



## Teen Book Review Community Service Guidelines

The Dover Plains Library is always looking for ways to engage local teens in the community and to help them fulfill community service requirements. Teens (13+) can now earn 2 hours of community service by reviewing a book from the Library collection or from one of the Library's online services such as Libby, Overdrive, or Hoopla. New to Libby/Overdrive? Never used Hoopla? Visit the E-Resources page on our website, [www.doverplainslibrary.org](http://www.doverplainslibrary.org), for tutorials on how to get started. Keep in mind, audiobooks count, too!

Books must meet the following requirements:

- It must be a book that you have never read before
- It must be a book published within the last three years
- The primary audience for this book must be teens

Please draft your review based on the following guidelines. All parts of your review must be wholly in your own words. Read your review carefully before submitting for spelling mistakes, grammar, and completion of review requirements.

Include the following information at the top of your review:

- Your age
- Title of the book
- Author of the book
- Format of the book (hardcover, ebook, audiobook, etc.)
- Rating (on a scale of 1-5)

Submit your review via email to [director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org) . Please include your full name somewhere in your email and allow 3 days for processing of reviews. The librarian will read your review to verify that all of the requirements have been met. Completed reviews will be kept in a binder in the Library to promote books to other teens in the community.

If you are submitting a review for a community service requirement (NHS, church, etc.), please stop by the Library with any paperwork that needs to be filled out for the service organization.

## Teen Reviewer Guidelines

The ideal book review should:

- Summarize the content of the book
- Explain your opinion or response to the book
- Gauge its appeal to a general or specific teen audience

Each review will contain the following elements:

- **A headline.** This headline will be the first part of your review seen by the reader and should grab the reader's attention.
- **A list of major characters.** This list can be bulleted and should identify each character and their role in the narrative. This list should include 5 characters and should be written in complete sentences.
  - If there are more than 5 major characters, pick your 5 favorites
  - If your book does not contain 5 characters, your character list should include significant and additional descriptive details about those characters that do exist
- **A plot summary.** The summary should be the "bones" of the story discussing what the main characters seek to accomplish. To find the "bones" of the story, expand on your character list by defining the challenges those characters face, significant others in the story, and the story's setting. Then, add details to bring the story to life for someone who has not read the book.
  - Do not give a blow by blow retelling of every fact in the story. Your plot summary should cover the beginning and middle of the story, and include a discussion of the final conflict without giving away the ending or spoiling any major reveals
  - Your plot summary should be written in one single tense
  - Remember that your review will be read by teens who have not read the book, so your plot summary must be clear and cohesive.
- **A critical evaluation.** Comment on the structure of the book. Topics you can discuss in your critical evaluation include the writing style, the flow of the plot, the author's expertise for the subject, flaws in the story, themes, and illustrations or lists as a plot device. **Your plot summary and critical evaluation combined should total at least 250 words.**
- **A discussion of the book's appeal.** Will teen readers enjoy this book? Who would you recommend this book to?

Reviews should not need extensive editing for spelling, grammar, content, understanding, or style. Please proofread your work!

*\*In submitting a book review, you are agreeing to let the library post portions of thereof for marketing purposes on the library website and social media platforms. In all cases, reviewers will remain anonymous.*

# Sample Review

**Age:** 14

**Book Title:** Holes

**Author:** Louis Sachar Book Format: Audiobook

**Rating (on a scale of 1-5):** 5/5

**Headline:** "Dig Up Treasure, Truth, and Treacherous Lizards!"

## Character List:

- **Stanley Yelnats** - Stanley is a 14-year-old boy with bad luck, who is wrongly accused of a crime he didn't commit. Instead of jail, Stanley is sent to Camp Green Lake, where he is forced to dig holes.
- **Zero** - Zero is a boy whom Stanley befriends at Camp Green Lake. Also known as Hector Zeroni, Zero is the great-great-great grandson of Madame Zeroni. He is the fastest digger at Camp Green Lake and is taught to read by Stanley.
- **Madame Zeroni** - Madame Zeroni cursed the whole Yelnats family with bad luck after Elya Yelnats, the great-great grandfather of Stanley Yelnats, failed to complete the task she'd assigned him.
- **The Warden** - The Warden is in charge of Camp Green Lake. She has the boys dig holes to look for the treasure buried by Kate Barlow and is the granddaughter of Trout Walker.
- **Kate Barlow** - Kate Barlow was a school teacher who fell in love with Sam "the onion man." After Sam was killed by the townspeople, Kate became the outlaw Kissin' Kate Barlow, who eventually robbed Stanley Yelnats the First. She buried his money on the grounds that would become Camp Green Lake one hundred years later.

## Review:

Meet Stanley: he's a criminal, but it's not his fault. He swears! Thanks to his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather, Stanley Yelnats is accused of stealing a pair of shoes donated to an orphanage and is sent to Camp Green Lake for his rehabilitation. But these boys don't do community service. They don't frolic in the lake--there is no lake! They dig holes, all day, every day. Each hole must be exactly five feet deep by five feet wide, and the only way to get out of digging is to find something that might interest The Warden. It doesn't take long for Stanley to catch on to The Warden's plan: he and his new friends aren't digging to build character--they're looking for treasure, buried one hundred years ago by the outlaw Kissin' Kate Barlow. When Zero, another "camp attendee," runs away into the desert, Stanley embarks on a daring rescue mission, braving deadly yellow-spotted lizards and blistering heat to save him. Once they're reunited, Zero joins Stanley in his quest to dig up the truth, discover his past, and clear his name.

Part mystery, part comedy, Holes is a tale about learning from the past, the road to self-discovery, and why exactly rattlesnake venom shouldn't be used as a nail polish ingredient. Author Louis Sachar takes readers for a ride with Stanley as together you'll uncover hidden truths, piece together revelations, and feel the heat of a sun so hot that you'll be reaching for your own water bottle. The only holes in Stanley's story are the ones he's digging into the ground--through flashbacks, Sachar reveals unexpected relationships that give meaning to everything from Stanley's friendship with Zero to The Warden's unrelenting drive to discover the treasure. While younger characters make this book a standout choice for middle school readers, there's something here for everyone: action, adventure, friendship, obstacles to overcome, and scary reptiles.