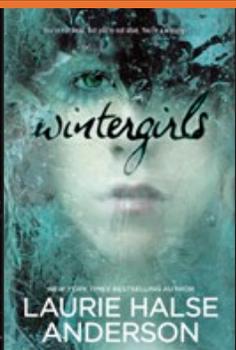
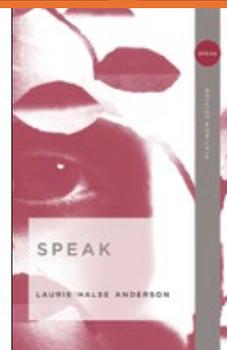
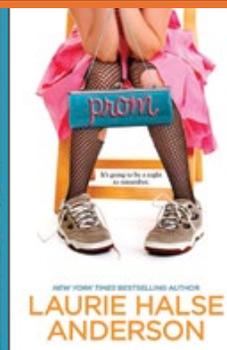
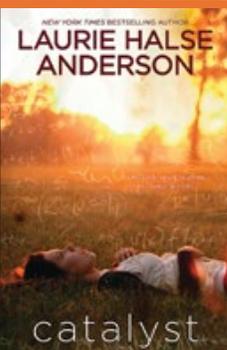
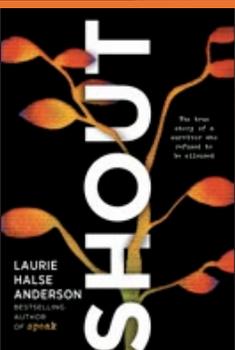


An Educator's Guide to

LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON

Building Resilience through Young Adult Literature

The activities in this guide align with
Common Core State Standards
and fit into the curriculum for grades 9-10



Dear Educator:

Laurie Halse Anderson's young adult novels offer a respectful and honest view of the difficult issues faced by teens today. Wildly popular with teens and teachers alike, Anderson's novels tackle deep, devastating topics such as rape, eating disorders, sexual abuse, violence, bullying, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Her newest book, *SHOUT*, is nonfiction. It is a memoir written for teens and inspired by the thousands of stories she's heard from her readers. Like her novels, *SHOUT* touches on painful traumas that are familiar to today's teens. Anderson's own story gives her readers perspective on why she wrote *Speak*, why readers responded so strongly to that novel, and how being brave enough to share stories can change lives.

Some time ago, an educator told Anderson that her teen novels are best described as "resilience literature," and we agree with that categorization for her novels and her memoir. Resilience is the ability to persevere or cope when faced with stress or trauma, and we demonstrate resilience when we adapt, stabilize, or reorganize after suffering. We invite you to see these books through that lens—a collection of stories that emphasizes the resilient nature of teenagers.

Here, the characters are not imaginings of the author's inspiration but a detailing of the author's experience. As Anderson writes in the introduction, "Finding my courage to speak up twenty-five years after I was raped, writing *Speak*, and talking with countless survivors of sexual violence made me who I am today. This book shows how that happened." Readers will appreciate the opportunity to better understand her novels, and they will leave feeling inspired to consider how they might make change in their own lives, communities, and schools.

We hope that this guide inspires more educators to tackle literature that addresses powerful and realistic challenges faced by modern teens. Why? When educators deeply discuss and reflect on difficult circumstances faced by an individual or fictional character it offers students an example of how to consider the larger world and how we all might improve it.

These books are extraordinary because they allow all readers—teens and adults, students and teachers—to rehearse their own imaginary responses to the traumas described in each novel. All schools should already have a system in place for reporting bullying, expressing concerns about a child's safety, and offering support for the mental well-being of their students. If you as an educator do not already know the resources available in your school or local area, this is an excellent reminder that you are a primary resource for students who might need help. Please consider posting hotline information for youths in crisis and promoting crisis intervention services in your local area.

A selection of national hotline services:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline—1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Veteran's Crisis Line—1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
- RAINN (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network)—www.rainn.org
- National Sexual Assault Hotline—1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ youth)—1-866-488-7386
- National Eating Disorder Association: nationaleatingdisorder.org

We believe that focused readings of these texts will help students identify resilience in the characters and themselves. Fictional characters can offer safe opportunities for teens to discuss issues that for too long have been unspeakably difficult to bring to light. Thank you for your continued support of our titles.

This guide was created by Heather Richard. Heather has been putting young adult literature at the core of her curriculum and professional life for nearly twenty years. She holds an MFA in Writing for Children, and has worked as a paraprofessional, an English teacher, a college instructor, and a high school librarian. When not working on her next book, she mentors teachers and underserved students as a school turnaround specialist for the Massachusetts State-wide System of Support.



A note to Educators about Trauma.

Estimates suggest that at least one in four students has faced significant trauma.

Anderson's work—*SHOUT* in particular—implores us to remember this as we work with youth. As a piece of nonfiction, *SHOUT* reminds us that these kinds of traumas are occurring in our communities, and that young people have faced horrible traumatizing events, like Anderson did. She offers us a clear reminder that bad things don't just happen to characters in books. Sexual violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, and bullying happen to real people—kids, students, and teachers, too.

Trauma can be a barrier to learning.

Students who have been exposed to trauma often have difficulty regulating emotions, paying attention, and forming healthy relationships, and this can impact their learning experiences. Often, the impact of trauma will cause students to act in ways that don't meet teacher expectations or standard behavior codes. Sometimes we respond with statements of frustration. "What's wrong with you!?" we might ask a disruptive child.

Students who have experienced trauma are not trying to aggravate, irritate, or disrespect the teacher. If teachers fail to recognize this fact, they are unlikely to provide an environment that supports students who face trauma. And remember—trauma-informed classrooms and schools benefit each and every student.

As educators, it is our responsibility to be prepared to support students who have been exposed to trauma. What can you do as a school? As a teacher?

Five Tips for Trauma-Informed Teaching:

1. Concentrate on the support you offer students, not the details of the trauma.

Educators don't need to know the details of the trauma in order to respond with empathy, flexibility, and connection. All traumatized students deserve your support, even if you don't know exactly what they went through. An adult's perception of how severe a described trauma might be should NEVER dictate how respectful or compassionate we are in response.

2. Never force autobiographical writing. Have students write to literature instead of from personal experience.

Well-meaning educators often hope that writing a personal essay or making a personal connection will empower students, but it can feel like a violation of privacy (or worse, it may re-traumatize students). Focus the work of your classroom on writing thoughtful responses to texts and citing evidence, even if it is evidence from a book with painful subject matter. A focus on creating the space to talk about difficult issues through literature without the need to disclose or expose a history of personal trauma is one way to ensure equitable access to learning regardless of students' personal history. This will keep your classroom a safe space for all. Use caution when asking students to write personal narratives. Remember, it took Laurie Halse Anderson decades to be ready to write *SHOUT*.

3. Identify resources.

Educators and school communities should be aware of local and national resources that can offer support for people in crisis (both for teens, and for the adults in their communities). Make connections between the literature you study and the services in your community. Have phone numbers and websites posted so people can privately reach out for support. Remind students that if they are in crisis, your role is to help them find support even if they don't want to share the details of their trauma with you. Students also need to know who they can contact for anonymous support if that's the next right step for them.

4. Build community by establishing social and emotional safety in your class and school.

Remind students that they are part of a learning community, and cultivate a sense of belonging. Create predictable classroom routines. Set clear boundaries for students and for yourself. Use norms for discussion, set expectations for discussing sensitive topics, and be prepared to hold the space for difficult conversations. Learn to recognize the signs of distress in your students, and be ready to offer support before, during, and after your lessons. Recognize when disruptions might be linked to trauma and avoid interpreting disruptions as a personal insult.

5. Practice and model good self care.

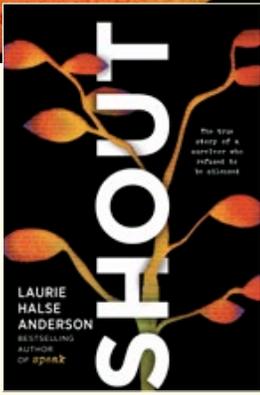
Remember, it is not only children who deal with trauma; many adults have faced significant traumas in their youth or more recently. Teaching about difficult subjects may be intense for educators, and you deserve support as you do the hard work of holding space for youth. Take good physical care of yourself. Make sure you are setting clear boundaries regarding your role as an educator. Refer students in crisis to appropriate professionals. Seek out support from colleagues or professionals when things are overwhelming.

The work you are doing to have real, thoughtful, important conversations with youth is some of the most important work happening in the world.

We hope this educator's guide will encourage you to give the message to your students: you are not alone.

As Laurie Halse Anderson says, "I walk with you."





SHOUT

Pre-Reading Activities: Brainstorming - Understanding Nonfiction

Moderate a brainstorming session about the following questions:

1. What is the main difference between nonfiction and fiction? What is the role of the author in each?
2. How would you define the following genres of books: memoir, biography, autobiography? What do they share in common, and what are the subtle differences?
3. How is a memoir or autobiography different from a journal or diary? Discuss the differences.
4. If you could read someone's memoir, whose would it be? It may already exist, or it may be one you wish you could read. Why does that person's story interest you?

Questions for reflection to guide group discussion or to use as written prompts

1. Why is the book divided into three parts? Why is the poem "Speak, Draft One, Page One" in Part One instead of Part Two?
2. Reread "librarian on the cusp of courage" and discuss her interaction with Anderson. Is the librarian courageous at all? What does courage look like for survivors of sexual violence? What does courage look like for teachers? For school communities? For authors and other artists?
3. Anderson repeatedly calls attention to the etymology and definition of words, and several poems explicitly compare words. Reread "two opposites of rape," "the word," and "shame turned inside out." How do these underscore her argument about the power of language?
4. Anderson ends her introduction with the following sentence: "This is the story of a girl who lost her voice and wrote herself a new one." Discuss what events or attitudes silenced her voice. Find evidence in the book that she has written herself a new voice.
5. Anderson says, "Danish is a tricky language," and explains how the pronunciation uses very different sounds than English. Why do you think she includes so many Danish words in her poems, particularly if she knows much of her audience is unlikely to speak the language?
6. Reread "cave painting." What turning point does this articulate in Anderson's writing life?
7. In the poem "Catalyst," the author describes how names in her novels are very carefully and deliberately chosen. Find examples when Anderson uses names in her poems. Then reflect on why so many of her poems never offer a name (or pseudonym) for her subjects.
8. What messages about words and sharing stories did Anderson receive as a child? Use poems such as "unclean" and "tsunami" to compare those childhood messages to her mature understandings about speaking one's truth.
9. Why do you think Anderson wrote *Speak* first instead of writing a memoir about her experiences with sexual violence?
10. The majority of *SHOUT* is written in free verse. What effect does reading this in poem form have on the reader? What is left out and what is emphasized through this form?
11. There are three pieces in Part One that use prose instead of free verse. Reread the numbered paragraphs in "amplified," "ninth grade: my year of living stupidly," and "chronological cartography." Why are these stories told in prose? How is the tone different than the free verse?



Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1. As an extension activity, have students explore other biographical works. Bring students to a library and show them the biography section. Have them use the online catalog of local or state libraries to find one of the following: memoir, biography, autobiography, or diary. Without reading the entire book, have students explore the text.
 - Identify text and other features of the books (photographs, style, chapter titles or headings, etc), and be ready to describe them to a classmate.
 - Analyze why this person's experience or life caught public interest. Look at the jacket copy, any endorsements, and use an online search to help you.
 - Present your book to your peers in a brief "book talk." Try to convince someone why a certain book may be worth reading.
2. A great story often is adapted into another art form. The novel *Speak* was adapted into a film and into a graphic novel. A biography, *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow, inspired Lin Manuel Miranda to write the musical *Hamilton*. Use this as a starting point to discuss how one story can be told in many different ways.
 - Research the creation of an adaptation. Seek out a book that was turned into a movie, research the creation of a graphic novel adaptation of a favorite story, or find art inspired by a book. Write a brief essay that explains how the creator was inspired to make their adaptation, and how it helps you see a different perspective on the original piece.
 - Can you identify another true story that would make a great adaptation? Which adaptation would you argue is most appropriate for that particular story? Which of Anderson's other books would you like to see adapted? Into what form?

Creative Connection Activities

Power of the Voice (emphasizing Speaking and Listening Skills)

SHOUT is about giving voices to those who have been silenced. To show students not only the power of language but also the power of the spoken word, organize a Poetry Slam. Begin by having several students study and recite the same poem from *SHOUT*. Note and discuss differences in how they read the same text aloud. Then have students identify a poem that they find meaningful, or support students in writing a poem themselves. Prepare for the poetry slam by having students practice reciting the poem for their classmates. Organize a whole-school activity where students can showcase their voices and the poems that inspire them.

The Things You Carried

Reread the poem "the things I carried to Denmark."

Using it as an example, write a list poem about the things a character in a favorite book might carry on a long or difficult journey.

Note: Refrain from demanding autobiography in this assignment. Know your students well if you'd like to have them write about their own experiences. Before you begin, review the tips for trauma informed teaching. Some students have had to pack up their belongings (e.g., refugees, immigrants, or children in temporary care), and an inventory can be particularly difficult for families who have lost homes to fire or disasters. Remember, the teaching goal is to give every student access to the learning task (writing a poem with a specific theme and topic), and accomplishing the task can often be less vulnerable if it is not based on personal experience.

Advice from Auntie Laurie

*too many grown-ups tell kids to follow their
dreams*

like that's going to get them somewhere

Auntie Laurie says follow your nightmares instead

cuz when you figure out what's eating you alive

you can slay it

—poem from *SHOUT*



Q&A with Laurie Halse Anderson

1. *Speak* was published in 1999 and 20 years later you're publishing *SHOUT*. What feels the same and what feels different in both the writing and publishing of these books?

They have been completely different processes. Writing *Speak* meant transmuting my emotional experience as a rape survivor into a fictional story. It took years until I was comfortable talking about how much of the book reflected my reality. (That *Speak* has become a part of the cultural conversation about sexual violence is due to two decades of brave educators handing the books to a generation of teenagers.)

SHOUT was written in fire.

I wrote it with the intention of telling my entire story and amplifying the stories of other survivors. Rape culture is a poisonous thread woven deeply into the fabric of American society. We need to honor all victims of sexual violence, hold the perpetrators accountable, and begin conversations about consent and healthy sexuality. I hope that *SHOUT* will be a part of that movement toward compassion and responsibility.

2. *SHOUT* is your first book in verse. Will you be writing in verse again or was it a special format for your memoir?

I've been writing poetry my whole life and I really enjoyed using the form for *SHOUT*. Verse allows the writer and reader to feast together on the marrow of truth. I'll write in verse again, I suspect, but only when the occasion demands it.

3. What is your hope for educators using *SHOUT* in the classroom?

I hope it opens up more conversations about sexual violence and rape culture, of course. It also creates opportunities for teens to learn how to use poetic forms to write about their own lives. My experiences with alcoholic parents, PTSD, depression, and sexual violence are shared by millions of our teenagers. I hope that when they see their truth in the pages of my book, it will validate what they are going through. I hope they will be empowered to shout about what is going on in their lives, and they will be heard.

4. As a writer, you've traveled to schools around the country. How has being a teenager changed over the years since *Speak* published and what makes you hopeful for the youth of today?

It is much harder to be a teen now than in 1999. Much of this is due to the rise of bullying on social media and the availability of pornography, which is how many young men learn about sex if their parents are not willing to talk about it.

On the other hand, our culture has become slightly more accepting of LGBTQIA teens, though this varies dramatically from region to region. There are also more opportunities and support for the development of friendships instead of all adolescent relationships being framed in terms of potential sexual interactions.

We've opened a few doors, but we have far to go.

5. Traveling abroad and in general has had a significant impact on your life, especially as a teen. Do you have any advice for teens when it comes to travel and writing?

Step One: Get your passport.

Step Two: Start working and saving.

I knew from a very early age that I wanted to travel and explore other cultures. My experiences in other countries opened my heart and mind and continue to shape me. Being intentional about goals is the best way to achieve them. Dream big, plan for action, make it happen.

6. If you were in high school now, what would you want your teachers to know?

I wish that my teachers would have looked beyond the surface of a girl who couldn't afford fashionable clothes. I wish they understood the signs of trauma. I wish they didn't support the jock-bro culture. I wish they would have been the leaders and the mentors we all needed them to be.

My French teacher and a gym teacher were the ones who saw me. I owe my life to them.



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES FOR LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON'S NOVELS



Brainstorming

Moderate a brainstorming session about the following questions:

- What is resilience?
- Identify and describe fictional characters in books, film, or television that you would argue are resilient.
- Who are some real-life people you know who are resilient?

First Impressions

Break into groups and discuss first impressions about the book.

If students selected a book from various options, ask them to defend or explain their choice. If the class is reading one book, tell them why you chose that specific book. Then, ask students to come up with first impressions about the book:

- What can you learn about the book from the title and cover art?
- What can you learn about the story from the jacket copy?
- Inside the book, read the author's dedication page. Can you draw any conclusions about the author from the dedication?
- Then look at the next page. What is there? Why is it there—what is its function? What do you think it means?
- What is this book going to address? How do you know?

Interconnected Web

Choose one social problem (see the list for examples):

- depression
- sexual assault or rape
- child abuse
- eating disorders
- bullying
- drug use
- reckless driving
- cutting/self-harm
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- teen pregnancy
- sexism
- traumatic brain injury
- family dysfunction

Write the word or phrase on the center of a whiteboard. Then ask students to come up, one by one, and identify something they think contributes to the problem. Have students draw a line connecting the two words/phrases. Continue until a variety of contributing factors have been identified, and a web has been created. When the web becomes sufficiently complicated, emphasize to students how the interactions between many factors contribute to the rise of a social problem.

Extension

Have students write on the following prompt, emphasizing that whether or not something is a problem is related to our own personal views. Use the following sentence starters:

"One of the most pressing issues faced by teenagers in our area is . . ."

"Some factors that contribute to that problem are . . ."

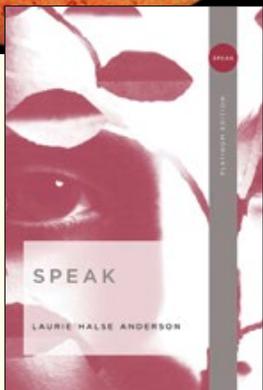
First Chapters

Give students the opportunity to read the first chapter.

Break into small groups and have students discuss the social problem that is the main concern of the novel they have chosen. How do they know? Cite specific textual evidence.

A major component of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard is that students will "Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently." Reading these novels independently correlates directly to the Reading Literature strand CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.10. For the purposes of this guide, all correlations to CCSS will be made at the 9-10 grade level.





SPEAK

The following questions may be used to guide group discussions or as written essay prompts. [Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. There are a number of references to fairy tales in this book. Discuss by citing moments that remind you of fairy tale stories.
2. What does it mean to be a good friend? Who are Melinda's friends? Is Melinda a good friend? Cite examples from the text to support your ideas.
3. Why does the author include report cards? What do the report card grades tell you about Melinda?
4. Internal conflict occurs within a character's psyche. At one point, Melinda says "I think it's some kind of psychiatric disorder when you have more than one personality in your head . . . The two Melindas fight every step of the way" (132). Discuss this conversation and other moments when Melinda is conflicted.
5. Melinda makes a list of "The First Ten Lies They Tell You in High School" (5-6) and "Ten More Lies They Tell You in High School" (148). Make your own list of ten lies they tell you in high school. Are they the same or different?
6. Review the conversation Melinda and Rachel have in the library. What kinds of things do they speak out loud? What kinds of things do they write to each other? Discuss why some things are easier to say and some things are easier to write.
7. Melinda's father says, "by the end of the summer, this tree will be the strongest on the block" (187). How can this apply to Melinda? Discuss the symbolism of what happens to this tree and compare it to what happens over the course of a year in Melinda's life.
8. Reread the last scene of the book. Discuss exactly what you think Melinda tells Mr. Freeman. Why does she feel moved to finally speak?

Creative Connections

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

Senior Year

Imagine Melinda as a teaching assistant. Write a scene where she gives students an assignment. What kind of assignment would she give? Look back at Mr. Freeman's introduction to the tree assignment (p. 12). Would her approach be similar or different?

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Correlates with CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 and 8 (research)

Banned Books Week: Each year, the American Library Association participates in Banned Books Week. Laurie Halse Anderson's books, including *Speak*, have been challenged in many different places. Research the history of censorship in libraries. Be ready to answer the following questions:

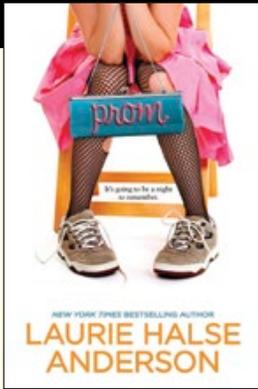
- What is the difference between "banning" and "challenging" a book?
- What are the reasons offered when challenging a book?
- Why does the American Library Association speak out against censorship?

Extension Activity: Choose one picture book that has been challenged in the past year. Read it, discuss as a group, and decide under which (if any) restrictions that book should be included in school libraries.

Art Speaks to Others

Mr. Freeman asks students to create art: "Say something, express an emotion, speak to every person who looks at it" (12). Choose one of the artists or authors mentioned in the book. Select one example of their work to research and analyze. Write a paper that offers biographical information on the creator, explains the creator's creative process, and analyzes its success as a piece of art. How does their art "speak to every person"?





PROM

Educators Note: Anderson's novel *Prom* is a different sort of resilience literature. In tone, *Prom* is much more humorous than the other novels covered in this guide. This book is an excellent option for exploring the same themes of flexibility, resilience, and personal strength, while not focusing on a protagonist who is depressed or wounded by his or her circumstances.

The following questions may be used to guide group discussions or as written essay prompts.

[Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. Describe the mood of the first few pages of the book. How does Anderson create the mood in this section? Try to discuss language, tone, setting, and characters.
2. How is this story like the familiar story of Cinderella? How is it different?
3. Teenagers often end up with lousy, low-paying jobs. Discuss the kinds of work teens do in this book and in your area. Is Ashley's job really that bad?
4. Many schools include the coronation of a court during prom—usually with a king and queen. What do you think of that practice? Write an editorial for the local newspaper that supports or discourages a prom court.
5. The relationship between Ashley and TJ changes over the course of the novel. Cite evidence that shows why it changed.
6. Laurie Halse Anderson often creates playlists for her novels. Consider the playlist at the end of *Prom*. What are the similarities between the songs on her list? What are your top ten songs for a prom? Find a willing teacher (or other adult, preferably a generation older), and ask what songs they remember enjoying at high school dances or proms.
7. Moving on from a less-than-ideal situation is one indicator of resilience. Discuss Ashley's decisions at the end of the book. Do you think they are wise choices? Who else "moves on" by the end of the book?
8. If you could give one piece of advice to Ashley Hannigan, what would it be? If Ashley could give one piece of advice to you (or to her little sister Adrian), what do you imagine it would be?

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Correlates with CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 and 8 (research)

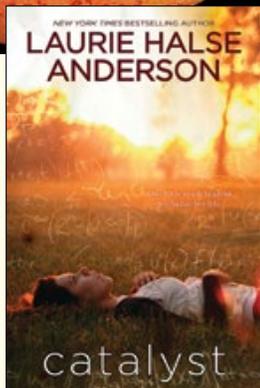
Every year high school students and their families spend enormous amounts of money on prom activities. Research the cost of local proms and how much people spend, on average, for this one activity. Do you think it is worth the cost? Why or why not?

Creative Connections—Narrative Writing

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

Wedding Bells! Use your imagination to write a scene from Junie and Charles's wedding from Ashley's perspective. Be sure to stay true to her tone and style as you describe the ceremony and party afterward.





CATALYST

The following questions may be used to guide group discussions or as written essay prompts. [Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. In the beginning of the novel, Kate's main concern is to get into her ideal college, MIT. Why does she want to go there? Why is her singular drive so problematic?
2. Early in the novel, Teri gets into a fistfight at school because she is being bullied. Why don't Kate and her friends step up in her defense? Is this the first time Teri has been teased? Why is it continuing?
3. Consider all the chapter titles. Choose several and explain why those words are used for that particular chapter. What does the last chapter title—Covalent Bonding—imply about Teri and Kate?
4. Teri and Kate keep important secrets. Discuss the different reasons each of them keeps those secrets.
5. After the accident, Kate doesn't want to talk, though Mitch encourages her to share how she feels. Instead, she, Sara, and Travis paint the room. Why? Why does Mitch leave? What do you think of Teri's response to the room?
6. When Kate finds the funeral director in her kitchen, she says, "He doesn't look like a funeral director. He looks normal. This is a terrifying thought. You could walk past somebody like this in the mall, and you would never know he handles dead bodies all day" (178). Why is this so disconcerting to Kate? Contrast how "normal" the funeral director is with how "abnormal" Kate's life has become.
7. Kate's image of Teri changes as the story goes along, and ultimately she compares Teri to titanium. How has their relationship changed? How has their relationship changed them?
8. Near the end of the book, Kate tells her brother, Toby, about their mother's funeral (see 200). How does this story help us understand Kate's obsession with running?
9. Discuss how the title of the book focuses the reader's attention on certain events. Why did Anderson choose this specific chemistry term as the title?
10. There are many hints that Teri is a strong, resilient, resourceful young woman. Discuss those traits and compare them to Kate. Who seems more capable? Why?

Creative Connections=Narrative Writing

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

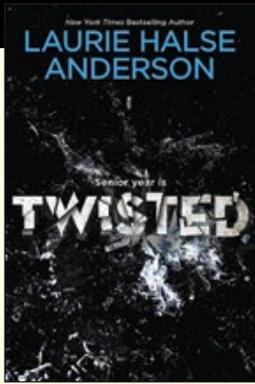
Good Kid, Bad Kid

In *Catalyst*, Kate often mentions the conflicting feelings between "Good Kate" and "Bad Kate." Using the contrasting viewpoint, write a list of things Kate might do, say, feel, or think as "Good Kate" vs. "Bad Kate." For an added challenge, create two lists for Teri as well.

Untold Story

Imagine a scene in which Teri tells Kate about the circumstances that led to her decision to pretend Mikey was her brother.





TWISTED

The following questions may be used to guide group discussions or as written essay prompts. [Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. In the beginning of the book, Tyler decides not to beat Chip at arm wrestling. Why? What does this tell us about Tyler? Contrast this to how he treats Chip in the cafeteria when he “returns” the blanket. How has Tyler changed?
2. Tyler makes a number of poor decisions. List as many as you can think of, and rank them in terms of seriousness. Try to figure out if he has made up for them by the end of the book. Be sure to discuss cheating in school, guns, and the initial crime of graffiti.
3. What is the role of gossip in this school?
4. Consider the scenes when Tyler describes the way students dress. Do you think a school should have a dress code? What are some of the problems and benefits of restricting clothing choices in schools?
5. Look at the list of excuses Tyler’s mom gives on page 56. What is she trying to do in this moment? Why is she sticking up for her husband? Her last comment is “you have to give him a chance.” Does Bill deserve another chance?
6. Fantasizing about committing crimes is very different than following through with it. What was Tyler’s plan A? What drove him to that kind of desperation? Why didn’t he follow through?
7. Describe how Tyler and his father are similar. How are they different?
8. The novel opens with Tyler on the roof, on his last day of work. Compare his interaction with Joe in the opening chapter to the one in chapter 65, where he is also on the school roof. How do these moments compare to chapter 58, where Tyler is working on the roof of his house and his father climbs up to give him pliers?
9. By the time he enters senior year, Tyler is big and strong. If that transformation happens before the book opens, what transformation occurs during the book?
10. At the end of *Twisted*, Laurie Halse Anderson writes about the many boys who sent her letters over the years. She explains that “This book [*Twisted*] is in no way based on any of the stories they shared, but I hope it echoes and reflects their struggles and triumphs.” What does she mean by that? In other words, why do you think she wrote this book?

Creative Connections–Narrative Writing

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

Write Chapter 79:

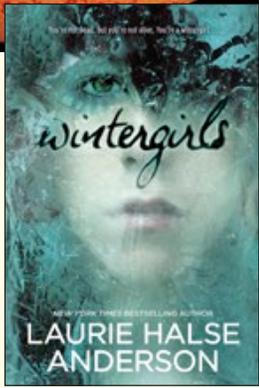
Write a scene that describes Tyler’s graduation day. What happens that day? How have his parents and sister changed? Tie your answer to what you know has happened in the book.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Correlates with CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 and 8 (research)

Tyler is given “community service” as part of his punishment for vandalism. Find out more about community service programs for juvenile offenders, and find information about “restorative justice” programs. What are their benefits and drawbacks?





WINTERGIRLS

The following questions may be used to guide group discussions or as written essay prompts. [Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. Two of the first things readers often notice about the format of *Wintergirls* are the crossed-out words and the numbers beside food references. Why does the author use these devices? What do they show the reader about Lia?
2. Cassie's mother is eager to talk to Lia, saying that she is "the only person who could help her understand why" (161). Does Lia really know why Cassie became bulimic? What does Lia mean when she says that the real question is: why not?
3. By the end of the novel, we know that Lia's point of view is distorted. How is her view of herself unrealistic? Is her view of other people also distorted? Provide evidence or examples from the text.
4. While Lia's parents are encouraging her to be healthy and eat normally, Jennifer, her stepmother, is concerned that Emma is becoming too plump. Why does Anderson choose to have this subplot in the story? How does this complicate Lia's life?
5. Near the end of the book, in a major turning point, Lia cuts herself, and Emma finds her. Lia says, "The screams of my little sister shatter the mirrors" (226). Explain the significance of that quote. What does she mean when she says the mirrors have shattered?
6. Lia is haunted by the secret that Cassie called her on the night she died. Near the end, Lia has one last conversation. Reread their conversation on page 273. They both apologize for different things. What regrets do they have? Could answering the phone have saved Cassie? Why or why not?
7. What is the key to Lia's survival? What makes her want to live?
8. The last line of the book is "I am thawing." The book is set in the winter months, and there are a number of references to the notion of being a "Wintergirl." In what physical and emotional ways are Lia (and Cassie) frozen?

Creative Connection-Narrative Writing

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

Little Bits of You

At one point, Lia says "bits of me are scattered all over town: the graveyard, school, Cassie's room, the motel, and standing in front of the sink in my mother's kitchen" (181). Write a poem or narrative that explains where "bits of you" are scattered. Be creative and use sensory details to describe what and where represents you.

The Unwritten Letter

Early in the book, Lia considers reaching out to Jennifer, saying "I open my mouth, but steam rushes in and boils away the words." Write three different letters from Lia's point of view: one to her parents, one to Cassie, and one to Emma. Adopt the strikethrough style, if you wish, but be sure to focus on the differences between those relationships.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Correlates with CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 and 8 (research)

While it is true that the characters who suffer in *Wintergirls* are female, there is growing concern about teenage boys and eating disorders. Research the incidence of eating disorders in teenage males. What are some of the unique challenges boys face if they have an eating disorder? Write an informational pamphlet and ask your school to distribute it to school nurses and coaches. Make posters to increase awareness of male eating disorders, and find and share local or national resources for the treatment of eating disorders.





THE IMPOSSIBLE KNIFE OF MEMORY

The following questions may be used to guide group discussion or as written essay prompts. [Discussion questions are all correlated to Reading Standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; and CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3. When used in discussion, they correlate to ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1,3,4,6; when used as essay prompts, they correlate to Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1.]

1. While the focus of this book is on Hayley's family problems, no one in the novel seems to be without significant challenges. What kinds of issues are the supporting characters facing? How well do they cope? Be sure to discuss Finn, Gracie, Trish, and Jonas, the boy who is bullied after the lockdown drill. Why is he in the story (see chapter 65)?
2. Early in the book, Hayley says a teacher has them compare a burly Odysseus to a wrinkled, small Mother Theresa. Research both figures. Who is the hero? Why? Then think about veterans who earn a Purple Heart in battle. What does that award symbolize? Are they heroes?
3. Roy says of Hayley's father: "His soul is still bleeding. That's a lot harder to fix than a busted-up leg or traumatic brain injury" (101). What does he mean? Support your answer by reviewing the sections of the book that reveal the memories that haunt Hayley's father. What do these memories explain about his behavior?
4. Hayley's father teaches her a number of strategies to employ when she is feeling stressed. Discuss how or why they might be successful. What strategies have you tried when you are stressed?
5. Hayley says there are only two types of people in the world: zombies and freaks. What does she mean? If you had to divide the world into types of people, how would you describe the world? Why?
6. In the novel, Hayley's father has a number of guns. Is he a responsible gun owner? Why or why not? Do the issues described in this novel change your views about gun rights?
7. Review Andy's discussion with the students in Chapter 70. Is his information correct? What do you think of his interpretation of the facts? What does he mean by "Politics beats out freedom, honor, and service every time" (282)?
8. The final chapter begins this way: "If this were a fairy tale, I'd stick in the 'Happily Ever After' crap right here" (365). Is the final chapter a fairy-tale ending? Why or why not?
9. Andy says, "Killing people is easier than it should be . . . Staying alive is harder" (282). Given that statement, what do you make of the end of the novel?

Creative Connections-Narrative Writing

Correlates with CCSS Writing Standard CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 (writing narratives)

1. Think about an important memory from your life. Write the story of that day with particular attention to visual details, the way Hayley remembers the visual details of her father's red swim shorts. If possible, find someone who was there and see if your recollection is the same.
2. Write a scene in which Hayley is struggling with math in college and has to call Finn for help. What does he say to help her? Is it easy or hard for her to accept his help?

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Correlates with CCSS ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7, 8, 9 (research)

Research the kinds of support systems available to veterans, particularly in America. What services seem to be available for people who are no longer on active duty? Are those sufficient? Share what you find with your classmates and your wider community.



Resilience Literature: Incorporating Informational Texts with Anderson's work

The Common Core State Standards encourage the reading of both literary and informational texts. The careful selection of informational texts to use with Anderson's fiction not only addresses the standard requirement that students read informational texts (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10) but also allows students to explore how different materials approach the same topics (see CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7—diverse formats and media).

The Power of Telling A Story

In her *New York Times* review of *The Impossible Knife of Memory*, Jo Knowles, another author of realistic fiction for youth, writes, "Anderson exposes the secret hurts far too many teenagers carry every day. Her protagonists battle their demons privately, sinking deeper into isolation and despair until they realize that the only way to survive is to tell their stories."

Reading: Read Knowles' entire review of the book.

Writing: Use this quote to develop a thesis about the book you read. Do you agree or disagree with Knowles's analysis that telling one's story is a key to survival? Why or why not? Does this apply only to the protagonist or does it also describe some of the other characters?

Extension Activity: Talk to other people about the Anderson books they read. Do all of Anderson's protagonists battle their demons privately? Is this consistent throughout Anderson's work?

(source: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/12/books/review/laurie-halse-andersons-impossible-knife-of-memory.html?_r=0)

News Publications

Reading: Have students use a major newspaper to seek out one recent article about one of the social issues in the book.

Writing: Write a letter to the newspaper encouraging more coverage of the specific topic, providing several reasons why attention is important at this time.

Extension Activity: Look at every issue from the last year of a major news magazine to notice what social problems receive headlines. Do the same for a year from the 1980s (or any other time period). Have the problems changed dramatically? What trends do you notice?

Promotional Materials

Reading: Have students select a specific outreach organization to investigate. Encourage students to find that organization's promotional materials: read websites, peruse written material, and watch videos that are used in the promotion of social service organizations.

Writing: Write a pamphlet or create a poster for a social services organization. Coordinate with the guidance department to make the material accessible to students.

Extension Activity: Make a 30-second Public Service Announcement that identifies the problem and offers real-life help for someone who is suffering (hotline, website, etc).

Film Studies

Multimedia: Select a film that is geared toward a teenage audience and addresses a social issue. Discuss how the film approaches the issue and whether or not it is effective in making the viewer believe that the problem is real and important. Compare it to the emotional power of the Anderson book.

Writing: What do you prefer? Have students write a persuasive essay on the power of film versus the power of a book. Require students to provide evidence from both the book and the film to support their contention.

Extension Activity: (Note: *Speak* was made into a film. Teachers may want to do a comparative analysis of the adaptation.) Explain to students that publishers do not currently use a standard rating system to categorize content in books, then ask students to articulate their understanding of the movie rating system. Provide students with the guidelines for the MPAA film rating guide, and explain your district's rules about films in classrooms. Using the text as their springboard, have students argue which rating the book would get if it were made into a film. Have students point to certain scenes to prove their point. Vote on whether or not the school would let a film with the same content be aired in the classroom. If the answer is no, why are films and books so different?



Comparing texts

The following questions can be used in discussions or as essay prompts. Each requires that two different texts be compared, so these are excellent resources for classes utilizing literature circles.

Survival: A Theme

In each of Laurie Halse Anderson's books, the main character may be described as a survivor. Using specific evidence from the text, explain what the protagonist endured, how the character managed to survive, and how they change over the course of the text. Focus on the character's relationships with others as well as how he or she changed internally.

Battling Depression

Many of the characters in Anderson's books consider suicide: Tyler, the main character in *Twisted*; Lia, the main character in *Wintergirls*; Andy and his daughter Hayley in *The Impossible Knife of Memory*. The majority of people with suicidal ideation (suicidal thoughts) do not follow through on them.

Compare and contrast any two characters who have suicidal ideation (from the same or different texts).

Look back at the moments in the story when they seem most vulnerable and depressed.

Why do each of them consider suicide?

Why don't they follow through?

Who or what seems to offer each of them hope?

Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.

College Planning

College is a topic of discussion in every book by Anderson. Discuss the different books and compare the different characters' college plans. Which is most similar to your plans for future education? Be specific about the similarities and differences in your college plans.

Writing: Reflect on the purpose of the college essay. Why do colleges ask for a writing sample in the form of a college essay? What does a college essay reveal about a potential student?

Extension Activity: Use the internet (or *The Impossible Knife of Memory*, p 197) to search out examples of prompts that colleges use for their application essays. Choose one carefully and write an essay that you think might get you into the college of your dreams, even if you have other plans for your future. If you can't find one you like, propose an alternative question to the teacher and write the essay answer.



// In several of my books, I try to connect to other pieces of literature. Hopefully these references provide insight into the story, and inspire deeper discussions.

In *Speak*, I mention *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* several times. And Melinda has to read *Scarlet Letter*.

***Prom* is connected thematically to the familiar *Cinderella* story.**

With *Twisted*, I used the last name of Miller as an homage to Arthur Miller. In my mind, Tyler is the literary grandson of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*.

***Wintergirls* rests on the myth of Persephone and Demeter: the daughter is stolen away into hell, the mother plunges the world into winter as she searches for her girl.**

In *The Impossible Knife of Memory*, the journey of returning vets and the struggles they overcome is that of *The Odyssey*. //



LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON

is a *New York Times* bestselling author whose writing spans young readers, teens, and new adults. Combined, her books have sold more than eight million copies. She has been nominated three times for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Two of her books, *Speak* and *Chains*, were National Book Award finalists, and *Chains* was short-listed for the prestigious Carnegie Medal. Laurie was selected by the American Library Association for the 2009 Margaret A. Edwards Award and has been honored for her battles for intellectual freedom by the National Coalition Against Censorship and the National Council of Teachers of English.

In addition to combating censorship, Laurie regularly speaks about the need for diversity in publishing and is a member of RAINN's National Leadership Council. She lives in Philadelphia, where she enjoys cheesesteaks while she writes. Find out more about Laurie by following her on Twitter at @halseanderson, Instagram at halseanderson, Facebook at writerlady, and Pinterest at halseanderson or by visiting her website, madwomanintheforest.com.



LET THE CRITICS **SPEAK** FOR THEMSELVES:

"If you found *Speak* to be of value,
you will find *SHOUT* to be A REVELATION!"

—Rob Bittner, educator and YA literature specialist on *SHOUT*

★ "Anderson explores the complicated nature of perception and memory, and how individuals manage to carry on after experiencing the worst . . .

ONE OF ANDERSON'S STRONGEST

and most relevant works to date."

—*School Library Journal* on *The Impossible Knife of Memory*

★ "Anderson . . . stretches her wings by offering . . . a male protagonist . . . one of the most poignant and gripping scenes in young-adult literature."

—*Kirkus* on *Twisted*

"Anderson's novels . . . speak for the still-silent among us, and force all of us to acknowledge the real and painful truths that are too dangerous to ignore."

—*The New York Times* on *The Impossible Knife of Memory*

★ "**IN A STUNNING FIRST NOVEL,**

Anderson uses keen observations and vivid imagery to pull readers into the head of an isolated teenager."

—*Publishers Weekly* on *Speak*

"Once again, Anderson's taut,

CONFIDENT WRITING

will cause this story to linger long after the book is set down."

—*School Library Journal* on *Twisted*

★ "Anderson illuminates a dark but utterly realistic world . . . this is

NECESSARY READING."

—*Booklist* on *Wintergirls*



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