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To Read or Not To Read: Should the Classics Be Replaced?

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A constant debate amongst high school English literature teachers is whether or not they should require their students to read books from the classical literary canon. Often times these books are difficult for students to understand, and rather than learning to enjoy reading, these teens simply view reading as a difficult activity that they are forced into doing. However, these books are also considered great masterpieces with timeless themes and beautiful language, so by depriving students of reading this classic material, it is possible that teachers would be doing students a disservice. In my research I reviewed the literature on this topic, I surveyed four different classes of literature students, and I interviewed four experienced English Literature teachers. My research showed the importance of integrating young adult, diverse, and contemporary literature into the classically founded English curriculum.