

## A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio-born author Kate Hattermer and learn about her debut novel.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*.

Discover read-alikes and deep-dive resources to explore topics and themes in depth.

# The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy

By Kate Hattermer

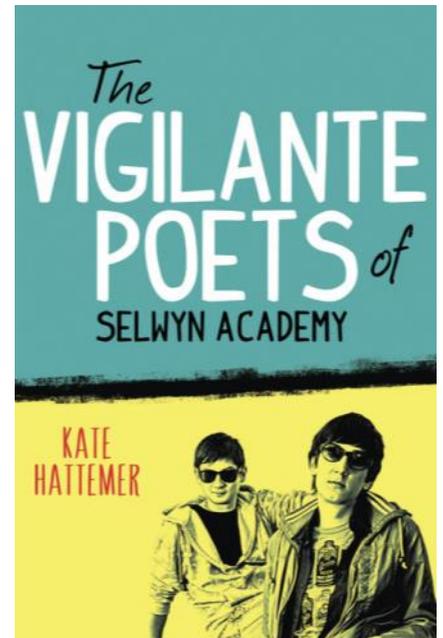


## About the Book

Despite limited talent, self-proclaimed nerd Ethan Andrezejczak has made it to junior year at Selwyn, a prestigious Minnesota arts academy. When a reality show begins filming a talent competition in the school, promising a substantial scholarship to the winner, Ethan and his friends rebel.

With a nod to Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*, Ethan, Luke, Jackson, and Elizabeth initiate an underground poetry protest called *The Contracantos*, complete with a banned newspaper, secret forays to the school's printing press, and hacking into the administrative finances.

But the forces behind the show are craftier than they seem. The web of betrayal stretches farther than Ethan could have ever imagined. It's up to Ethan and his friends to save Selwyn—and up to his four-year-old triplet sisters and an acrobatic, heroic gerbil named Baconnaise to provide comic relief.



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## Book Details

***The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*** by Kate Hattermer.

Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. ISBN 9780385753784. Ages 12+. 323 pages.

Leveled Reading: AR Points 10.0. ATOS Book Level 4.8. HL590 Lexile.

[penguinrandomhouse.com/books/228368/the-vigilante-poets-of-selwyn-academy-by-kate-hattermer/](https://penguinrandomhouse.com/books/228368/the-vigilante-poets-of-selwyn-academy-by-kate-hattermer/)

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library:

[ohiodigitallibrary.com](https://ohiodigitallibrary.com)

Available as a downloadable talking book and as a Braille book through the State Library of Ohio Talking Book Program:

[klas.com/talkingbooks/ohio](https://klas.com/talkingbooks/ohio)



Author photo and biographical information courtesy Penguin Random House; used with permission.

## About the Author

Kate Hattermer grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio as the oldest of eight siblings. She attended Yale University and taught high school Latin in Virginia before returning to Cincinnati, where she worked as a bookseller.

She's now writing, teaching, reading, and running in the greater DC area. Her debut, *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*, received five starred reviews and was named a best book of the year by the American Library Association, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Bustle.com*, and the Los Angeles Public Library. Her second novel, *Land of 10,000 Madonnas*, was published in April 2016 and her middle grade novel *Here Comes Trouble* will be released in 2017.

**“Selwyn?  
Sell-outs! That’s  
who we are.**

**We’re orbiting  
an ersatz star.**

**We used to  
spend our time  
creating**

**But now we  
walk the halls  
awaiting**

**The latest,  
greatest Nielsen  
rating.”**

**THE CONTRA-  
CANTOS**

## Author Resources

### Kate Hattermer's official website

[katehattermer.com](http://katehattermer.com)

### Author page on Penguin Random House website

[penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/177770/kate-hattermer](http://penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/177770/kate-hattermer)

### American Booksellers Association interview with Kate Hattermer

[bookweb.org/news/indies-introduce-new-voices-qa-kate-hattermer](http://bookweb.org/news/indies-introduce-new-voices-qa-kate-hattermer)

### For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Contact Kate Hattermer at [katehattermerbooks@gmail.com](mailto:katehattermerbooks@gmail.com) to schedule a live or virtual appearance.

## Talk About It

Topics to share when discussing *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy* with teens.

- Ethan claims to have no talent, yet it is obvious that Selwyn Academy only accepts exceptional students. Do you think his claim is true, or is it a result of his lack of self-confidence? Do we often lack objectivity when looking at our own strengths and weaknesses?
- Talent competitions in reality television have become very popular, yet many question the “real” quality of the reality. Do you think shows such as *The Voice* and *America’s Got Talent* are scripted, or are they in fact real? Are some contestants portrayed negatively, as Maura was, to boost ratings? Does it seem the most truly talented artist always wins?
- Ethan, Jackson, and Elizabeth feel betrayed by their friend Luke. Do you feel Luke’s actions are justified? Is it more important to follow your dreams or to stand up for your principles? What happens when these two goals collide?
- The mantra of Ethan and his friends is “I should have been able to do better” (p. 221), which is a quote from Ezra Pound to the poet Allen Ginsberg. Does this seem to be an acceptable view, or is it an expression of regret? Can you think of times in your own life when this was applicable?

## Go Further

Ideas for extending the experience of reading **The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy**.

**Educators:** Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards, such as Social Studies: American Government: Civic Participation and Skills (HS) may also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy** align with Learning Standards for Grades 7-12.

**Librarians, parents, and others:** These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov). From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Ohio's Learning Standards."

Though Ezra Pound has been condemned as a Nazi sympathizer, his work is still read and respected by many. Should a person's political ideals interfere with his or her image as an artist? To learn more about the very controversial poet Ezra Pound, visit these websites to decide for yourself.

Ezra Pound: Fascist Connections (Biography.com)  
[biography.com/people/ezra-pound-9445428#fascist-connections](http://biography.com/people/ezra-pound-9445428#fascist-connections)

Ezra Pound (Poets.org)  
[poets.org/poetsorg/poet/ezra-pound](http://poets.org/poetsorg/poet/ezra-pound)

For a deeper dive, use online resources available to students through INFOhio ([infohio.org](http://infohio.org)) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library ([ohioweblibrary.org](http://ohioweblibrary.org)), particularly Literary Reference Center, to research Pound's writings and his political views. Using evidence from your research, write an essay or give an oral presentation assessing Pound's place in literature and history.

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Reality television has been around a very long time, but has grown in popularity in the last ten to fifteen years. Is the term "reality television" a misnomer? Is "enhanced reality" just another term for fake? Do we watch reality television for the story or the drama? To learn more about the history and evolution of reality television, check out these websites.

Reality TV: An Enhanced Reality (hosted by The Alliance for Networking Visual Culture)  
[scalar.usc.edu/works/reality-tv/index](http://scalar.usc.edu/works/reality-tv/index)

Timeline: 60 years of reality TV programming (*The Hollywood Reporter*)  
[hollywoodreporter.com/news/timeline-60-years-reality-tv-119972](http://hollywoodreporter.com/news/timeline-60-years-reality-tv-119972)

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When the principal bans the newspaper created by Ethan and his friends, it naturally becomes more popular with the students and even some teachers. Student-produced newspapers have a long history of censorship. Explore that history and decide whether or not freedom of the press should exist in schools. In the age of social media and blogging, is this even a relevant discussion?

Responding to Censorship (Southern Poverty Law Center)  
[splc.org/page/responding-to-censorship](http://splc.org/page/responding-to-censorship)

The Hazelwood Decision and Student Press (Scholastic)  
[scholastic.com/teachers/article/hazelwood-decision-and-student-press](http://scholastic.com/teachers/article/hazelwood-decision-and-student-press)

Facts and Case Summary - Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier (United States Courts)  
[uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-hazelwood-v-kuhlmeier](http://uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-hazelwood-v-kuhlmeier)

## Explore More

Creative works and resources to use with *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*.

### Teen On the Same Page: *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*

[teenspace.cincinnati.library.org/samepage/book](http://teenspace.cincinnati.library.org/samepage/book)

Teen On the Same Page, a community reading initiative of Teenspace at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, selected *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy* as its fourth title for a citywide read. The Teen On the Same Page website offers more information about the book and author, as well as readalikes and video companions, some thought-provoking questions for further discussion, and additional resources.

### Teen Ink

[teenink.com](http://teenink.com)

A print and online magazine written by teens, *Teen Ink* has published poetry, fiction, nonfiction, reviews, forums, art and photos since 1989.

### Art21: Protest

[pbs.org/art21/watch-now/episode-protest](http://pbs.org/art21/watch-now/episode-protest)

Art21 from PBS offers videos, film, and information on arts and artists. Check out the episode *Protest*, which examines contemporary art and its role in expressing awareness of, and outrage at, both our society's history and present condition.

Fascinated by **tricolons** and **interrobangs**? Learn more:

Tricolon (About: Education)

[grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/tricolonterm.htm](http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/tricolonterm.htm)

Interrobang (Merriam-Webster)

[merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interrobang](http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interrobang)

Looking for more **books about teens and show business**? Check out "Reality TV Readalikes" by Colleen Seisser.

[yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2013/05/23/reality-tv-readalikes](http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub/2013/05/23/reality-tv-readalikes)

## Check It Out

Additional teen novels for readers of *The Vigilante Poets of Selwyn Academy*.

**Something Real** by Heather Demetrios. Henry Holt & Co., 2014.

**The Real Real** by Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus. HarperCollins, 2009.

**Reality Boy** by A. S. King. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2013.

**Flash Point** by Nancy Kress. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2012.

**Girl Out Loud** by Emily Gale. Chicken House, 2012.

**How I Got Skinny, Famous, and Fell Madly in Love** by Ken Baker. Running Press, 2014.

**Pizza, Love, and Other Stuff That Made Me Famous** by Kathryn Williams. Henry Holt & Co., 2012.

**Reality Check** by Jen Calonita. Little, Brown & Co., 2010.

**Watch Me** by Lauren Barnholdt. Simon Pulse, 2010.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:  
[library.ohio.gov/ctro](http://library.ohio.gov/ctro).

This toolkit revised  
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