

Teacher TESTIMONIALS



Jenny Rella

**10th grade ELA, Masters in Art of
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Vail School District, Tucson AZ**

As an English educator who has shared *Runaway at Sea* with both seventh and tenth-grade classrooms, I can confidently say this novel is a rare gem that bridges the gap between middle and high school lexiles. The narrative is masterfully constructed, lending itself seamlessly to nearly every RL standard, from analyzing complex character development to deconstructing intricate thematic structures. Whether we were diving into the nuances of the protagonist's internal conflict or evaluating the author's specific choices in pacing and suspense, the text provided a rich, rigorous foundation for deep literary analysis across all levels of ability.

Beyond the technical merits, the level of student engagement was truly remarkable. It is a rare feat to find a book that captivates a restless 12-year-old just as effectively as a more cynical 10th grader, yet my students were consistently hooked from the very first chapter. They weren't just reading for an assignment; they were genuinely invested in the stakes of the voyage, sparking some of the most vibrant and passionate classroom discussions I've had in years.

Additionally, the instructional versatility of *Runaway at Sea* allowed me to extend the learning far beyond the four walls of the English classroom through a variety of cross-curricular activities. My students didn't just read about life on the water; they experienced it firsthand by learning the technical skill of reading a compass and hosting local Boy Scouts who taught us the art of tying authentic nautical knots. We even collaborated with the art department to bring the story to life visually, with students creating stunning renderings of pivotal scenes from the novel. These hands-on experiences transformed the unit into an immersive journey that resonated with every type of learner.

I absolutely loved teaching this book, and it has earned a permanent, well-deserved spot in my curriculum.



Margreit Maitland



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Brianna P. Smith

ELA 10 Teacher

Vail School District, Tucson AZ

Teaching *Runaway at Sea* in my 10th grade English classroom was an engaging and rewarding experience. Margareit Maitland creates a fast-paced, high-interest narrative that immediately draws students in while encouraging them to think critically about resilience, decision-making, and survival.

My students connected with the protagonist's journey, and the story sparked meaningful discussions, thoughtful analysis, and strong written responses across a range of ability levels.

While I used this novel with sophomores, I would highly recommend it for upper-middle school students as well. Its accessible style, combined with rich thematic depth, makes it an excellent choice for building reading confidence while still promoting deeper thinking. *Runaway at Sea* is a versatile, impactful text that supports both engagement and academic growth in the classroom.



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