

---

## Francine Prose's Views on Why American High School Students Hate Literature

Francine Prose wrote "I Know why the Caged Bird Cannot Read" to depict that American high school students learn to hate literature in part because they are asked to read mediocre, easy novels. She supports this claim by using examples from her sons' experiences with their school system and reading lists she gathered from across the country. Both of these pieces of evidence help her develop an argument that is very hard to refute. In the last few paragraphs she states an alternative solution to this issue and explains it. Her solution is to tell students that books are a work of art. Prose's goal is to get high school students wanting to appreciate real literature.

Prose uses evidence from her sons' experiences in high school to establish credibility and display the wide range of people that are affected by the American school system. She brings up her "own two sons" and discusses their reading repertoire in both public and private schools. She states "Neither has heard a teacher suggest that he read Kafka ... No instructor has ever asked my sons to read Alice Munro." which displays the lack of diversity in instructors book choices. She mentions that they were forced to drudge through *To Kill a Mockingbird* and "the weaker novels of John Steinbeck" bringing up the idea of mediocre, easy novels. She stresses in the beginning that "early encounters with literature leave such indelible impressions" which leads into the fact that her sons "slogged repeatedly through ... manipulative melodramas". She shows that her sons were never taught to enjoy books as a form of art, but rather as something they were forced to read and analyze.

Prose analyzes reading lists from several high schools throughout the country to stress that it is not just her children and those around her struggling with this issue. She reached the conclusion that "What emerges from these photocopied pages ... is a numbing sameness, unaffected by geography, region, or community size". Kids are forced to read these boring novels and are never allowed to truly express their opinion on them. Questions are asked such as How does this novel portray racism? In what ways can you relate to this novel?. These questions force students to conform to one track thinking. Students forced to think inside of boxed up questions like these learn to hate literature. They do not look forward to reading a book because they are already told what they should understand within the novel. Prose supports her claim by using evidence such as this and then offers an alternative solution.

Prose's solution is to force students to believe that books are a work of art. She says we need to "[produce] and [become] a nation of avid readers of serious literature" meaning we must

---

### Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

---

teach students today to appreciate literature and get the desire to read. She stresses the importance of this by saying “it’s worth noting that books are among the few remaining forms of entertainment not sustained by, and meant to further, the interest of advertising” which means no one is trying to sell you anything, and the text is not affected by anything. It is pure and simple, no media involved. Young adults who do not appreciate literature live in a world where they cannot escape the advertising industry at all. Her solution involves the need to stop force-feeding “gross oversimplifications” of novels and simply appreciate literature.

Prose establishes credibility of her argument by using evidence from both her personal experience and external sources. Along with her alternative solution, these items provide a strong argument that is very challenging to refute. Her two major pieces of evidence expose the American school system as a whole. She displays the questions asked by high school teachers and explains that they teach high schoolers to hate literature. Her solution to fix the school system is fully elaborated in the last few paragraphs of the essay. This essay provided proper evidence and a thought out solution to a very large problem.

gradesfixer.com

---

## Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)