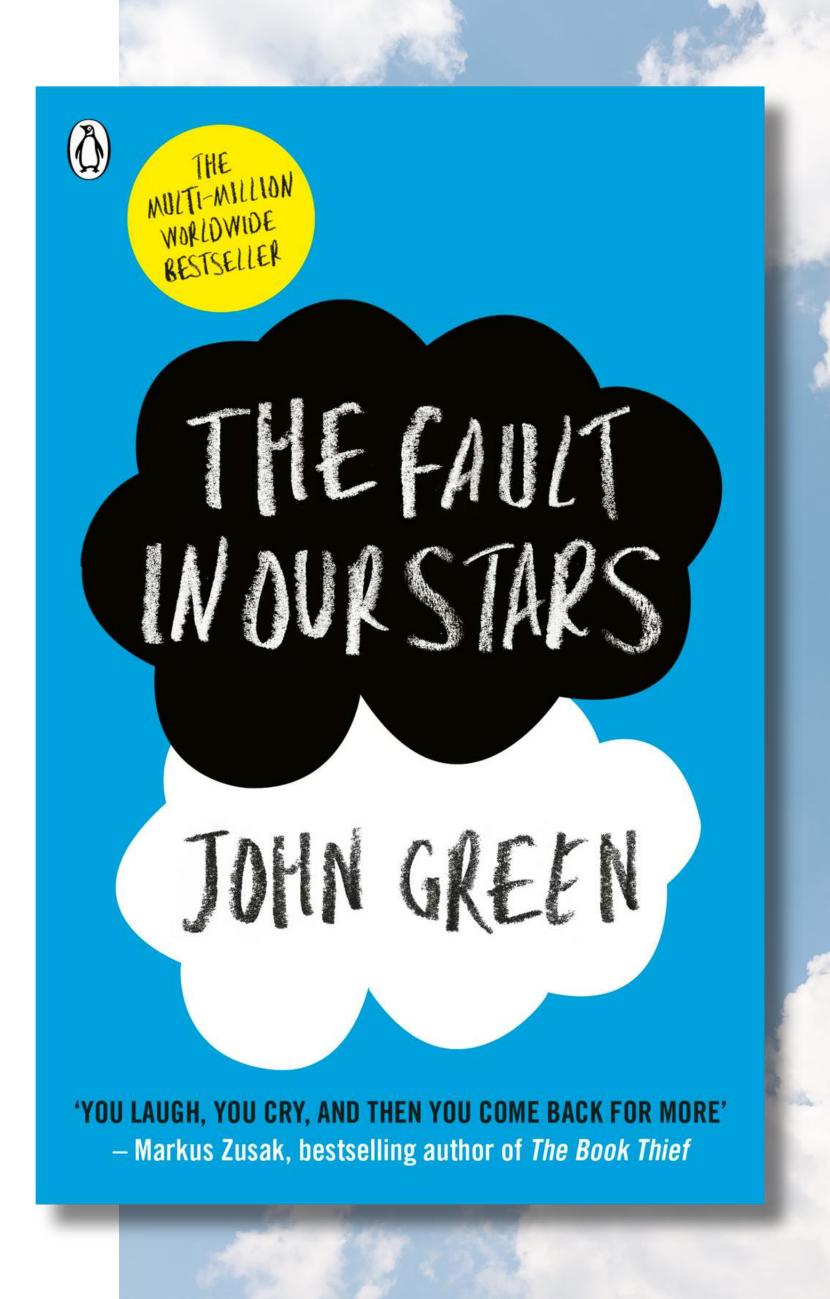
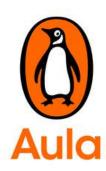
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ABOUT THIS TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

This resource pack will give students some background information on John Green and on the key themes and issues of The Fault in Our Stars. It is designed to link to many different areas of the curriculum and touches upon:

Literacy

Students will:

- Analyse the author's use of language
- Practise using persuasive language
- Develop their use of punctuation and sentence styles
- Write descriptively using literary devices
- Write a newspaper article
- Practise the art of editing

Drama

Students will:

- Create dramatic freeze-frames
- Analyse aspects of character
- Create storyboards or short films
- Perform dramatic readings
- Talk in the voice of a character

Citizenship

Students will:

- Debate the theme of fate
- Explore issues surrounding friendships and relationships
- Discuss the issues inherent in Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'

Art and Design

Students will:

- Create their own book covers
- Design storyboards

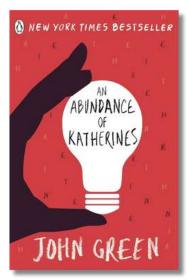
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



"I never thought that I would be able to write for a living... I always thought being a writer was like being an astronaut or playing in the NFL or something..." – John Green.

John Green is an award-winning, #1 New York Times bestselling author whose many accolades include the Printz Medal, a Printz Honor, and the Edgar Award. With his brother, Hank, John is one half of the Vlogbrothers (youtube.com/vlogbrothers), one of the most popular online video projects in the world.

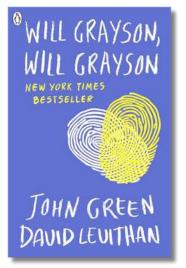
Other books by John Green:



9780141346090

John Green, An Abundance of Katherines

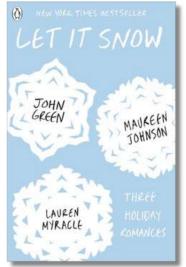
When it comes to relationships, Colin Singleton's type is girls named Katherine. And when it comes to girls named Katherine, Colin is always getting dumped. Nineteen times, to be exact. On a road trip miles from home, this anagram-happy, washed-up child prodigy has ten thousand dollars in his pocket, a bloodthirsty feral hog on his trail, and an overweight Judge Judy-loving best friend riding shotgun - but no Katherines. Colin is on a mission to prove The Theorem of Underlying Katherine Predictability, which he hopes will predict the future of any relationship, avenge dumpees everywhere, and finally win him the girl.



9780141346113

John Green and David Levithan, Will Grayson, Will Grayson

One cold night, in a most unlikely corner of Chicago, teenager Will Grayson crosses paths with . . . Will Grayson! Two teens with the same name who run in two very different circles suddenly find their lives going in new and unexpected directions. Culminating in epic turns-of-heart on both of their parts, they team up to produce the most fabulous musical ever to grace the high-school stage.



9780141349176

John Green, Maureen Johnson, and Lauren Myracle, Let It Snow

An ill-timed storm on Christmas Eve buries the residents of Gracetown under multiple feet of snow and causes quite a bit of chaos. One brave soul ventures out into the storm from her stranded train and sets off a chain of events that will change quite a few lives. Over the next three days one girl takes a risky shortcut with an adorable stranger, three friends set out to win a race to the Waffle House (and the hash brown spoils), and the fate of a teacup pig falls into the hands of a lovesick barista.

Introductory Task:

This task will give students a better idea about who John Green is and what his work is about. This could be set as a homework activity or, if you have the resources, it could also be completed in class.

Start by organising your class into groups of three and allocating the roles of: **researcher**, **scribe** (writer) and presenter. Each group will be responsible for discovering something new about John Green and his wonderful work! Students could choose from:

- John Green's life
- John Green's work
- Awards and nominations
- Vlogbrothers

Each group should pick one category and work together to create a bank of information and be ready to present their work next lesson. Be creative - presentations could be in 3 the form of a poster, a video, a presentation or even a song! Try these links for places to start your research:

John Green's website: http://johngreenbooks.com/

Vlogbrothers on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/vlogbrothers

John Green's Tumblr: http://fishingboatproceeds.tumblr.com

Watch out for the 2014 release of The Fault in Our Stars film – a great opportunity for homework activities, compare and contrast exercises or even a movie night!



YOUR BOOK JOURNEY JOURNAL

To help your students track their experience of reading the book they could fill in and complete this table:

	KEY EVENT	NOTES/ OBSERVATIONS	FAVOURITE LINE	STAR RATING
CHAPTERS 1-5				
CHAPTERS 6-10				
CHAPTERS 11-15				
CHAPTERS 16-20				
CHAPTERS 21-25				

Alternatively, students could keep a scrapbook to which they add as they read the story. This could be made up of images from magazines or websites, or they could even draw their own pictures as a response to the text.

LESSON 1: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves..."

Objective: To analyse the title of the book and consider the theme of fate. **Outcome:** To have a debate around the theme of fate vs. our own actions.

The title *The Fault in Our Stars* comes from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar who comments that "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves..."

Starter (small introductory task)

- Q.1: What do you think is meant by the title *The Fault in Our Stars?*
- Q.2: Do you think there is a reason that bad things happen in the world?
- Q.3: Does the title of John Green's book agree or disagree with the statement above? Explain your answers.

Main Activity

Organise your class into two teams. One side of the class needs to argue that we don't have control over what happens to us – that our lives are mainly controlled by <u>fate</u> or chance. The other side needs to argue that <u>our own actions</u> are more influential in shaping our lives. Remember, even if you are arguing for something other than what you believe, this is a great chance to practise your skills of persuasion!

Students should spend the first 20 minutes brainstorming their ideas and coming up with a **persuasive argument**. Extra points for teams who use examples from the book!

Plenary (final reflection task)

Put the labels 'fate' and 'own actions' on either side of the room. Ask students to move to the side they now believe in – or perhaps they're somewhere in the middle!

Extension Activity

Students could write a short reflection on the debate and think about whether their ideas changed, and if so, why.

Lesson 2: Dramatic Readings

Objective: To explore John Green's text by creating a dramatic reading of Chapter 1.

Outcome: To perform a section of the text to the class.

Starter

Watch a short section of John Green reading Chapter One of The Fault in Our Stars http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_vFvbfn9Fs (Suggested section: from 02:53 until 05:20). Alternatively, teachers could model this activity to their students, reading a section of the story with lots of expression.

Key Questions:

- Q1. How does John Green use his voice to make his reading interesting?
- Q2. What do you notice about his eye contact?
- Q3. Does he use gesture? What is the effect of this?

Main Activity

Split Chapter One up into sections and allocate them to small groups of students. Each group should create a dramatic reading of their section of the text. They might choose just one student to read or they might all read in turns/in unison. Students should consider:

- 1. Their tone of voice.
- 2. Their gesture and eye contact.
- 3. Positioning (could you start reading from one corner of the room and move somewhere else whilst reading? Perhaps perform out of sight of the class?)

Readings should be performed in the correct sequence. If possible, teachers could record their students' dramatic readings.

Plenary

Students should listen to/watch their dramatic performances and give themselves a 'What Went Well' and an 'Even Better If...'. If readings were not recorded then they can give this feedback to one another after their performances.

Lesson 3: "Nothing has ever looked like that in all of human history.' (p147)

Objective: To understand how writers use images to create interesting and captivating settings. **Outcome:** An imaginative description of a setting for a story.

'It happened all at once: We exited the highway and there were the row houses of my imagination leaning precariously towards canals, ubiquitous bicycles, and coffeeshops advertising LARGE SMOKING ROOM. We drove over a canal and from atop the bridge I could see dozens of houseboats moored along the water. It looked nothing like America. It looked like an old painting, but real – everything achingly idyllic in the morning light – and I thought about how wonderfully strange it would be to live in a place where almost everything had been built by the dead.' (p156)

Starter

Draw a circle around all the key images of Amsterdam in the above passage.

Discussion points:

- Why are these images "nothing like America"?
- Why do you think John Green chose to send Hazel and Gus somewhere so different from their home?

Main Activity

Work in groups and brainstorm ideas for the setting of a story. It should be somewhere completely different to where you live! Think about:

- Where in the world (or the universe!)
- What the weather is like
- What the scenery is like

Write a paragraph describing this setting. Try to include lots of adjectives, short sentences and similes/metaphors to help your reader understand exactly where you are and what it is like.

Plenary

Read your descriptions to the class. Give each other star-ratings and feedback.

Extension Activity: "I thought how wonderfully strange it would be to live in a place where almost everything had been built by the dead."

Q. What do you think this sentence means? How does it change the atmosphere of the passage?

Lesson 4: Underwater

Objective: To analyse how setting and theme can be linked in a story.

Outcome: To create imaginative book covers.

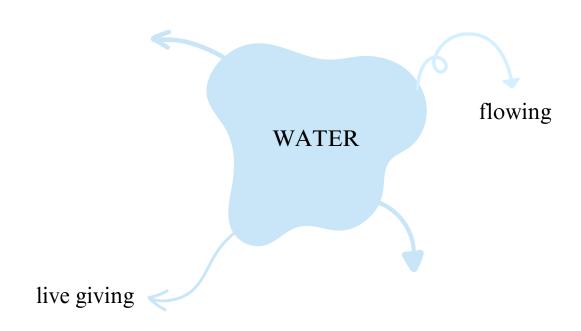
Hazel and Gus have just travelled to Amsterdam to meet Van Houten. Hazel describes her feelings towards the city:

'Mostly we just stared into the canal. I was thinking a lot about how they'd made this place exist even though it should've been underwater, and how I was for Dr. Maria a kind of Amsterdam, a half drowned anomaly...' (p172)

Starter

Discussion points: how is Hazel connected to Amsterdam? What do they have in common? Why might John Green have made this connection?

Students should work as a class to brainstorm around the theme of 'water'. They should write as many associations of water as possible around a bubble:



In pairs, discuss the question: how does a setting add to a story? Can it ever tell us more about characters?

Main Activity

Give students one of the themes listed below. They should work in pairs or small groups to create a setting that would fit the theme. Be creative! Could a love story be set in the Arctic? Or could a thriller be set in an office?

- Revenge
- Death
- Romance
- Friendship
- Heroism

Draw your setting as a front cover of your own best-selling book! What colours would suit your setting? Would it be in a town or in the countryside? Would you have any characters in your cover image? What would you title the book? Why?

Plenary

Pitch your book cover to another group. Imagine you are presenting it to a publisher – what makes it interesting? How does it link to the theme you were given?

Lesson 5: "The real heroes aren't the people doing things; the real heroes are the people NOTICING things" (p312)

Objective: To understand how to **observe** different aspects of a character.

Outcome: To work together to create character freeze-frames.

And then we introduced ourselves: Name. Age. Diagnosis. And how we're doing today. I'm Hazel, I'd say when they'd get to me. Sixteen. Thyroid originally but with an impressive and long-settled satellite colony in my lungs. And I'm doing okay. (p5)

Starter

Q. What do you learn about Hazel from this passage? What impressions of Hazel's character do you have?

One member of the class should come to the front and everyone else should work together to help 'sculpt' them into this character. Think about:

- 1. Facial expressions
- 2. Posture
- 3. Height (are they powerful and standing tall? Or weak and kneeling on the ground?)

Main Activity

Students should work in groups of three and be given one of the descriptions below. Two of the students should work together to sculpt the third member of the group into this character.

Van Houten

'A potbellied man with thin hair, sagging jowls, and a week-old beard squinted into the sunlight. He wore baby-blue man pajamas like guys in old movies. His face and belly were so round, and his arms so skinny, that he looked like a dough ball with four sticks stuck into it.' (p180)

<u>Gus</u>

'Long and leanly muscular, he dwarfed the molded plastic elementary school chair he was sitting in. He looked my age, maybe a year older, and he sat with his tailbone against the edge of the chair, his posture aggressively poor, one hand half in a pocket of dark jeans.' (p8-9)

Plenary

Look at each other's character sculptures. Based on the sculptures, what kind of people do you think these two characters are?

Homework: Observe a friend or family member over a few days. Write a character sketch describing the way they look and act.

Lesson 6: "A Shattering Crash"

Objective: To empathise with the main characters of the story and understand how they are feeling in chapter twelve.

Outcome: To write a monologue and talk in the voice of a character.

When Hazel and Gus travel to meet Van Houten in Amsterdam they discover he is not the man they had been expecting:

"I RESIGN!" Lidewij shouted. There were tears in her eyes. But I wasn't angry. He was looking for the most hurtful way to tell the truth, but of course I already knew the truth. I'd had years of staring at ceilings from my bedroom to the ICU, and so I'd long ago found the most hurtful ways to imagine my own illness. I stepped toward him. "Listen, douchepants," I said, "you're not going to tell me anything about disease I don't already know. I need one and only one thing from you before I walk out of your life forever: WHAT HAPPENS TO ANNA'S MOTHER?"

He raised his flabby chins vaguely toward me and shrugged his shoulders. "I can no more tell you what happens to her than I can tell you what becomes of Proust's Narrator or Holden Caulfield's sister or Huckleberry Finn after he lights out for the territories."

"BULLSHIT! That's bullshit. Just tell me! Make something up!"

"No, and I'll thank you not to curse in my house. It isn't becoming of a lady."

I still wasn't angry, exactly, but I was very focused on getting the thing I'd been promised. Something inside me welled up and I reached down and smacked the swollen hand that held the glass of scotch. What remained of the Scotch splashed across the vast expanse of his face, the glass bouncing off his nose and then spinning balletically through the air, landing with a shattering crash on the ancient hardwood floors. (p193-4)

Starter

Key questions:

- 1. What is Hazel upset about?
- 2. How has Van Houten gone back on his word?
- 3. How do you think Hazel and Gus are feeling at this point in the story?

Main Activity

Students should write a short monologue in the voice of Gus, Hazel or Van Houten. They should focus on how their chosen character is **feeling** at this point in the story and try to explain **why** they are feeling this way

Plenary

Selected students should come to the front of the class and sit in the 'hot-seat'. They can start by reading their monologue and they should be ready to improvise and answer questions from the class.

Lesson 7: Isaac's Journey

Objective: To understand the character of Isaac.

Outcome: To write a newspaper article based on Isaac's story.

'The only redeeming facet of Support Group was this kid named Isaac, a long-faced, skinny guy with straight blond hair swept over one eye.

And his eyes were the problem. He had some fantastically improbably eye cancer. One eye had been cut out when he was a kid, and now he wore the kind of thick glasses that made his eyes (both the real one and the glass one) preternaturally huge...' (p6)

Starter

Skim through the novel and use what you already know to draw a timeline tracking Isaac's journey. The first one has been done for you:

Isaac's Timeline

meet Isaac

We meet Isaac at support group for the first time. We learn about his eye cancer.

Main Activity

Work in groups to write a newspaper article about Isaac and his story. You could assign the roles of information gatherer, editor and designer to each group. Groups should consider:

- 1. What happened to Isaac
- 2. Where and when these events happened
- 3. The significance/future implications of these events

Plenary

Students should stick their newspaper article on the wall of the classroom, near to where they were working. Students should then walk around the room reading the other groups' articles.

Lesson 8: "You don't get to choose if you get hurt in this world... but you do have some say in who hurts you." (p313)

Objective: To understand the key theme of friendship in the novel.

Outcome: To write a persuasive speech about a friend.

Starter

Towards the end of the book, Gus writes a eulogy for Hazel. He says:

'Hazel is different. She walks lightly, old man. She walks lightly upon the earth. Hazel knows the truth: We're as likely to hurt the universe as we are to help it, and we're not likely to do either.

People will say it's sad that she leaves a lesser scar, that fewer remember her, that she was loved deeply but not widely. But it's not sad, Van Houten. It's triumphant. It's heroic. Isn't that the real heroism? Like the doctors say: First, do no harm.

[...]

What else? She is so beautiful. You don't get tired of looking at her. You never worry if she is smarter than you: You know she is. She is funny without ever being mean. I love her. I am so lucky to love her, Van Houten. You don't get to choose if you get hurt in this world, old man, but you do have some say in who hurts you. I like my choices. I hope she likes hers. (p311-313)

Students should discuss this speech as a class. Is there anything unusual in the way Gus talks about Hazel? What makes his writing persuasive? (Notice the use of punctuation, range of sentence styles and the informal tone)

Main Activity

Students should write a speech about their best friend. Like Gus has done, think about what makes that person special. Why is it that you have chosen them to be your friend? Try to include:

- 1. Interesting adjectives
- 2. A variety of sentence lengths
- 3. A range of punctuation

Plenary

Selected students could read their presentations to the class. Alternatively, students could write their speeches in neat on pieces of paper, and send them to their chosen friend.

Lesson 9: "Peter Van Houten: Novelist Emeritus and Semiprofessional Disappointer."

Objective: To analyse the character of Van Houten and consider the place of rolemodels

Outcome: To write an interview between Hazel and Van Houten.

"I think you're a pathetic alcoholic who says fancy things to get attention like a really precocious eleven-year-old and I feel super bad for you. But yeah, no, you're not the guy who wrote An Imperial Affliction anymore, so you couldn't sequel it even if you wanted to. Thanks, though. Have an excellent life." (p276-277)

Starter

- Q1. Have you ever had a role-model?
- Q2. Have they ever let you down?
- Q.3 Do you think what Hazel says to Van Houten in the passage above is fair?

Main Activity

Towards the end of the book Hazel finds out more about Van Houten's past. We learn that his daughter had cancer. He says:

"I had to tell her she would die. Her social worker said I had to tell her. I had to tell her she would die, so I told her she was going to heaven. She asked if I would be there, and I said that I would not, not yet. But eventually, she said, and I promised that yes, of course, very soon. And I told her that in the meantime we had great family up there that would take care of her. And she asked me when I would be there, and I told her soon. Twenty-two years ago." (p286-7)

Using the passage above, students should write an interview between Hazel and Van Houten. Hazel should be asking Van Houten about his life. Use everything you know to improvise his answers!

Plenary

Students should work in pairs and choose one of their interviews. Taking one character each, they should read through this interview and reflect on Van Houten and Hazel's relationship.

Lesson 10: 'So there is this thing called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs' (211)

Objective: To consider what is important in our lives. **Outcome:** To create a class 'Hierarchy of Needs'.

Starter

- Q1. Do you need food and water before you can love/be loved?
- Q2. Is it necessary to be physically healthy in order to create art?
- Q3. What do you think "self-actualizing" means and how important is it?

Main Activity

Hazel talks about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. She says:

Basically, this guy Abraham Maslow became famous for his theory that certain needs must be met before you can even have other kinds of needs... Once your needs for food and water are fulfilled, you move up to the next set of needs, security, and then the next and the next, but the important thing is that, according to Maslow, until your physiological needs are satisfied, you can't even worry about security or social needs, let alone "self-actualization," which is when you start to, like, make art and think about morality and quantum physics and stuff.' (p211-2)



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Students should work in pairs and discuss Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Do you think it is correct?

Having discussed this hierarchy, students should now make their own hierarchy of the things they think are important in life. They might move some of the categories around or add in completely new ones.

Plenary

Students should work as a class to put all their ideas together to make a 'class hierarchy of needs'. This should express what your class generally think are the most important aspects of life, and in what order – if any – these need to be fulfilled. If things get heated you might have to take a vote!

Lesson 11: "All writing is rewriting"

Objective: To understand the editing process

Outcome: To write a tweet explaining what The Fault in Our Stars is about.

Starter

Read the blurb for An Abundance of Katherines by John Green. Students should work together to cut this paragraph down to **50 words**. Be careful - you still need to have all the important information in there! That's 62 words that need to go!

When it comes to relationships, everyone has a type. Colin Singleton's type is girls named Katherine. He has dated—and been dumped by—19 Katherines. In the wake of The K-19 Debacle, Colin—an anagram-obsessed washed-up child prodigy—heads out on a road trip with his overweight, Judge Judy-loving friend Hassan. With 10,000 dollars in his pocket and a feral hog on his trail, Colin is on a mission to prove a mathematical theorem he hopes will predict the future of any relationship (and conceivably win the girl). An Abundance of Katherines was a 2007 Michael L. Printz Honor book and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Main Activity

Students should work in pairs to write a blurb for The Fault in Our Stars. They should try to include:

- 1. What the main events of the story are
- 2. The key themes
- 3. Your impressions of the book

Now swap blurbs with the pair next to you. Read through their paragraph and now write it as a tweet. It should be no more than 140 characters long (including letters and spaces), but try to keep all the key information!

Plenary

Read the tweet of the original blurb you wrote. Is all the key information still there? Give the other pair a mark out of five for how well you think they 'tweeted' your blurb.

Lesson 12: The Fault in Our Stars Book Trailer

Objective: To understand the structure of *The Fault In Our Stars*.

Outcome: To create a dramatic trailer for the story.

Starter

On large pieces of sugar paper, students should brainstorm all their favourite things about the book. They should consider:

- What were the important events?
- Who were the main characters?
- Which parts did you find hardest to read?
- Which parts did you find most enjoyable to read?

Main Activity

Students should work together to create their own trailer for The Fault in Our Stars. This could be made by creating a storyboard, a series of dramatic freeze-frames, or, if you have the time and resources, students could make their storyboards into short films. To get some inspiration, look at these trailers below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnj4X6ILEH4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhuCXfPsevI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4o_eWO3yig https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PEepfswJWs

Plenary

Watch each group's trailer! If time, create a 'red carpet event' where students screen their trailers for the class, or present their storyboards. Remember to give some feedback/applause!

VOCABULARY

Some challenging vocabulary is used in *The Fault in Our Stars*. This glossary could be circulated to your students to help them explore, understand and enjoy some of the more unusual words which appear.

abundance – a very large quantity of something; plentifulness

anomaly – something that deviates from what is standard, normal or expected

bacchanalia – the Roman festival of Bacchus; drunken celebrations

consciousness – the state of being aware of and responsive towards one's surroundings

coterie - a small group of people with shared interests or tastes, especially one that is exclusive of other people

diagnosis – the identification of an illness

dysmorphia – deformity or abnormality in the shape or size of a part of the body

eponymous – (of a person) giving their name to something

eulogy – a speech that praises someone highly, usually after they have died

existential – relating to existence

hamartia - a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero or heroine

hierarchy – a system of organisation which puts some things above others

idyllic – happy, peaceful or picturesque

inexorable – impossible to stop or prevent

insipid – lacking flavour; weak or tasteless

misnomer - a wrong or inaccurate name or designation

oblivion – the state of being unaware; destruction or extinction

ontology – a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of being

palliative – relieving pain without dealing with the cause of the condition

pathetic – arousing pity

physiological – a branch of biology that deals with the normal functions of living organisms **precarious** – dangerously placed; likely to fall

precocious – having developed certain abilities or inclinations at an earlier age than is usually expected

sobriquet – nickname

thyroid - a large ductless gland in the neck which regulates growth and development **ubiquitous** – present, appearing or found everywhere

QUOTE CARDS

These are key quotes from the book which can be used as prompts for class discussion.

"There will come a time," I said, "when all of us are dead. All of us. There will come a time when there are no human beings remaining to remember that anyone ever existed or that our species ever did anything. There will be no one left to remember Aristotle or Cleopatra, let alone you. Everything that we did and built and wrote and thought and discovered will be forgotten and all of this" — I gestured encompassingly — "will have been for naught. Maybe that time is coming soon and maybe it is millions of years away, but even if we survive the collapse of our sun, we will not survive forever." (p12-13)

Sometimes, you read a book and it fills you with this weird evangelical zeal, and you become convinced that the shattered world will never be put back together unless and until all living humans read the book. (p33)

All salvation is temporary. (p59)

Pain demands to be felt. (p57)

My shoulder hurt. I worried the cancer had spread from my lungs. I imagined the tumour metastasizing into my own bones, boring holes into my skeleton, a slithering eel of insidious intent. (p86)

"I'm a grenade," I said again. "I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there's nothing I can do about hurting you; you're too invested, so just please let me do that, okay? I'm not depressed. I don't need to get out more. And I can't be a regular teenager, because I'm a grenade." (p99)

"...there is no shortage of fault to be found amid our stars." (p112)

There were elm trees everywhere along the canals, and these seeds were blowing out of them. But they didn't look like seeds. They looked for all the world like miniaturized rose petals drained of their colour. These pale petals were gathering in the wind like flocking birds - thousands of them, like a spring snowstorm. (p161)

"The risen sun too bright in her losing eyes." (p168)

"It's really mean of you to say that the only lives that matter are the ones that are lived for something or die for something. That's a really mean thing to say to me." (p169)

"We live in a universe devoted to the creation, and eradication, of awareness. Augustus Waters did not die after a lengthy battle with cancer. He died after a lengthy battle with human consciousness, a victim – as you will be – of the universe's need to make and unmake all that is possible." (p266)

"Grief does not change you, Hazel. It reveals you." (p286)

"I'm in love with you, and I'm not in the business of denying myself the simple pleasure of saying true things. I'm in love with you, and I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we're all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we'll ever have, and I am in love with you." (p153)

