

WHS Book Rationale

Title: *The Old Man and the Sea*

Author: Ernest Hemingway

- **Intended Audience**

English 11 and English 11 Honors

- **Brief summary and educational significance**

Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize for this, his final novel. It tells the story of Santiago, an old fisherman who uses his skills and amazing physical forbearance to break an 84 day unlucky streak by “going out too far” and catching a large marlin. The fish is destroyed by sharks as the old man returns home, and he is left with nothing.

- **Purpose of teaching the work and how it will be used**

Hemingway is an extremely important figure in American writing, and this is perhaps one of his most famous works. It is extremely accessible to both high level and at-risk students.

The Old Man and the Sea is a deceptively simple novel that can be read as a straightforward story of courage and strength, as religious allegory, or from a variety of other viewpoints. This makes it a wonderful text for discussion and understanding literary complexity.

Students will understand concepts important in Hemingway’s writing, such as the Hemingway hero and “nada.”

- **Potential problems**

Some religious references, Santiago is a nominal Catholic.

- **Addressing potential problems**

Discussion of the purpose of Santiago’s religion (Catholicism and baseball), the importance of belief, what Santiago does or does not believe, and how this helps him persevere.