



 Prestwick House

# Activity Pack

## SPEAK

BY LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON



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Written by Amy Clayton

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Reading****Top Ten**

**Objective:** Listing ten reasons for the title

**Activity**

*Speak* is a book about growing up. The main character Melinda starts her freshman year at Merryweather High School feeling completely alone. She has a hard time trusting anyone or anything, including herself.

The novel is full of lies: lies Melinda is told, lies Melinda witnesses, lies Melinda tells herself and others. Melinda, the protagonist and narrator, points out several of them in one of her Top Ten lists. She lists out the “The Top Ten Lies They Tell You in High School” on page 6 during her freshman orientation assembly. However, this book is ultimately about the truth.

With a partner, come up with a top ten list of reasons Laurie Halse Anderson titled the novel *Speak*. Your reasons should be thoughtful and written in complete sentences. Also, consider with your partner what ‘speak’ has to do with truth and lies. Write out your list and share them with the class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Marking Period: Spotlight/Sanctuary****Similes and Metaphors**

**Objective:** Charting similes and metaphors

**Activity**

Part of what makes Laurie Halse Anderson's writing so likable is the descriptive language she gives her narrator. Melinda has a unique way of seeing the world around her; in many ways her world, at the moment, is not all that different from Mr. Freeman's half a globe.

Keep track of the similes and metaphors Melinda uses throughout the book using the chart that follows. Once you identify the simile or metaphor, explain what is being described and why it is or isn't a good comparison. We have completed one for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Marking Period: Heathering****Writing**

Objective: Changing perspective

**Activity**

Since the novel is written in first person, we only hear Melinda's side of things. In this chapter she shares with the reader her opinion of Heather: "She is happy, driven, aerobically fit. She has a nice mom and an awesome television. But she's like a dog that keeps jumping into your lap."

Imagine you are observing their exchange as a fly on the wall. What would your opinion of Melinda and Heather be? Does Heather really seem as needy as Melinda describes her? Why or why not? How would you describe their interaction? What is each girl's tone of voice like? What kind of body language do you notice between the two? Write out one to two paragraphs of your observations in first person, be descriptive.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Marking Period: Halloween/Name Name Name****Collage****Objective:** Creating a character collage**Activity**

At the start of the novel, the protagonist/narrator was nameless, and then she named herself Outcast. Eventually, Melinda shares her name with the reader. Think about these phases of Melinda. How has Laurie Halse Anderson slowly been developing this protagonist? In what ways has Melinda changed from the beginning of the novel? In what ways has she not?

With a small group of students, you are going to chart the progression of Melinda throughout the four parts of the novel. Select the shortest student in your group to be the model. Your teacher will give each group a large piece of banner paper. The shortest group member should lay face up on the paper while the group loosely traces his or her outline. This will become your Melinda.

Divide your life sized Melinda into four equal sections. Using images and words from magazines, newspapers, and your own original drawings, create a collage that represents Melinda's state of mind in this section of the novel.

Hang the Melinda's up around the classroom and add to them after each part of the book. Take note of any changes that occur in colors that are used, or words, and images selected.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Marking Period: Closet Space****Poetry**

Objective: Reading poetry

**Activity**

Maya Angelou's image keeps Melinda company in the janitor's closet. She likes having Maya's strong, sweet face looking down upon her while she works on cleaning the place up. The poster is from the school library and was taken down due to the censorship of Maya Angelou's books.

Maya Angelou's work speaks to many people who have struggled in their lives. Her poems and autobiographical accounts often address abuse, sexual experience, poverty, feminism, and discrimination.

Read three Maya Angelou poems: "Alone," "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," and "Still I Rise." Underline images that remind you of Melinda. Why do you think Laurie Halse Anderson would use Maya Angelou as a figure for Melinda to feel comforted by?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Marking Period: First Amendment/Giving Thanks****Debate****Objective:** Debating immigration**Activity**

Immigration is often debated. Mr. Neck and David Petrakis stand on opposite sides of the issue. Unfortunately, in class, Mr. Neck does not do a great job at structuring the debate. Anger and a desire to be in control through intimidation and sarcasm seem to be what motivate him. Many authority figures use these techniques to win arguments, but bullying is not the best way to get a point across.

With your classmates, conduct a debate about immigration. Divide the class into two groups, Pro immigration and Con, or against immigration. In your teams collect your evidence and organize your ideas.

Each side will have a chance to present. After group shares their argument, each side will be allowed to rebut, or disagree with, the opinions of the other team. The rest of the class will vote to determine a winner.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Marking Period: Winter Break/Hard Labor****Theme****Objective:** Conveying themes**Activity**

In the novel, Laurie Halse Anderson is constantly making the reader focus on Melinda's mouth. We keep waiting for Melinda to use her mouth to communicate what is going on with her, but instead we are bombarded with images of her torn chapped lips, and even her bleeding lips.

List various themes and motifs that you can identify on the top lip. After you have included the themes and motifs write a short paragraph on the bottom lip about one theme/motif that is present in the novel.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Third Marking Period: Escape/Code Breaking****Symbolism**

Objective: Understanding symbolism

**Activity**

Hester Prynne tries desperately to get the students in her English class to understand the symbolism behind Hester Prynne's scarlet letter. In the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the young woman, Hester Prynne, is persecuted by her community for committing the sin of adultery. She is forced to wear a scarlet letter "A" on her chest until she reveals the man she had the affair with. Hester Prynne refuses and braves the torment of the community.

Of course, the scarlet letter is a *symbol* of Hester Prynne's sin. With a partner, discuss why Melinda feels the letter S would be an appropriate symbol for her internalized 'mistake.' Brainstorm together another letter or object that you feel would better serve as a symbol for what Melinda is feeling. Share your ideas with the class.