

**Creosote** – a thick oily substance used as a wood preservative

**dago** – a disparaging and offensive term for a person

of Italian or Spanish descent

**deference** – respectful submission to another's wishes

**delirium** – a state of extreme confusion and restlessness

**destitute** – lacking money and basic necessities

**diminutive** – very small; also a suffix indicating smallness or familiarity

**entice** – to attract or tempt someone

**evasive** – not giving a direct answer; concealing the truth

**exasperation** – extreme frustration or irritation

**excursion** – a short trip for pleasure or a specific purpose

**feeble** – lacking physical or mental strength

**flapper** – a young woman of the 1920s who rejected traditional social norms

**flophouse** – a cheap lodging place

**flouted** – openly disobeyed or defied

**foragers** – people or animals that search for food; raiders searching for supplies

**forlorn** – lonely and miserable, as though deserted or abandoned

**freckled** – covered with small light-brown spots on the skin

**fretted** – to worry

**gadfly** – a persistent annoyance or critic

**gamy** – having a strong, slightly spoiled flavor (of meat)

**gaunt** – very thin, especially from hunger or suffering

**gumption** – courage and resourcefulness

**ecode** – a rock containing a cavity lined with crystals

**Gestapo** – the secret police of Nazi Germany, known for brutality

**Gila monsters** – a species of venomous lizard native to the southwestern United States

**gumption** – courage and resourcefulness

**harebrained** – regarded as impractical and likely to fail

**hacienda** – a large estate, farm, or ranch in Spanish-speaking regions

**hedonism** – the belief that pleasure or happiness is the highest good

**hoisted** – to raise or lift somebody or something up, especially using a mechanical device

**hollyhocks** – a tall flowering plant of the mallow family



**hostel** – an inexpensive lodging place  
**hovering** – to float or remain in one place in the air  
**hunch** – an intuitive feeling about something  
**ingrate** – an ungrateful person  
**ingenuity** – cleverness and originality  
**ingrate** – an ungrateful person  
**Kabuki dancer** – a performer in a classical Japanese theater style  
**looted** – stolen goods; to steal goods illegally  
**malicious** – motivated by a desire to cause harm  
**magistrate** – a lower-court judge  
**mantillas** – a lace scarf worn over the head and shoulders  
**mediocre** – adequate or acceptable, but not very good  
**mirage** – something that appears real but is unreal or imagined  
**monochromatic** – having only one color  
**namby-pambies** – weak or silly people  
**noblesse** – noble birth or rank  
**nonchalant** – calm and unconcerned  
**Nomads** – a member of a people who move seasonally from place to place to search for food and water or pasture  
**oasis** – fertile land in a desert; a place of relief from difficulty  
**Oakie / Okie** – an offensive term for a migrant farm laborer from Oklahoma or nearby states  
**oleander bushes** – a poisonous evergreen bush with fragrant flowers  
**on the wagon** – abstaining from alcohol  
**ornate** – elaborately decorated  
**ostentatiously** – in a showy way meant to impress  
**palatial** – grand or luxurious like a palace  
**pariah** – a despised or rejected person  
**paralytic** – relating to paralysis or immobility  
**partridges** – a medium-sized, ground-nesting bird related to pheasants  
**pewter** – a gray alloy of tin and lead  
**pigeonhole** – to classify or label someone without much thought  
**pilfering** – to steal small items of little value

**pillaged** – robbed using force, especially during war  
**pious** – very religious or devout  
**pithy** – brief yet forceful and to the point, often witty  
**ploy** – a tactic used to deceive or gain an advantage  
**precariously** – in a way that is unstable or insecure  
**primitive** – very simple and basic; not modern  
**qualms** – sudden feelings of doubt or apprehension  
**ragamuffin** – a child in ragged, dirty clothes  
**raucous** – loud and harsh-sounding  
**recriminations** – accusations made in return to an original accusation  
**relegated** – moved to a less important position  
**Rhododendrons** – a shrub with clusters of colorful flowers  
**rubes** – unsophisticated people from rural areas  
**ruddy** – having a healthy, reddish color  
**rustic** – simple, rural, or old-fashioned  
**sagebrush** – a bush with silvery leaves, native to western North America  
**saguaros** – a large, tree-sized cactus species  
**sashayed** – to walk in a way intended to attract attention, often by swaying the hips  
**scorching** – very hot or burning  
**Shanghai** – to trick or force someone into doing something or going somewhere  
**shiftless** – lacking ambition or energy  
**shylocked** – a ruthless and demanding moneylender  
**simony** – the buying or selling of sacred things  
**sieve** – a mesh utensil for straining or separating solids  
**sluice** – an artificial channel for conducting water, often with a gate to regulate flow  
**spires** – tall, pointed structures on rooftops or towers  
**squatter** – a person who illegally occupies property  
**stigma** – shame or disgrace attached to something socially unacceptable  
**stout** – thick or heavy in body; also courageous  
**stucco** – plaster used for surfacing walls  
**tentative** – hesitant or done without confidence  
**tourniquet** – a device used to stop bleeding by compressing a blood vessel

**translucent** – allowing light through but not fully transparent

**tufts** – small bunches of hair, grass, feathers, or fibers

**urchin** – a mischievous young child

**vagrant** – a homeless wanderer

**vitalis** – a brand of hair product

**vying** – striving or competing with someone or something

**warmonger** – somebody eager for war or who tries to start a war

**wheedle** – to coax or persuade someone using flattery or indirect means

**wheedling** – coaxing or persuading with flattery

**wino** – an offensive term for someone addicted to wine

**wisteria** – a flowering climbing plant

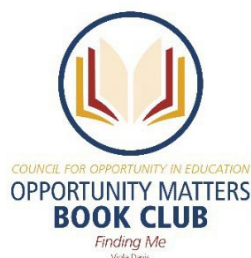
**woefully** – expressing great distress or sorrow

**yucca** – an evergreen plant with sharp leaves and clusters of white flowers

Appendix



## Sample Content Awareness Statement for Signature



### **CONTENT AWARENESS STATEMENT**

The [INSERT PROGRAM NAME] will participate in the Council for Opportunity in Education Opportunity Matters Book Club. The COE Opportunity Matters Book Club encourages a national conversation on coming-of-age stories related to cultural identity, social justice, and belonging.

*The Glass Castle* is Jeannette Walls' 2005 memoir about her turbulent, nomadic childhood and the resilience she developed while being raised by eccentric and deeply flawed parents. It highlights how, despite poverty and instability, Walls ultimately built a successful life of her own, symbolized by her father's unfulfilled dream of constructing a "glass castle." The book addresses sensitive issues such as poverty, abuse, neglect, and alcoholism.

By participating in this book club, the reader and/or their signatory acknowledges and understands the content's nature.

---

As a student participant, I acknowledge that I have read the above statement, understand that the book contains the referenced content, and have decided to participate in the Book Club sponsored by the [INSERT PROGRAM NAME].

---

Student Signature

---

Date

***If the student is under the age of 18 a parent/guardian signature is required.***

As the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ [INSERT STUDENT NAME], I acknowledge that I have read the information within this document and grant my student permission to participate in the Book Club sponsored by the [INSERT PROGRAM NAME].

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

## Educational Resources

### *Suggested Book Citation*

Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle*. Scribner, 2005.

### *Supplemental Educator Resources*

- [Being the Change](#) by Sara K. Ahmed. [Lessons and Strategies to Teach](#) ([heinemann.com](#))
- [Breathing New Life Into Book Clubs](#) by Sonja Cherry-Paul and Dana Johansen
- [Building a Trauma-Informed, Compassionate Classroom: Strategies & Activities to Reduce Challenging Behavior, Improve Learning Outcomes, and Increase Student Engagement](#) by Jennifer Bashant
- [Child Neglect and Trauma: A fact sheet for providers](#) ([ntctsn.org](#))
- [Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Trauma: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS](#)
- [Self Care for Educators.pdf](#) ([nctsn.org](#))

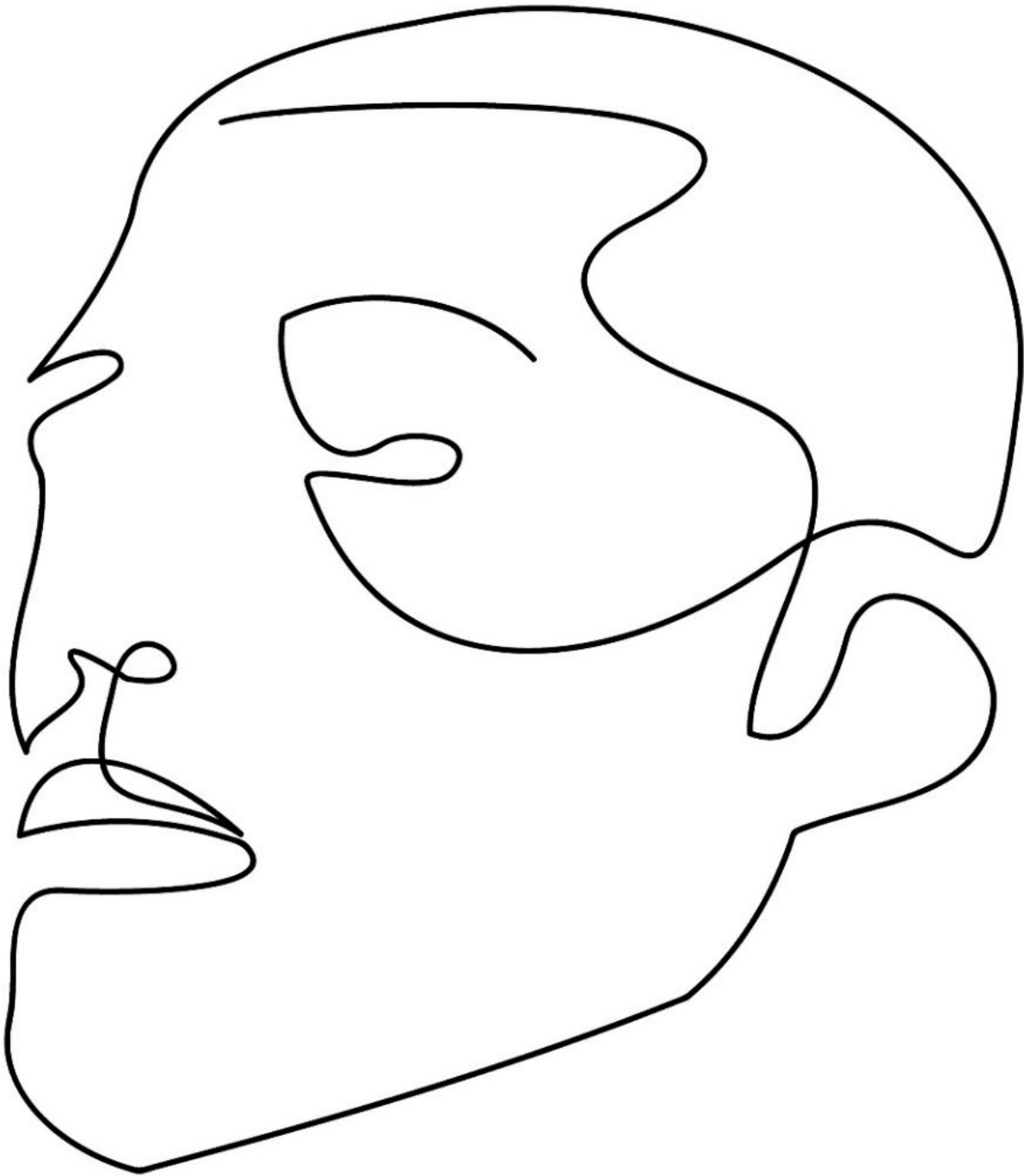
- [The Psychology of PTSD](#)
- [30 Grounding Techniques to Quiet Distressing Thoughts](#)

### *Videos for Instructional Use*

- OPRAH: [Jeannette Walls Lets Go of Her Shame](#)
- CBS: [For two decades, Jeannette Walls hid her roots. Now she tells her own story.](#)
- JWU: [Campus Reads: The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls](#)

(Note: COE does not claim any intellectual property rights to the materials cited above. They are included strictly for informational and educational purposes.)







## National Hotlines and Resources

### Mental Health Crisis Intervention Resources

- [Crisis Text Line](#) (Text “HOME” to 741-741; Call 877-382-1609)
- [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (Call 988 24/7)
- [NAMI HelpLine | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)
  - NAMI Information HelpLine (1-800- 950-NAMI)
  - Email: [helpline@nami.org](mailto:helpline@nami.org)
  - Text: 62640
  - Chat: [NAMI Support](#)
- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#) (Call or text 988, 1-800-662-HELP (4357), or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org))
  - SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
- [National Council for Behavioral Health Treatment Provider Locator](#)
  - [FindTreatment.gov](https://FindTreatment.gov) the confidential and anonymous resource for persons seeking treatment for mental and substance use disorders in the United States and its territories.
- [Grief Share](#) (1-800-395-5755)
  - GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone.
- [Self-Abuse Finally Ends \(S.A.F.E.\)](#) (1-800-DONT-CUT (1-800-366-8288))
  - This is an information line answered 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. SAFE shares information and referrals on ending self-

injurious behavior. People by offering phone support and microgrants.

### Mental Health Crisis Intervention – Youth Specific

- [Crisis Text Line for Teens](#) (Text “Buddy” to 741-741)
  - Crisis Text Line is a global not-for-profit organization providing free mental health texting service through confidential crisis intervention via SMS message. The organization's services are available 24 hours a day, every day.
- [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#) (312- 642-7243)
  - The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, formerly the National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association, is a nonprofit organization providing support groups for people who live with depression or bipolar disorder as well as their friends and family.
- [National Association for Children of Addiction \(NACoA\)](#) (301-468-0985)
  - The mission of NACoA is to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families.
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
  - Their mission is to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.

### Substance Misuse and Addiction Resources

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#) – (Call or text 988, 1-800-662-HELP (4357), or

© Council for Opportunity in Education

chat at  
988lifeline.org)

- SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders
- [National Council for Behavioral Health Treatment Provider Locator](#)
  - FindTreatment.gov, the confidential and anonymous resource for persons seeking treatment for mental and substance use disorders in the United States and its territories.
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
  - Alcoholics Anonymous is an international mutual aid fellowship of alcoholics dedicated to abstinence-based recovery from alcoholism through its spiritually-inclined Twelve Step program.
- [Nar-Anon Family Groups](#) (1-800-477-6291)
  - The Nar-Anon Family Groups are a worldwide fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction
- [Marijuana Anonymous](#) (1-800-766-6779)
  - Marijuana Anonymous is a fellowship of people who help others to recover from marijuana addiction.
- [Cocaine Hotline](#): (1-844-289-0879)
  - The cocaine hotline is a toll-free telephone number where you can get free information about cocaine abuse and addiction. You do not need health insurance to call.)
- [Gamblers Anonymous](#) (855-222-5542)
  - A fellowship of people who provide support to individuals who have a compulsive gambling problem

- [Narcotics Anonymous](#) (1-818-773-9999)
  - A nonprofit fellowship that provides support for individuals for which drugs have become a major problem. Narcotics Anonymous uses a 12-step model developed for people with varied substance use disorders

## Eating Disorder Resources

- ANAD Helpline: 1 (888) 375-7767
  - Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. CT •
- National Alliance for Eating Disorders Helpline: 1 (866) 662-1235
  - Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. ET
- Diabulimia Helpline: 1 (425) 985-3635
- [National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders](#): (1-888-375-7767)
  - ANAD is the leading nonprofit in the U.S. that provides free, peer support services to anyone struggling with an eating disorder, regardless of age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or background.

## Reproductive and Sexual Health

- [Project Rachel](#) (1-888-456-4673)
  - Offers post abortion pro-choice counseling.
- [Pregnancy Decision Line](#) (1-866-799-1726)
  - Pregnancy Decision Line is a free confidential pregnancy and abortion helpline. They provide caring, professional support if you or someone you know is facing an unplanned pregnancy.
- [Postpartum Support International](#) (1-800-944- 4773)
  - The mission of Postpartum Support International is to promote awareness, prevention and treatment of mental health issues related to childbearing in

every country worldwide.

## Housing/Transitional Living Programs

- [955HOPE](#) – The Homeownership Preservation Foundation (1-888-995-HOPE [4673])
  - Specializes in housing counseling and foreclosure prevention. The organization also provides a comprehensive approach to financial well-being, which includes advice on budgeting, homeownership vs. renting, loan products and support with long-term financial stability.
- [Lawyer & Legal Advice Search](#)
  - FindLaw.com contains a wealth of free, up-to-date, and easily understandable legal information and tools. They offer one of the most comprehensive lawyer directories on the internet.
- [Coalition for the Homeless Crisis Intervention Hotline](#) (1-888-358-2384)
  - The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who work to end and prevent homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected.
  - Email: [info@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:info@nationalhomeless.org)
- [211 Help Line](#)
  - The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated 211 as the 3-digit number for information and referrals to social services and other assistance in the year 2000. The 211 service is provided by more than 200 local organizations that are committed to serving their communities.

## Domestic Violence Resources

- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (1-800- 799-SAFE [7233])
  - 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the National Domestic Violence Hotline provides essential tools and support to help survivors of domestic violence so they can live their lives free of abuse.
  - Text “START” to 88788
  - [Online Hotline](#)
- [Love Is Respect](#) (1-866-331-9474) (1-800-787-3244 TTY)
  - Offer comprehensive resources to engage, educate, and empower young people to prevent and end abusive relationships.
  - Text ‘LOVEIS’ to 22522

## Runaway/Lost Children or Youth

- [National Runaway Safeline](#) (Call or text 1-800- RUNAWAY, 1 (800) 786-2929)
  - The National Runaway Safeline (NRS) provides crisis intervention services to young people and their families while also offering prevention, educational and training programs to the network of runaway and homeless youth (RHY) service providers nationwide.
- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) after reporting a child missing, call (1- 800-THE-LOST)
  - The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is a private, non- profit 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization. NCMEC works with families, victims, private industry, law enforcement, and the public to assist with preventing child abductions,

recovering missing children, and providing services to deter and combat child sexual exploitation.

## Child Abuse/Neglect

- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#) (1-800-422- 4453)
  - The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse.
  - Text 800-422-4453
- [Darkness to Light](#) (1-866-FOR-LIGHT)
  - Provides child sexual abuse, resources and support
  - Text to 741741

## Hunger

- [USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse](#)
  - The clearinghouse aides low-income individuals or communities by providing food assistance and other nutrition and social services information, serving as an important tool in combating hunger and promoting economic mobility.
  - By Phone: Call the USDA National Hunger Hotline, which operates from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM Eastern Time. If you need food assistance, call 1-866-3- HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE to speak with a representative who will find food resources such as meal sites, food banks, and other social services available near your location.
  - By Text: Text to the automated service at 914-342-7744. with a question that may contain a keyword such as “food,” “summer,” “meals,” etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.

- [Feed America](#)

- The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks and food programs helps millions of people find food and grocery help in their communities every year. Connect with your local food bank to learn about upcoming free food distributions and to apply for national food programs
- like SNAP and WIC.
- [No Kid Hungry Free Meals Finder](#)
  - Enter your address to find free, healthy meals being served by organizations in your community.
  - You can also find these resources by texting the word FOOD to 304-304.

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If you have any questions about the Opportunity Matters book club, please contact COE Director of Student Opportunities **Angela L. Holley** via email at [angela.holley@coenet.org](mailto:angela.holley@coenet.org).