

RED BANK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

9th Grade Summer Required Reading

Speak

By Laurie Halse Anderson

Reflective Questions

Summary of book (Kirkus Reviews):

At the end of the summer before she enters high school, Melinda attends a party at which two bad things happen to her. She gets drunk, and she is raped. Shocked and scared, she calls the police, who break up the party and send everyone home. She tells no one of her rape, and the other students, even her best friends turn against her for ruining their good time. By the time school starts, she is completely alone, and utterly desolate. She withdraws more and more into herself, rarely talking, cutting classes, ignoring assignments, and becoming more estranged daily from the world around her. Few people penetrate her shell; one of them is Mr. Freeman, her art teacher, who works with her to help her express what she has so deeply repressed. The plot is gripping and the characters are powerfully drawn, but it is its raw and unvarnished look at the dynamics of the high school experience that makes this a novel that will be hard for readers to forget.

Awards:

National Book Award Finalist, 1999

Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in YA Literature Honor Book, 1999

Students:

Please answer the following questions as you read the book. Each answer should be typed. **They must be answered by the first Monday of the school year.**

1. Alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of two or more adjacent words or syllables. Find examples of alliteration in the novel as you read.
2. Which of Melinda's teachers in the novel would you consider good teachers? Which ones display odd characteristics? List some of each and explain why the teacher is good or odd. It may be possible to put a single teacher on both lists.
3. Based on Melinda's experiences, what tips might you offer an incoming high school freshman?
4. In three columns list five words each to describe you, Melinda, and Marjane, the main character in Persepolis. Do you see any common characteristics? In what ways are you three very different characters? In what ways do your life situations intersect or vary?