



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Speak

based on the book by  
Laurie Halse Anderson

Written by  
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR  
LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON

Laurie Halse Anderson was born in upstate New York. Her maiden name, Halse, is often mispronounced; it rhymes with waltz.

Laurie was turned on to writing in the second grade during a haiku lesson. She read all the time, enjoying historical fiction, science fiction, and fantasy more than any other genres. She also had an interest in foreign cultures and languages. In high school, Laurie moved out of her parents' house and lived on a pig farm in Denmark where she was an exchange student.

After her high school graduation, Laurie worked for minimum wage in a clothing store, where she quickly discovered she needed to go college. She attended Onondaga Community College for two years, working on a dairy farm milking cows during that time. She later transferred to Georgetown University and graduated with a degree in Languages and Linguistics. Laurie got married after graduating from college; she and her husband then had two daughters.

Laurie never thought of writing as a career, but later became a freelance reporter. Though she was sent several rejection letters, she eventually published some nonfiction and children's storybooks.

In 1999, Laurie published *Speak*, which won several awards. She then published *Fever 1793*, several books that are part of the *Wild at Heart* series, *Prom*, *Catalyst*, which takes place at Merryweather High and references Melinda in her sophomore year at school, and *Twisted*, which was published in 2007.

Recently, Laurie and her husband divorced; she is now remarried and part of a great extended family.

## INTRODUCTION

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *Speak*. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to a symbol used throughout the novel—a tree. Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain how the activity relates to the book they are about to read. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

There is a **group theme project** in this unit. This project requires students to conduct research on the issue of rape, in hopes of raising awareness about it.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or expressing personal opinions. The first writing assignment mimics an essay Melinda and her classmates do in their English class. The second writing asks students to persuade the school board to increase rape and sexual harassment education in schools, and the third gives students several roles in which to write from.

There is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students must read nonfiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about their themes in our world today.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES - *Speak*

1. Through reading Laurie Halse Anderson's novel *Speak*, students will look at the two major symbols—trees and silence— and discuss their roles in the novel.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will make connections with the material in the text and apply the lessons learned to their lives.
4. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Speak* as they relate to the author's theme development.
6. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
7. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
  - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas  
Note: Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
  - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
  - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
  - d. To encourage logical thinking
  - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *Speak*

Date Assigned	Pages Assigned	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment #1</i> Welcome to Merryweather High-Dinner Theater	
	<i>Assignment #2</i> Blue Roses-Third Marking Period	
	<i>Assignment #3</i> Death of the Wombat-My Report Card	
	<i>Assignment #4</i> Exterminators-Oprah, Sally Jessy, Jerry, and Me	
	<i>Assignment #5</i> Real Spring-Final Cut	

UNIT OUTLINE - *Speak*

<p><b>1</b> Introduction Activity  Project Assignment  PVR1</p>	<p><b>2</b> Study Quest. 1  Review Vocab 1  KWL Chart</p>	<p><b>3</b> Review Key Literature Terms  Review Works Cited and Parenthetical Documentation  PVR2</p>	<p><b>4</b> Study Quest. 2  Review Vocab 2  Writing Assignment #1</p>	<p><b>5</b> Symbolism Art Project  PVR3</p>
<p><b>6</b> Study Quest. 3  Vocab Review 3  Oral Reading Evaluation  PVR4</p>	<p><b>7</b> Speaker</p>	<p><b>8</b> Writing Assignment #2</p>	<p><b>9</b> Study Quest. 4  Vocab Review 4  Figurative Language Activity</p>	<p><b>10</b> Nonfiction Assignment  PVR5</p>
<p><b>11</b> Study Quest. 5  Vocab Review 5  Writing on the Bathroom Stall</p>	<p><b>12</b> Writing Assignment #3</p>	<p><b>13</b> Movie</p>	<p><b>14</b> Movie Cont.  Discussion on similarities and differences between book and movie</p>	<p><b>15</b> Extra Discussion Quest.</p>
<p><b>16</b> Extra Discussion Quest. Cont.  Letter to the Author</p>	<p><b>17</b> Project Presentations  Unit Evaluation</p>	<p><b>18</b> Vocabulary Review</p>	<p><b>19</b> Unit Review</p>	<p><b>20</b> Unit Test</p>

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R= Read



## LESSON ONE

### Objectives

1. To introduce the *Speak* unit
2. To distribute books, study questions, and other related materials
3. To preview the vocabulary and study questions for Assignment #1
4. To begin Assignment #1

Note: The level of your students will determine how involved you want to make this introductory activity. You may simply want students to draw a picture of a tree to display around your classroom, or you may want to have students plant their own seeds and care for the plants over the course of the unit, watching them grow like Melinda does over the course of the novel. You can tell students to bring in a package of seeds and a small pot/cup from home, or you can purchase all materials and have them for students. (*If students are bringing their own materials, be sure to have extras for those who forget.*)

### Activity #1

Ask students to think about the growth of a tree. Direct students think about the entire process, from the initial planting of the seed through the end of the tree's life. Have students think about the dangers and problems that can occur over the course of the tree's life (uprooted, cut down, damage from extreme weather, diseased limbs, etc). Once you have talked in general about the life of a tree, ask students to list qualities of a tree (strong, survive almost anything, constantly growing, changes with the seasons).

### Activity #2

Next, give each student a small pot or cup filled with soil. Distribute seeds to the class, explaining the proper care of the plants (water and sunlight). You may want to appoint a time each day (the first two minutes or last two minutes of class) for students to water their plants and check on the progress. Allow a few minutes for students to label their pots/cups and plant their seeds.

Transition: Once you have discussed the characteristics and life of trees, tell students they are about to begin reading *Speak*. Show them the front of the novel, pointing out that there is a tree on the cover. Tell students that over the course of the novel several references to trees will be made. Explain to them that trees are a major symbol used through the novel and will be used to represent Melinda's growth and life.

### Activity #3

Distribute the Raising Awareness project and rubric. Discuss the directions in detail. *Note: Some schools may allow for these posters to be displayed around the school to raise awareness about rape. If your school allows this, select your best posters to hang in popular areas around school. If not, display the posters in your room.*

### Activity #4

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *Speak*  
Writing to express personal opinions

PROMPT

Melinda and her classmates had to write an essay in their English class. The assignment was to write an essay about “The Best Lost Homework Excuse Ever.” Your assignment is to write a creative and detailed essay about the best lost/late homework excuse you can think of.

PREWRITING

Think about all the excuses you or your friends have ever given your teacher for lost or late homework. What excuses were the most creative? What excuses worked or made the teacher laugh? Lost and late homework is often the topic of television shows and movies as well. Think about the shows you watch and some of the creative excuses you’ve seen on screen. What excuses were the most detailed?

Write down some possible ideas for your excuse. Remember, a good, creative excuse will have several steps to it. Think about the entire course of events that led up to your homework being late or lost.

DRAFTING

This essay should be written in first person. It will have an introductory paragraph where you will want to mention the assignment that is late and the class/teacher you are explaining the excuse to.

The body of your essay should include several paragraphs explaining all the details of the excuse. When a new problem occurs, begin a new paragraph. Try to separate the steps that lead up to the homework being lost or late into their own paragraph. Remember, a good excuse will contain several attempts at getting the assignment done, or finding the homework, but with a new problem that prevents this from happening in each paragraph.

Your essay should have a conclusion that contains the end to your story. This should include the last step—your arrival at school. You will also want to mention the assignment, teacher, and class again to remind the reader of what it was that was late.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your composition, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary. Ask your classmate what he/she thought of each of the characters/events you chose for your assignment.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.