

# the outskirts of hope



In 1967 when Jo was 10 years old, her father moved their family to an all-black town in the Mississippi Delta, where they were one of only two white families and the only Jewish one. There, her father started a medical clinic, her mother taught at the local high school, and Jo was the only white student at her junior high. Living in a trailer in the poorest county in the nation during the turbulent 1960s, they were drawn into the heart of the civil rights movement.

## WHY INCLUDE *OUTSKIRTS* IN YOUR CURRICULUM?

Middle and high schoolers learning about the Civil Rights Movement will get a unique, personal perspective unlike textbook retellings. *Outskirts* can be used as a companion book to or in place of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, providing the opportunity to address the same issues of racial discrimination, the Jim Crow laws, life in the Deep South during segregation, but with a true story.

The reading of *The Outskirts of Hope* provides a Common Core-aligned curriculum through its focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It can be presented as a one-hour assembly or classroom presentation, or read over the course of a couple of weeks. *Outskirts* is a critically acclaimed, best-selling memoir, having appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*'s top ten list of non-fiction e-books. It won the 2015 National Indie Excellence Award for Autobiography and the Writers' League of Texas Best Non-fiction for 2015.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

1. What was President Johnson's War on Poverty?
2. What were the Jim Crow laws?
3. What is white privilege?
4. What does it mean to be accepted into a community? What is an outsider?
5. What is voter suppression?
6. Why was Dr. Martin Luther King so important?
7. What is the impact of education in breaking the cycle of poverty?
8. How can reading make a difference?
9. Where do we find the courage to become involved?
10. What do we do now?

## RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT

Draft an essay drawing parallels between today's racial, political and social state and the events in *The Outskirts of Hope*. How are things alike? How have they changed? What do you imagine the world will look like twenty years from now?

Using examples from history and current events, show how courage can lead to change.

## HOW TO INCLUDE JO



Reach out to Jo via email to see if she'll be in town! Jo is available for some in-person presentation, lectures and classroom discussions. [JO@JOIVESTER.COM](mailto:JO@JOIVESTER.COM)

If Jo isn't local to your area, Skype her in. Reach out by email and set up a time for her to visit virtually.

Send Jo a list of questions from your classroom and she'll return a response. Get more in-depth on a topic or ask her opinion on current events!

## AWARDS



**2015 National Indie Excellence Award Winner for Autobiography**



**2015 National Indie Excellence Award Finalist for Social/Political Change**



**2015 Sarton Women's Book Award Shortlist - Story Circle**



**2015 Writer's League of Texas Book Awards Winner for Non-Fiction**

## CONTACT INFO

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