

LEADS

Lesson Plan

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Class Act



WITS Connection: Look & Listen Explore Act Did it work Seek Help
points of view

Story Summary:

Class Act is the story of how eighth grader Drew Ellis navigates the pressures of attending a prestigious school where a divide exists between more and less privileged classmates, all while he tries to learn to accept himself. As Drew confronts challenges with new and old friendships, he tries to find a way for everyone to see and accept one another, and himself.



Class Act

Pre-Reading

Questions:

1. How do you handle a friendship when it gets rocky?
2. How do you feel about being in the spotlight?
 - a. Why do you like it, or not?
3. What does the word stereotype mean to you?
4. Do you ever feel like you must or want to act in a way that is not true to you?
 - a. In what types of situations have you felt this way?
 - b. How does this make you feel?
5. What does having a positive self-image mean to you?
 - a. How can having a positive self-image help someone in difficult moments?
 - b. How can we help to foster positive self-image in ourselves and others?



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While Reading

Questions:

1. The night before school starts, Drew tells his grandma “I just can’t be myself at this school. I gotta be MORE” (p. 8).
 - a. In what ways is Drew trying to be more than himself? Is he the only one?
 - b. How have you felt pressure to be more or less than yourself at school?
2. When Andy shows up at school still green from Halloween, Drew and Jordan have different reactions (pp. 71-73). What was your reaction?
 - a. How would you respond to Andy’s embarrassment even though he’s often a bully?
3. After spending time at Liam’s house, Drew gets in a fight with his childhood friends and ghosts Liam. Why does his friend Wendell get so angry? Why does Drew get so angry? Why do you think Drew ghosts Liam?
4. What does Drew’s grandma mean when she tells him “not to be afraid of failing, be afraid of regret” (p. 173)?
 - a. When have you faced the fear of failing? How did you overcome it?
5. How does the conversation with “Pigmund Freud” help Drew?
6. What finally resolves the tension in Drew and Liam’s relationship?
 - a. How is it different than the tension between Drew and Andy? Is there a way for them to repair their relationship too?



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Activity:

1. Return to the comic Jordan drew on pp.52-53 about his similarities and differences with his friend Drew.
2. Instruct students to draw their own comic about some of the interests and characteristics they share with a friend, and the ways in which they are different/compliment one another.
3. Encourage students to swap comics with a partner and discuss what they created.
4. Lead a discussion with the class about why commonalities AND differences are important in our relationships.

Post-Reading

Questions:

1. Drew gets a lot of attention from Ashley and Mr. Roche throughout the story. How does he feel about it? Why?
 - a. How can seemingly positive things like compliments become negative or cross boundaries?
 - b. How could Drew (or his friends) use LEADS to respond to some of the unwanted attention he gets?
2. Feeling seen is a recurring theme in this story. For example, Drew feels invisible after leading the sister school tour, and Jordan feels overlooked because of his light skin.
 - a. What are some other ways that characters feel like they are and aren't seen?
 - b. Why is feeling seen important?
3. Maturity is another theme of the story, and something Jordan spends a lot of



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time worried about.

- a. What does this story teach us about maturity? (Being mature is more than being tall and smelling bad after gym class)
 - b. What does maturity look like for Drew?
 - c. What does it look like for you?
4. A “stereotype threat” is when a person fears they are confirming a stereotype about their social group. For example, Drew doesn’t want to play basketball because he feels like he is expected to play just because he is Black.
- a. Why does Drew feel he must avoid conforming to a stereotype even if it means not playing a sport he loves?
 - b. Where else does stereotype threat appear in the story?
5. Mr. Roche makes a lot of mistakes in the story. Can people who are genuinely trying to be inclusive and to change the system make missteps? Does the fact that he is willing to learn from his mistakes make a difference?

Activity:

1. Divide the class into small groups.
2. Instruct each group to pick a page in the story and discuss how graphic novels use both words and images to tell the story using the following prompts:
 - a. What type of information do you learn from the words?
 - b. What type of information do you learn from the images?
 - c. How do the words and images work together to communicate the story?
 - d. Find an example in the story of an image where the character’s body language or expression shows us something about who they are?
3. Lead a discussion with the class about their reflections on each question.
 - a. Why is it important to be aware of our body language and expressions?