

***SPEAK* Reading Guide**

Quotations

Throughout the story, Melinda uses her dry sense of humor to describe her high school experience. It feels very authentic in many cases. However, there are times when Melinda shows weakness and her humor does not help her in various situations. Pick one quote per “marking period,” there are 4.

Quote	Explanation

First Marking Period 3-46

1. Describe three things that go wrong for Melinda on her first day of high school. P. 3-14
2. What is her art project for the year? What do you think of that type of project? Would you want it? Explain. P. 12.
3. Describe Melinda's home situation. P. 14-17
4. Why does Melinda take the mirror down?
5. What problems or frustrations is Melinda experiencing with her classes? What problems is she experiencing with her friends and ex-friends? How do you know this?
6. Describe her "burrow" p. 24-26 Why does she go there?

7. Why does she become friends with Heather? How is Melinda different from Heather?
8. How is Melinda going to use the late passes as her “get-out-of-jail-free cards”? p. 25
9. Describe Melinda’s experiences at the pep rally. P. 26-30 Why do kids she doesn’t even know treat her this way?
10. Summarize her thoughts on cheerleaders. P. 29-30
11. Why is the section from p. 32-35 called “Acting”? Look beyond the obvious.
12. How does Melinda become increasingly isolated in the section called First Marking Period?
13. Describe “The Marthas”. What is Heather’s response to them? Your response to them?

14. This section ends with her “Nightmare” and a person she sees called IT. Why do you think she refers to this person as such?

Second Marking Period Pages 49-92

Pre-reading

1. How do you think that Melinda’s life would be different if she were living in 2014 with all of the media outlets that we have today?

Chapter Questions

2. How appropriate are the verbs Melinda has chosen for her Spanish homework: to translate (traducir), to flunk (fracasar), to hide (esconder), to forget (olvidar) p. 51 Why can’t she conjugate olvidar?
3. Contrast Heather’s and Melinda’s response to Job Day. P. 53
4. Summarize the discussion between Mr. Neck and David Petrakis about “Immigration”, and the debate topic – “America should have closed her borders in 1900”. What character traits does each reveal through this episode? What does xenophobic mean? P. 56

5. Comment on Melinda's thoughts: "He says a million things without saying a word. I make a note to study David Petrakis. I have never heard a more eloquent silence." P. 57
6. How is the "Thanksgiving Dinner" typical of Melinda's somewhat dysfunctional family? P. 57-61 In what way is the title of this section, GIVING THANKS, ironic?
7.
 - a) What is significant about Melinda's turkey bone sculpture?
 - b) Contrast the teaching style and relationship to students of Mr. Neck and Mr. Freeman.
 - c) How is Mr. Freeman's own painting significant? P. 62
8. Contrast Melinda's and David Petrakis' reaction to the "apple lesson" in Biology. P. 65-66
9. How does David Petrakis fight back "about the freedom to speak thing"? p. 67-68
10. What truth is there in Melinda's statement about her parents: "I'm just like them – an ordinary drone dressed in secrets and lies." P. 70-72

11. Why is Melinda touched by her Christmas gift of a sketch pad with charcoal pencils? P. 72
12. Describe Melinda's Christmas break and explain why she is "actually grateful to go back to school". P. 74
13. How is Melinda the "visitor from the Planet Foul Shot"? p. 77
14. Comment on: "Maybe I'll be an artist if I grow up." P. 78
15. How does Melinda come to Heather's rescue? P. 80
16. Contrast David's and Melinda's reaction to the "frog" lesson . P. 81
17. How does the winter blizzard synchronize with Melinda's life and emotions? (pathetic fallacy) p. 87.

18. What more is learned about IT in this section?

19. What new developments are there with Mr. Freeman and his painting? Suggest why the author, Laurie Halse Anderson, might have included Mr. Freeman's struggles.

Third Marking Period Pages 95-137

1. How is Melinda's self-comparison to a rabbit appropriate? P. 97

2. Hairwoman tries to teach symbolism in Hawthorne's novels. Explain what symbolism is. What symbolism can you see in this novel? P. 100-102

3. a) Suggest why Melinda thinks Mr. Freeman is "the sanest person [she] know[s]". p. 104
b) Connect the section called "STUNTED" p. 102-104 to the section called "CODE BREAKING" p. 100-102.

4. Explain the irony of the Valentine's card taped to Melinda's locker. How does it affect Melinda? P. 110

5. Suggest why Melinda thinks: “Do they chose to be so dense?” at the meeting with her parents, the principal and the guidance counselor. P. 116
6. Why might Melinda be labeled an “at risk” student by her teachers, counselor and school administration? What plan do they devise to help her? Evaluate its effectiveness. P. 116
7. Suggest why Melinda relates to the artist Picasso. Look up what some of Picasso’s art work looks like. P. 119
8. Explain the wisdom in Mr. Freeman’s advice: Don’t be so hard on yourself. Art is about making mistakes and learning from them.” How might this apply to other aspects of Melinda’s life? P. 122
9. Why does Melinda think she “stumbles from thornbush to thornbush”? p 125

10. How does her appearance reflect her mental state? P. 124

11. Suggest how the biology unit on seeds relates to Melinda's life. P. 126

12. Summarize the fight between Melinda One and Melinda Two. P. 132 Offer some advice to these warring sides of Melinda.

13. What memory does Melinda relive in "A NIGHT TO REMEMBER"? p. 133 Why is the title ironic? Explain how she got into that predicament. How had the author used foreshadowing throughout the novel to prepare you for this disclosure? (3 examples)

14. What positive things are happening for Melinda in this marking period? What negative things?

Fourth Marking Period Pages 141-198

1. What positive feedback did Ivy give Melinda about her art? P. 145-146

2. Who is Melinda spying on? Why? What dilemma does she now face? What “role” does the Maya Angelou poster in her closet play in all this? Explain why it is fitting that her conscience speaks in Maya Angelou’s voice. What is Melinda’s final decision? What would you have done in a similar situation? P. 151-152

3. How does Mr. Freeman’s advice to Melinda about her tree apply to life in general and her in particular? P. 153

4. a) In what way does Mr. Neck continue to make Melinda’s life miserable? Is he being fair? Explain. P. 155
b) What is Melinda’s solution the problem of the suffragette report?
c) What does David mean by “But you got it wrong.” P. 159 Does he have a good point? Explain.

5. Describe the physical and mental effects that seeing “Andy Beast” in the Art room has on Melinda. P. 162

6. Outline the stages of Melinda’s coming to terms with what happened to her at the end of the summer party.

7. What positive things does Melinda do that build her confidence and that make her emotionally stronger? P. 165-180

8. What is the outcome of a) the “conversation thread’ Melinda started in the girls’ washroom p. 185 and b) her conversation with Rachel p. 184

9. How are pruning the tree, raking the leaves, and planting the seeds symbolic of Melinda’s recovery?

10. What is Melinda searching for when she heads out on her bike? P. 188

11. Describe the climax of the novel and explain why it is fitting.

12. a) What purpose is served by the section “FINAL CUT”? p. 196-198
b) Explain the significance of the last line, “let me tell you about it.” P. 198