

NOVEL/BOOK-LENGTH WORK (Fiction, Non-Fiction, Drama) PROPOSAL

Proposal Request Information

Prior to filling out this form, please read the [Novel Adoption Proposal Checklist](#) (scroll down to novel section) with pertinent policies regarding novel selection and adoption.

| | |
|---|------------|
| FOR DISTRICT USE ONLY FINAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED APPROVAL GRADE LEVELS: | 9th and up |
|---|------------|

Section I

To be filled out by requesting educator:

Ia. REQUESTOR AND REVIEW TEAM INFORMATION

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| School | Rock Canyon High School | |
| Date | 12/6/22 | |
| Requesting Educator Name | Karen Whitney | |
| Requesting Educator Email | kwhitney1@dcsdk12.org | |
| Novel Adoption School Process Manager Name | Jason Parker | |
| Novel Adoption School Process Manager Email | japarker@dcsdk12.org | |
| Proposal Review Team Member | Reviewer's Name | Contact Information - email |
| District Coordinator | Debra Yarcho | dyarcho@dcsdk12.org |
| Colleague | Mark Bishop | mbishop3@dcsdk12.org |
| Parent #1 | Suzanne Gray | rusjgray@gmail.com |
| Parent #2 | Mike Heene | mheene@adpay.com |

Ib. BOOK INFORMATION

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Title of proposed book | Stolen Focus |
| Author (s) | Johann Hari |
| Publisher | Crown |
| Edition | 1st |

| | |
|---|--|
| ISBN number | ISBN-10 : 0593138511 ISBN-13 : 978-0593138519 |
| Copyright date | January 25, 2022 |
| Course and/or subject area in which work will be used | AP Language and Composition 11th grade |
| Grade level(s) | 11th |
| Lexile Level Score (If you are unsure, please visit https://hub.lexile.com/fina-a-book/search) | 1050L |
| Dates the book information was displayed at the school and posted on the school's website (2 week min.) | 1/9/2023 and 1/10/2023 |
| Date the book was communicated to the School Accountability Committee? | February 23rd, 2023 |

Ic. NOVEL DESCRIPTION

Please write a brief description of the novel in your own words and how it relates to the content and age group of students using this proposed book.

Stolen Focus is a nonfiction text about the issues we face today around our ability to focus both individually and collectively. Hari dives into research around the impact of technology and various distractions we face in the modern world. It is a well-researched text that explores the problems as well as possible solutions to our diminishing ability to pay attention.

Id. ALIGNMENT WITH DCSD'S CURRICULUM

Please write a detailed description of how the novel **aligns to DCSD's Curriculum - Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) and Essential Skills:**

(Please cite the specific CAS Grade Level Expectations and if applicable, the Evidence Outcomes (EOs) the novel will help address).

Students will evaluate the argument that Hari is making about focus. I plan to use this text in a unit about education. This would be one of the choices for texts to read. Some of the text are memoirs, some are more analytical, like *Stolen Focus*. We are looking at essential questions like What is education? How do we evaluate education? What is the value of education? How do we evaluate education? *Stolen Focus* fits into these ideas because it argues that our focus is being diminished in substantial ways. This can have a great impact on education (formal and informal) and our ability to use our knowledge to live, solve problems in the world and exist as complex humans. Understanding a variety of research methods and arguments and how to make critical judgments about how the author achieves his purpose is a critical skill in AP Language and Composition. This is a very accessible text and students are able to analyze Hari's argument and evaluate his strategies and choices as a writer.

CDE Reading, Writing, Communication Standards: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

Ie. RECOMMENDATIONS

Three recommendations, referrals or reviews must be included. Please use professional reviews (reviews from the School Library Journal, Kirkus, Booklist, Publisher's weekly etc.). The District Library Media Center will be happy to direct you to these sources. List the sources of the reviews below and attach copies of all reviews.

Review #1

Kirkus

A deep dive into one of today's most pertinent psychological problems.

As Hari demonstrates, the fractured state of your attention span has more insidious causes and more drastic outcomes than you ever imagined. Tormented by his own inability to focus, the author traveled the world to speak to researchers and also abandoned his phone and computer to spend three months screen-free in Provincetown. The latter was liberating, enabling him to once again read books, have creative thoughts, and sleep well. Unfortunately, these effects didn't last long once he reconnected. As he learned from expert interviews, the causes of our attention issues are so vast that telling someone they can improve their plight by making personal adjustments is known as cruel optimism, "when you take a really big problem with deep causes in our culture—like obesity, or depression, or addiction—and you offer people, in upbeat language, a simplistic individual solution." The trouble is not just in our devices, but in our air, food, workplaces, the way we raise children, the surveillance of our lives by corporations, and more. Social media is especially dastardly, and Hari offers numerous appalling examples: Because feeling angry is more likely to keep your attention than any other emotion, YouTube has recommended videos by belligerent conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, such as the one claiming Sandy Hook was faked, 15 billion times. In Brazil, Facebook was used to swing an

election in a way that sounds eerily familiar: filling people’s heads “full of grotesque falsehoods, to the point where they can’t distinguish real threats to their existence (an authoritarian leader pledging to shoot them) from nonexistent threats (their children being made gay by penises painted on baby bottles).” Systemic change is the key to any possible solution, but some of Hari’s suggestions sound like more cruel optimism. Still, the author brings to light many important issues.

Bristling with facts and ideas expressed in a high-energy, cliffhanger style.

Review #2

Publishers Weekly

Journalist Hari (Lost Connections) explores a growing “crisis”—people’s inability to focus their attention for extended periods—in this provocative study. He presents data that suggests students switch tasks once every 65 seconds, while adults in offices tend to remain focused on one thing for just three minutes. There are costs to this decrease in attention span, he suggests, from both an intellectual and a productivity perspective, as studies have shown that workers’ IQ dropped by an average of 10 points when they faced frequent “technological distraction” in the form of emails and phone calls. Hari lays out a wide array of environmental factors at play in this decline: technology companies promote innovations to keep people glued to their screens; there’s a large-scale sleep deprivation issue (40% of Americans are chronically sleep-deprived); and overall stress levels have increased—meanwhile, “deteriorating diets and rising pollution” do little to help. Although Hari addresses some actions that readers can take (such as locking phones up in a safe and taking six months off social media), he concludes that the issue is beyond individuals and is a regulatory problem—but his call that people need to band together to build “a movement to reclaim our attention” feels somewhat nebulous. Still, it’s a comprehensive and chilling lay of the land. (Jan.)

Review #3

The Washington Post

“Our Attention Spans Are Suffering. Maybe There’s a Way To Get Them Back.”

Johann Hari had just traveled 4,000 miles to visit Graceland — Elvis Presley’s Memphis estate — and almost everyone around him was taking in the scene through a screen.

He was surrounded by blank-faced people staring at iPads distributed for self-guided tours, looking at photographs of each room instead of the room itself. When a man excitedly showed his wife that if you swiped left or right on your device, the view changed, Hari snapped. “But, sir,” he said, “there’s an old-fashioned form of swiping you can do. It’s called turning your head.”

That pithy takedown underscores Hari’s genuine alarm about the “urgent” attention crisis sweeping the globe. We are collectively losing our capacity for sustained concentration, he argues in his new book, “Stolen Focus,” and the problem is getting worse every day. We’re not present in our daily lives; not much gains traction in our minds. And we’re not simply losing our focus: It’s actively being stolen.

So Hari, tired of telling himself “just *one* more tweet,” embarked on a journey around the world to figure out what was going on and how to fix it. Here are four takeaways from the book:

We’re switching tasks at unprecedented speed.

I was immediately — and immensely — interested in “Stolen Focus,” but it took me more than an hour to finish Chapter 1. I paused to Google the author’s previous books and then check if he had a Twitter account. An Instagram? Every few

pages, I refreshed my email.

If I were in a more generous mood, I might call it multitasking, but Hari argues that, in fact, this constant switching between tasks is at the root of the attention crisis. There's been such an enormous increase in the volume of new information available every second that we've become transfixed by things that are "very fast and very temporary, like a Twitter feed." The more information we inhale, he says, the less we're able to focus on any one piece of it. Our brains aren't designed to absorb so much at a time: In one study, 136 students took a test; some had their phones turned off, while others received occasional text messages. Those who received messages scored about 20 percent lower than those who didn't.

As an expert Hari interviewed put it, we should aim to separate ourselves from potential sources of distraction. It's not enough to "try to monotask by force of will — because it's too hard to resist that informational tap on the shoulder."

One of the best ways out of distraction is finding your way into flow.

If you've ever experienced a flow state, you know what it is, though it can be difficult to put into words. Imagine an artist engrossed in the act of creation or a rock climber scaling an unfamiliar mountain. As Hari describes it: "This is when you are so absorbed in what you are doing that you lose all sense of yourself, and time seems to fall away, and you are flowing into the experience itself. It is the deepest form of focus and attention that we know of."

And we don't get there by relaxing. Flow requires a clearly defined goal that's both meaningful to you and at the edge of your abilities, but not impossible. The more we achieve flow, the happier and healthier we'll be. After Hari spent the morning writing, and entered a flow state, he felt more relaxed and open the rest of the day. To recover from the attention crisis, he argues, we need to replace our distractions with sources of flow.

Technology is deliberately designed to distract.

Big-name websites and apps strive to distract because that's the key to profitability. When we're looking at our screens, these companies make money; when we're not, they don't. So they manipulate us to keep us there, scrolling and clicking. "Whenever you are tempted to put your phone down, the site keeps drip-feeding you the kind of material that it has learned, from your past behavior, keeps you scrolling," Hari writes.

That's not a particularly surprising revelation, but it is alarming. And Hari makes, perhaps, a more compelling point: It doesn't have to be like this. There's an entirely different way our tech could work, he argues, and a world in which our healthy attention spans could exist in tandem with our phones and social media accounts. One easy example: Facebook could hold all notifications and deliver them to you once a day, rather than pinging you in real time and interrupting your focus. Or such sites could remove their infinite scroll, so when you reached the bottom of the screen, you had to think about whether you wanted to see more or not. These changes could be implemented overnight, but without financial incentives, they're unlikely to come to fruition.

There's not an easy solution.

There are interventions we're all capable of doing that can help reclaim some of our attention. One of Hari's sources suggested a handful: Implement a "10-minute rule," and whenever you feel the urge to check your phone, wait 10 minutes first. Change the notification settings on your phone so your apps aren't bugging you every few minutes. Or maybe delete them altogether.

Hari bought a kSafe, a plastic safe with a time lock. He can put his phone in it and then set the amount of time he'd like it to stay locked. (Fifteen minutes, an hour, an entire day?) He also uses a computer program called Freedom, which blocks access to the Internet for designated periods. Instead of chastising himself for becoming distracted, he asks himself what he could do to enter a flow state. And he's started to take six months of the year off social media (even asking a friend to change his passwords).

Still, Hari stresses that the solution to this systemic problem can't be solved by us as individuals. "The truth is that you are living in a system that is pouring acid on your attention every day, and then you are being told to blame yourself and to fiddle with your own habits while the world's attention burns," he writes. "Systemic problems require systemic solutions." It's a call to arms, to be sure, and I'm tempted to tell my Twitter followers about it — but I've deleted the app from my phone.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2022/01/22/stolen-focus-johann-hari-book/>

SECTION II: Review Team Information

Each review team member will complete an individual section for a formal review of the book based on your stakeholder perspective. All members of the site review team **MUST read** the proposed novel/book **prior submission to the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Director.**

IIa. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by requesting educator)

| The proposed novel... | Y/N | Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable |
|---|--|---|
| is appropriate for the following grade level(s) | 9-12 | This is a non fiction informative text about focus. It could be used in all high school grades. I plan to use it in AP Language and Composition (11th grade) |
| requires parent permission for students to read the book? | N | No concerns |
| allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience | Y | Concepts can be applied to a variety of situations and ideas. Hari digs deeply into ideas and shows readers that what we understand on the surface about focus and attention is not the whole picture. He challenges us to look at our environments and systems in different ways and gives us tools to solve issues associated with loss of focus and attention. These skills are useful in examining many aspects of our lives and in finding solutions to issues we may have thought unsolvable. |
| actively engages students through the text | Y | Many examples and anecdotes to engage students. Hari presents the statistics and factual information in a way that engages students and goes into detail to explain his ideas in a logical and meaningful way. |
| Gives an opportunity for all students to access | Y | Applicable throughout life. Again, all of these skills and ideas can be applied to a variety of ideas and situations students will encounter as they enter college and beyond. It encourages critical and in depth thinking, which is a valuable skill in any field. |
| Is in alignment with Board File ADB on Education Equity , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students? | Y | Hari presents ideas in a way that students of a variety of backgrounds can connect to and learn from. He uses examples that students can relate to. |
| Recommend novel for adoption | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

Iib. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by District Coordinator) Debra Yarcho

| The proposed novel... | Y/N | Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable |
|---|--|---|
| is appropriate for the following grade level(s) | Y | Grades 9-12 |
| requires parent permission for students to read the book? | N | The content is appropriate for high school students. |
| allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience | Y | Students can create meaning if they are willing to take a break from technology and follow some suggestions to regain focus |
| actively engages students through the text | Y | Text gives relevant examples of mainstream technology |
| Gives an opportunity for all students to access | Y | There are numerous examples and anecdotes to engage students. |
| Is in alignment with Board File ADB on Education Equity , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students? | Y | |
| Recommend novel for adoption | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

IIc. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by a colleague)

| The proposed novel... | Y/N | Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable |
|---|---|---|
| is appropriate for the following grade level(s) | Y | Absolutely! The writing style is engaging and personable and topically the book speaks to concerns important to any grade level |
| requires parent permission for students to read the book? | Y | No – nothing objectionable or inappropriate |
| allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience | Y | Very much so – With the book’s concentration on the problem of focus, the subject matter can be applied to any knowledge and experiential subset. |
| actively engages students through the text | Y | The book contains multiple anecdotes and stories that tie into the kinds of experiences many modern youth are struggling with |
| Gives an opportunity for all students to access | Y | Again, the attention on focus problems applies to every student who lives in our culture of techno-zombification. Any student with a cell phone can relate. |
| Is in alignment with Board File ADB on Education Equity , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students? | Y | The topics of this book apply internationally and impact every subset of modern human beings |
| Recommend novel for adoption | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes YES!!!!!!!!!!!! <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

IId. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by Parent #1)

| The proposed novel... | Y/N | Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable |
|---|--|---|
| is appropriate for the following grade level(s) | Y | The language and content is appropriate for this age group. |
| requires parent permission for students to read the book? | N | There is no offensive content in this book. |
| allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience | Y | I do believe that students will be able to reflect on their own attention behaviors as a result of reading this book. However, I would caution that the author creates this narrative to support his own viewpoint. It contains mostly anecdotal and personal stories and studies that are not fully researched. As the author writes “ I believe that our attention is getting worse, even though we don’t have long term studies...” pg 183 Hopefully, the students will understand the persuasive nature of the book and look for other knowledge that may support or contradict the author’s conclusions. |
| actively engages students through the text | Y | The personal stories are engaging and will create a space where students can think deeply about the hypothesis that the author puts forward. Such as the story of Hannah who is quoted “I see myself sitting at a desk and it’s all gray.....” “She told me she worries about her friends still stuck in that system.” pg 262. |
| Gives an opportunity for all students to access | Y | But there may be some triggering language in the chapter 11 for those who have ADHD. “it’s a bit criminal in a sense to say nothing more than, in effect, ‘Let’s placate them with medications....’ pg 236. |
| Recommend novel for adoption | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| | | |

Iie. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by Parent #2)

| The proposed novel... | Y/N | Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable |
|---|--|---|
| is appropriate for the following grade level(s) | Y | Age appropriate, content is accessible and relatable to high school students |
| requires parent permission for students to read the book? | N | Content is appropriate for High School students |
| allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience | Y | Students can definitely make relevant connections between their lives and societal factors that are creating issues with focus and attention. They can see this all around them - school, media, social media, work, etc. |
| actively engages students through the text | Y | Hari does a really good job of mixing anecdotes, specific examples and research making the text engaging and interesting for readers. |
| Gives an opportunity for all students to access | Y | Reading level is not difficult and technical ideas are explained in a way that makes them easily understandable. High school students will access this information easily. |
| Recommend novel for adoption | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

SECTION III: Requestor/Educator & District Coordinator Level Process Review

IIIa. Grade Level Recommendations (to be collaborated on between Requesting Educator & District Coordinator based on recommendations made by the review team)

Place initials in the columns indicating level of recommendation. Complete by initialing for every grade level indicated on the chart below. Please include justification if necessary for the level(s) of recommendation below the chart.

Note: If approved by the Board of Education, this novel can be used by all educators in DCSD. Please consider the use of this book for all PK-12 grades, not just the grade or content you teach.

| Grade level | Recommended | Recommended: Requires parent notification and consent: The novel/book may contain some mature content and themes | Not Recommended: Content inappropriate for grade level(s) |
|-------------|-------------|--|---|
| PK/K | | | KW,DY |
| 1 | | | KW,DY |
| 2 | | | KW,DY |
| 3 | | | KW,DY |
| 4 | | | KW,DY |
| 5 | | | KW,DY |
| 6 | | | KW,DY |
| 7 | | | KW,DY |
| 8 | | | KW,DY |
| 9 | KW, DY | | |
| 10 | KW, DY | | |
| 11 | KW, DY | | |
| 12 | KW, DY | | |

IIIb. CIA PROCESS REVIEW

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|--|----------------------|
| | District Coordinator |
| Sections I & II are complete. | Yes |
| Building administrator has reviewed the proposal. | Yes |
| The novel was on display at the school for two weeks. | Yes |
| Information about the novel was available on the district's and school's website for two weeks prior to being submitted to the district coordinator. | Yes |
| Information about the novel was shared with the School Advisory Council. | Yes |

SECTION IV: District Level Process Review

IV. DISTRICT LEVEL REVIEW (to be completed by the Director CIA)

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| | CIA Director Initials |
| The novel adoption process has been followed. | EM |
| The novel was displayed in the school that is making the request. | EM |
| The novel was displayed on the district website prior to approval. | EM |
| Notice was provided and the novel was available in the district office for two weeks prior to approval. | EM |
| Does the District Coordinator and review team support adoption of this book? | EM |

SECTION V: Signatures/Approvals

Va.

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the evaluating Educator recommend adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 09 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Evaluating Educator Signature <u>Karen Whitney</u> | | |

Vb.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the evaluating Colleague recommend adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 09 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Evaluating Colleague Signature <u>Mark Bishop</u> | | |

Vc.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the evaluating Parent #1 recommend adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 09 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Evaluating Parent (#1) Signature <u>Suzanne Gray</u> | | |

Vd.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the evaluating Parent (#2) recommend adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 20 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Evaluating Parent (#2) Signature <u>Mike Heene</u> | | |

Ve.

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the evaluating educator's Administrator recommend adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 21 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Administrator Signature <u>Jeff Seary</u> | | |

Vf.

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the District Coordinator certify that the information on this form accurately reflects the process followed at the site. | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 21 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| District Coordinator Signature <u>Debra Yarcho</u> | | |

Vg.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----|
| Does the CIA Director support adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date <u>Mar 21 2023</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| CIA Director Signature <u>Erica Mason</u> | | |

SECTION VI: Superintendent's Approval

SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Does the Superintendent approve adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date _____ | | |
| Superintendent Signature _____ | | |

SECTION VII: Board of Education Approval

BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Does the Board of Education approve adoption of this book? | YES | NO |
| Date _____ | | |
| Board of Education Signature _____ | | |

OFFICE USE

| | DATE | INITIALS |
|--|------|----------|
| Approved novel list updated (including recommended grade level) | | |
| Approved form with BOE signatures scanned to CIA folder on District server | | |