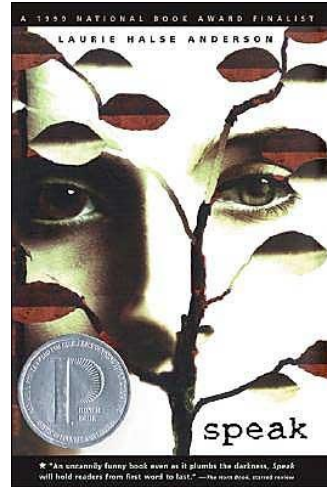


Speak



ISBN-13	978-0312674397
ISBN-10	0-312674392
Author	Laurie Halse Anderson
Publisher	Square Fish
Copyright	1999
Reprint Edition	2011
Synopsis	Melinda Sordino is a social outcast during her freshman year in high school. Her parents, friends, and teachers are clueless about her post-traumatic stress. Supported by her art teacher, Melinda starts a slow healing process.
Content Warning	The protagonist suffers trauma following a rape by a senior student at a party. The book contains a rape scene.
Themes	Trauma; bullying

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 1

Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 9

“It is easier not to say anything. Shut your trap, button your lip, can it. All that crap you hear on TV about communication and expressing feelings is a lie. Nobody really wants to hear what you have to say.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Melinda is desperate to find a least one friend at school. Write one paragraph about the importance of having a friend in high school.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 2

Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, pp. 30–31

“For a solid week, ever since the pep rally, I’ve been painting watercolors of trees that have been hit by lightning. I try to paint them so they are nearly dead, but not totally. Mr. Freeman doesn’t say a word to me about them. He just raises his eyebrows. One picture is so dark you can barely see the tree at all.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Contrast the mission of the Marthas to perform good deeds with their unkind attitude towards Melinda (e.g., calling her “creepy”). Write 2–3 paragraphs about the importance of starting with the school community when working to make a better world and improve the well-being of others.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 56

“David: The Constitution does not recognize different classes of citizenship based on time spent living in the country. I am a citizen, with the same rights as your son, or you. As a citizen, and as a student, I am protesting the tone of this lesson as racist, intolerant, and xenophobic.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Melinda admires David Petrakis’s actions. In your opinion, why does she admire David’s behavior? Write 2–3 paragraphs about ways in which students can inspire other students as well as teachers when they show concern for the welfare of others and promote First Amendment principles.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 72

"I almost tell them right then and there. Tears flood my eyes. They noticed I've been trying to draw. They noticed. I try to swallow the snowball in my throat. This isn't going to be easy. I'm sure they suspect I was at the party. Maybe they even heard about me calling the cops. But I want to tell them everything as we sit there by our plastic Christmass tree while the *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* video plays."

In your analysis of the paragraph address the following points:

- Why did Melinda need a sign that her parents notice her before telling them what happened at the party?
- In your opinion, what would happen if she told them?

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Melinda notes that words – spoken or written – are hard work. Write 1–2 paragraphs about the challenge of expressing oneself, especially when one feels stressed, depressed, or anxious.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 116

“Do they choose to be so dense? Were they born that way? I have no friends. I have nothing. I wonder how long it takes to ride a bus to Arizona.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Melinda does not talk to her parents, principal, or guidance counselor because she does not trust them. Write 1–2 paragraphs about trust as a necessary condition for openly talking with other people.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 128

“Are they talking about me? They’re certainly laughing enough. I chomp my sandwich and it barfs mustard on my shirt. Maybe they’re planning the next Project. They could mail snowballs to the weather-deprived children in Texas. They could knit goat-hair blankets for shorn sheep.”

Define and address at least one of the following terms in your analysis of the paragraph:

- Hypocrisy
- Sarcasm
- Helplessness

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Melinda feels that she cannot find her place in the world. Her parents’ marriage is falling apart. She has lost her best friends. And, she is unpopular at school. Nevertheless, she tells herself to stay normal, attend all classes, and stop hiding in the janitor’s closet. What inner strength enables her to keep going? Write 2–3 paragraphs about inner strength and how it can help people who suffer.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 153

“Mr. Freeman: You are getting better at this, but it’s not good enough. This looks like a tree, but it is an average, ordinary, everyday, boring tree. Breathe life into it. Make it bend—trees are flexible, so they don’t snap. Scar it, give it a twisted branch—perfect trees don’t exist. Nothing is perfect. Flaws are interesting. Be the tree.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

David told Melinda that she would not make a difference unless she speaks up for herself. In your opinion, should Melinda speak up about what happened to her at the party? Should she speak up about how blind her school was to her suffering? Write 2–3 paragraphs presenting your argument.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Key Paragraph, p. 198

“The tears dissolve the last block of ice in my throat. I feel the frozen stillness melt down through the inside of me, dripping shards of ice that vanish in a puddle of sunlight on the stained floor. Words float up.”

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Write a concluding paragraph about the importance of paying attention to others who seem to display signs of depression or anxiety. What is the ethical and moral obligation of adults and teens to show kindness, understanding, compassion, and support?

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Speak, Final Writing Assignment



Write an Argumentative Essay

Your final writing product will argue that it is critical that all people – teachers, school administrators, students, parents, and others in the community – will be able to notice signs of trauma and be kind to victims of trauma.

The essay will discuss how negative changes in people's behavior – changes that cannot be easily explained and last more than one month – can be signs of trauma. These changes can include avoiding social activities, neglecting one's physical appearance, lack of school engagement, and negative mood.

Begin your essay with a well-defined thesis statement or the key idea you will discuss and support with examples. Use the paragraphs you have written about the book, *Speak*, to provide examples and supportive arguments. The essay should be concise – avoid repetition and redundancy in statements.

Use the following checklist to evaluate your work:

- The essay begins with a clear argument.
- The essay provides examples to clarify on the reasoning.
- The essay includes good transition words and phrases (see below).
- The essay thoughtfully presents counterarguments, such as challenges to implementing the idea.
- There is a topic in each paragraph.
- There is a logical progression from one paragraph to the next.
- The essay ends with a strong conclusion.

Create a timeline to organize your writing schedule:

What	When
Create a thesis statement	
Create an outline	
Collect and organize ideas and facts	
Write an introduction paragraph	
Write the body paragraphs	
Write a conclusion paragraph	
Evaluate and edit	
Submit a rough draft	
Revise based on feedback	
Submit a final draft	