

**RED BANK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
ENGLISH 1 SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**

Speak

Critical Reading Questions

Directions: Answer each question with a well-developed paragraph (1/2 page). You should cite specific examples from the book and use page numbers to identify those examples. This work must be typed.

1. Define symbolism. Why is the tree Melinda draws throughout the story symbolic? What do its many renditions represent?
2. Discuss at least three relationships Melinda has throughout the story. How does each relationship compare to the last? Why are the people involved in each relationship important to the plot?
3. Throughout the novel, Melinda searches for her identity. Describe the ways in which she changes throughout the story. Do you think she ultimately becomes comfortable with herself? Does she have a clear identity toward the end?
4. Why did Laurie Halse Anderson choose the title? How does Melinda's story fit the title? Why does Melinda act the way she does throughout the novel?
5. Does Melinda represent the typical teenager entering high school? Why or why not? What are some transitions Melinda experiences?
6. How does Melinda respond to Andy Evans? What does his presence do to Melinda physically, emotionally, and mentally? How does she deal with him in the beginning? How does her approach ultimately change? What instigates this change?

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**Speak
Project Preparation**

To bridge the gap between the first work you will read as freshmen, The Odyssey by Homer, and Speak, you must complete the following tasks as you read Speak.

1. An odyssey may be defined as a long series of wanderings or adventures, especially when filled with notable experiences, hardships, etc. What notable experiences does Melinda encounter throughout her first four marking periods at Merryweather High School? Please explain at least four experiences, how Melinda dealt with each, and how each shaped her identity.
2. Create a timeline representing Melinda's first year of high school. As you read, record specific events that affect Melinda's experience. Your timeline should include at least twenty specific entries. Please mark each entry with at least one image (a drawing, magazine clipping, or printed picture).
3. Make a T-Table listing three pros and three cons for each of Melinda's friends. List page numbers indicating the portion of text illustrating each trait. Your table should look similar to this example:

Pros	Friend	Cons
1. 2. 3.	Ivy	1. 2. 3.
1. 2. 3.	Rachel	1. 2. 3.

4. Do you think Melinda is a typical high school student? Describe the expectations of your first year in high school that may be similar to those of Melinda. Explain the reasons you believe Laurie Halse Anderson wrote this novel about a freshman in high school.
5. List ten events that have occurred during your time in school (your odyssey). Explain how each has influenced your life. Look at the journal assignment after you complete it. Has your summer been an odyssey? Why or why not? Now, compare your odyssey to that of Melinda. Where do you see similarities between Melinda and yourself?

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Assignment: As you read *Speak* notice the way Laurie Halse Anderson wrote her novel using Melinda's voice. Although the novel is a work of fiction, the reader feels as if s/he is reading a memoir or journal. The following journal assignment may be completed using loose-leaf paper, a notebook, or a bound journal. As you respond to each prompt, think about your purpose for writing. You will be writing to give your new English teacher a good first impression, but you will also be writing to record life experiences. When you begin your first year of high school in September, you will use this journal as the basis for a project.

Important:

- Respond to every prompt listed. If you would like to write more traditional journal entries in addition the prompts, you may.
- Address only one entry per day. Each writing assignment should take about ten minutes.
- Just write. Do not worry about punctuation, capitalization, or sentence structure.
- Place the date and time of day at the beginning of each entry.
- Write as if you are addressing a person. It may help to begin each entry with Dear Diary, Dear Journal, Dear Fred, etc. (Giving your journal a name is encouraged.)
- **Each entry must be at least one hand-written page in length.**
- Have fun! You may want to add photos, pictures, drawings, etc. to your journal to make it more creative.

Prompts:

1. Describe your favorite food and your memories associated with it. Use all of your senses to describe it. How does it smell, feel, taste, sound, and look?
2. Look outside through a window of your home. What do you see? How does it make you feel? Now, look again. What is something you have never noticed about the scenery? Be specific. Describe those things you see.
3. Choose a spot in your home you rarely find yourself spending time. Again, use sensory information to describe what you see. What has kept you from this spot in your home? Will you spend more time here now that you have investigated?
4. Think back to your earliest memory. How old were you? What was happening? Where were you? Tell this story.
5. Go outside and find a piece of art. You are not looking for a painting or a sculpture; you are looking for something you find visually appealing. If you can, bring it home and describe it. Explain how you came across this "found art".

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6. Interview a family member. Explain who you decided to interview and why. What is this person's relationship to you? What kind of questions did you ask him/her? Did you learn anything about him/her?
7. Chronicle your day from the time you woke up to the time you began writing. What have you done? What does this routine illustrate about you?
8. Explain your first name and how you received that name. What does your name mean? Do you think your name "fits" you? Do you like your name? If you could change your name, would you? What would you call yourself if you had the choice? Are there famous people or family members that have the same name? Does your name make you feel important?
9. Think about your favorite activities. Write an entry explaining your favorite things to do. How do they make you feel?
10. Describe one thing that makes you original or unique. Think about it. What is one thing that separates you from your friends or family? How does it make you feel?
11. Look for different examples of water. Look at puddles, lakes, the ocean, your bathtub, rivers, Poland Spring bottles, rain drops, etc. What shapes do you see? How did the water get to its final resting place? What memories do you associate with water?
12. Collect random objects around your home – things you normally walk past without thinking. For what are the objects used? Do they help you live day to day? Are they unique? Is there beauty in these objects?
13. Close your eyes. What do you smell and hear in this moment? Explain these smells and sounds after you open your eyes. What are your first thoughts when you think of these smells and sounds?
14. What is your biggest dream? Do you want to meet a famous person? Would you like to travel the world? Explain the importance of this ambition and its importance to you.
15. Write about your favorite song, artist, or type of music. What makes this music important to you? What memories do you associate with this music?
16. Write about whatever is on your mind. Just write.
17. Discuss your feelings about the upcoming year. Are you scared to enter high school? Have you been participating in summer practices at the school? Are you excited? What are your expectations?
18. Write about your home. Imagine you are describing your home to someone who cannot see. How would one get around your home? Describe the layout, your favorite areas, and what one might expect to encounter in your home.
19. Who are your friends? How would you describe them? Is your best friend your dog, goldfish, or mom? Explain your relationship with your friends.
20. Where do you see yourself in six years? Explain your goals.