Characteristics of Young Adult books:

When selecting books appropriate for young adults, the following criteria are taken into account:

- Appeals to and engages young adults
- Well-defined characters
- Sufficient plot to sustain interest
- Plot lines developed through dialog and action
- Familiar themes with emotional appeal for teenagers
- Believable treatment
- Conclusion that is well developed and resolves the issue(s) satisfactorily

In addition to the literary value of the book, books for teens should also entertain, inform and/or look at issues that teens deal with in their daily lives. Often, realistic fiction grapples with the tough and controversial problems that today’s adolescents face, such as – drugs, drinking, pregnancy, abortion, abuse, sexual orientation, suicide and broken families. In addition to difficult content, these stories are often told in “authentic” teen voices, which may or may not include the use of slang and/or foul language. Books for young adults are selected by specific criteria: age of copyright, intended audience, and at least 2 good reviews from authoritative sources, i.e. School Library Journal, VOYA, Booklist, etc.

Library collections for young adults often include books intended for an adult audience, and the criteria for selection is still the same. Often, these books are classics, best sellers and award winners, which have been chosen for their broad appeal and literary content. The content of these books is intended for mature readers and are selected for those high school readers who have reached the stage where most of their reading choices are geared towards adult fare.