

**Instituto de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje**

**Facultad de Filosofía y Educación**



**Feeling infinite: Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* as a subject of language learning.**

**TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN**

**PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESOR DE INGLÉS**

**Y AL GRADO DE LICENCIADO EN EDUCACIÓN**

**Estudiante:** Fernanda Rayén Lazo Ibarra

**Profesor guía:** Sr. Pablo A. Villa Moreno

**Primer semestre 2014**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“Courage is grace under pressure”*

*—Ernest Hemingway*

None of this would have been possible without the love and caring of the few people who never stopped believing in me, even when I did not. Their support was crucial in helping me become a better person and the professional I am today.

In the first place, I would like to thank my dad and sister for the endless patience, love, caring, and support they have shown all these years. I could not be more grateful to have you in my life and I hope to make you proud with this project. I would also like to sincerely thank the rest of my family —my grandparents Marta and Miguel, my uncle Juan Pablo, my aunt Roxana and her children Joaquin and Matias, and my uncles Olga and Nano with their beautiful family Male and Mauro— who were an important part of this strength I came to find during these years and whose faith in me helped me to continue and never allowed me to give up either.

During these years at the university, I have also had the opportunity to meet a lot of nice people. To the ones who are still in my life and the ones who left, I would like to say that I appreciate the time spent together because I learned from each one of you in different ways.

Particularly, I would like to thank Victoria for being here all this time and for having accompanied me in this journey of growing up. For your unconditional friendship, joy, and wisdom, but, above all, for being the only one who stayed in my life and never stopped believing in me and in what I can do. I love you, Vicky!

Thanks, also, to my classmates in this Final Project course. I could have not had better partners in this journey and it has been a total pleasure to share this time with you. Thank you for your support and all the laughs we have shared, because you made this challenge easier and unforgettable. You are all good girls; very intelligent, talented. I have no doubt we will all be teachers our future students will remember.

Over these six years, I have had the honor to be a student of some very good teachers, who have taught me more than just academic content. Learning about myself and the world has been fundamental. Where would I be, after all, without all of the great teachers who spent time with me? Thank you Professor Salas, Professor Oyanedel, Professor King, and Professor Pescara for your dedication, advice, and support during this time. You all never stopped encouraging me to continue studying, improving as much as I could, and believing in what I was capable of.

Nevertheless, there is one Professor I could never thank enough. And that is Mr. Villa. You, sir, are the best teacher I have ever had and there are not enough words to express my admiration and infinite gratitude for you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for being the one who never stopped believing in me and in what I can do as a future teacher. Thank you for your support and friendship from the very first day. I will never forget your affection and how supportive and kind you have been.

But, most of all, thank you for showing me the incredibly endless world of literature and helping me realize I was actually good at something that can take me as far as I want.

I would not be here if you haven't helped me this much. Thank you very much for your patience, caring, and infinite wise. Without a doubt, you are a teacher that inspires.

Having arrived at this point has not been easy at all, but due to a series of events I had to experience and that have defined my life, I found the necessary inner peace and strength to be here right now. I have been able to fight off my own demons and never give up in this path, and I could not be more proud of myself for not giving up; even at the cloudiest days and the darkest nights.

Love,

Fernanda.

“That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings,  
that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.”

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	4
Epigraph .....	7
Table of contents.....	8
Introduction .....	10
Theoretical framework.....	17
1. Literature .....	13
2. Children’s literature.....	21
3. Young Adult Literature.....	26
4. The Bildungsroman.....	31
5. Stephen Chbosky’s biography.....	36
6. The Perks of Being a Wallflower.....	38
Needs Analysis.....	40
1. School’s guidelines.....	42
Rationale.....	46
1. The ‘what?’ component.....	46



2. The ‘why?’ component.....	47
3. The ‘how?’ component.....	49
Course Syllabus.....	52
Syllabus design.....	55
1. Course description.....	55
2. General objectives.....	56
3. Specific objectives.....	56
4. Expected learning outcomes.....	57
5. Contents and themes.....	58
6. Key concepts.....	58
7. Class information.....	59
Syllabus chart.....	63
Daily lessons.....	78
1. Sample lesson 1.....	78
2. Sample lesson 2.....	94
3. Sample lesson 3.....	103

Appendices.....	110
1. Short survey for students.....	110
2. Reading strategies chart.....	114
3. In-class participation rubric.....	115
References.....	120

## INTRODUCTION

From ancient times, the literary element —first oral and then, with Gutenberg’s invention, written— has always been a central part of our life, since emerged as a very suitable recipient of mankind’s diverse experiences, events, feelings, and ideas to be long-lasting from generation to generation.

This, of course, gained importance and visibility as time went by and society developed in all areas; but always remained as a subject of high interest. It is no surprise; therefore, to find literature incorporated in almost every aspect of nowadays’ society and, subsequently, in one of its keystones: the educational system.

The teaching of a Second Language (L2) is no exception to the rule, so it is really important that teachers are not only aware of such reality, but also clear about its implications and demand to incorporate and work with it, which requires to be properly fulfilled. If teaching an L2 is already challenging in many ways; engaging students with the idea of reading in it and to think about it not only as a mechanic and —sometimes considered— flat or boring task but as a valuable component of their learning process arises as almost a heroic thing to do.

On the one hand, teaching literature appears to be unattractive and irritating to students because of their deep-rooted conception that it basically consists on reading for taking ‘comprehensive’ tests afterwards, and we cannot entirely blame them: they are used to it. This is partly because of the old models that rule our educational system, but also because teachers are apparently ‘too used to it’, comfortable with such mechanic routines and simply do not seem to be interested in breaking the molds and take a step forward; resulting all of this in students having lost their interest in the subject. On the other hand, literature as a subject has been proven to have an undeniable amount of

benefits for language learners and the enhancing of their cognitive abilities; so as to work with more abstract or higher levels of reason and interpretation. Jonathan P.A. Sell, for example, states and lists them as follow:

A welter of reasons for or benefits of teaching literature in the FL classroom have been proffered by a variety of authors (...)

1. Cultural enrichment. Reading literature promotes cultural understanding and awareness.
2. Linguistic model. Literature provides examples of “good” writing, linguistic diversity, expressive ranges, and so on.
3. Mental training. Better than any other discipline, literature trains the mind and sensibility.
4. Extension of linguistic competence. Literature stretches the competences of learners who have mastered the linguistic rudiments.
5. Authenticity. Literature is genuine linguistic material, not a linguistically contrived textbook.
6. Memorability. Because literature, especially poetry and songs, is memorable, it can be a memorized archive of linguistic usage.
7. Rhythmic resource. Poems assist the learner in assimilating the rhythms of a language.
8. Motivating material. Literature is more likely to engage with and motivate a learner than artificial teaching inputs because it is generated by some genuine impulse on the

part of the writer and deals with subjects and themes which may be of interest to the learner.

9. Open to interpretation. Because literature is open to interpretation, it can serve as a basis for “genuine interaction” between learners. (Why teach literature in the foreign language classroom?, 87)

Therefore, if literature is well and effectively employed, it can overcome prejudices and become a highly motivating challenge. Reading, then, is valued as a rich source of cultural and linguistic awareness and exchange; an opportunity to enhance readers’ interpretative, emotional, affective, and imaginative abilities. The written word is not only a learning basis, but also a sociocultural one from which

“(…) Critical and analytical ability, social skills and the use of the imagination; encourages liberal, ethical and humanitarian attitudes ( . . . ) and provides information about literature, literary traditions and language.” (P.A. Sell 88).

Nowadays, our educational landscape is not a dream-like one, but if we as teachers are capable of approaching the question of teaching literature from an innovative and smart pedagogical point of view; then it will be easier to untangle and solve it in order to create a convenient plan to work with in a classroom.

Literature is not a mere memorizing and then reproducing process: it must be seen as a comprehensive subject. Students need to become aware that they can learn not only what is explicitly stated in the text along with vocabulary or reading “comprehension” activities; but that, at the same time, it is possible for them to discover the text in all of its richness and —hopefully—

complexity; learning also about culture, society, philosophy, history, politics, and many other aspects of life depending on the kind of literary work they are being taught.

As a prospective teacher of English, I chose to do my final project in this field because throughout all these years at the university it was possible for me to discover the wide range of possibilities English Literature offers students as a source of both knowledge and learning companion. Despite it took me a couple of years, after taking my English literature classes I could no longer deny the enormous power and potential of the field to be exploited if properly combined with suitable pedagogical models and teaching techniques so as to create a teaching product to effectively assure not only the presentation and delivery of contents but also an engaging and challenging pedagogical proposal capable of making students think outside the box and, hopefully, discover the same thing I did.

This project aims to present English literature as an attractive field of work for learning a Second Language by making it engaging, challenging, and attractive for students through proper teacher's guidance so that learners can establish pertinent connections between what the text is presenting and their own personal experiences. This way, language will become more appealing to them at the same time culture, history, and other important elements inherently present in the story being told in the text will connect to the learners' background information and they will become interested in literature in its pure form.

In order to achieve it, the project will be carried out by taking into consideration the student's needs, interests, and particular characteristics, but, most of all, the purpose and personal challenge to make them fall in love with the experience and to make them enjoy the feeling of being capable

of acquiring knowledge and fully understanding something that is typically considered to be intricate, difficult, and time-consuming.

Bearing in mind what has been previously stated is that I propose my project to be worked as a regular content unit considered to be a part of a bilingual Chilean school's curriculum design.

Sections of the paper can be distinguished as follows:

First, a theoretical framework section will introduce key concepts that must be clearly stated from the beginning: Literature, Children's and Young Adult Literature, and Bildungsroman.

Second, an analysis of the pertinence of the original work chosen both as a literature and as a pedagogical tool will be developed. This part will also highlight aspects I consider to be important both theoretically and more personally (e.g.: What is literature for me? Why am I doing this? What do I want to show/prove?), so that they will show up on the analysis later on. A small biography of the author will also be included.

A third section will present the Needs Analysis, a fundamental step required to model the content unit to be worked with during this project. It is highly important to observe the dynamics of the students' group in order to consider their needs, expectations, interests, and previous conceptions or thoughts on the subject, so this information is key, because it gives the teacher a clearer and more detailed view of the reality in which lessons will be developed and helps to design a suitable and effective syllabus. Being aware of the needs of the learners influences not only the content of the language course but also what potential can be exploited in terms of second language learning.

The Needs Analysis of this project will be carried out through a short survey in which students will have to answer—as concisely as possible—a set of questions regarding their literary preferences,

reading and study habits, and course expectations. After analyzed, this information will serve to design, implement, and improve the syllabus of the course.

The fourth section of this paper states a rationale where the reasons that justify and support the personal choice on the novel, author, genre, and syllabus design are given.

A fifth section is dedicated to the syllabus design, including the planning of all the lessons that will be worked during the course unit is presented. It is worth to mention that this takes into account the chosen literary work (novel) as well as the objectives, topics, activities, and the results derived from the Needs Analysis in order to make the unit as complete, engaging, and interesting as possible for students. Relevant information of the school where it will be applied will also be provided in this part of the paper.

Finally, some sample lessons containing the actual material that would be used in the course are provided. Each one of them includes a brief description of how the class could be taught, presented as a guideline to help the reader creating a more complete scope on how the lessons would look like when applied.

As a closure, I would like to state that this project is not only intended as a pedagogical tool for teachers, but also as a guide and help for shaping students into critical thinkers, fostering their independence and making them assume responsibilities and —somehow— take certain control of their own learning process as far as they can by trusting their own intellectual capacities and losing the fear to be active participants within it.



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. Literature.

Attempting to provide a definition for literature is not an easy task. Due to the multiple sources of information, material, approaches, opinions, and points of view available on the subject nowadays is that it becomes a tough nut to crack, but one thing is for sure: there is no universally fixed conception of the concept. Thus, the complexity of the several factors that play a role within it makes the elaboration of a single definition something not really down-to-earth. As Eagleton says “Literature must indeed be re-situated within the field of general cultural production; but each mode of such production demands a semiology of its own, which is not conflatable with some universal ‘cultural’ discourse.” (Criticism and Ideology, 6)

For the sake of this paper, not every written piece will be considered as literature; since it seems illogic and utopian pretending to equally apply criteria of creativity, fiction, beauty, artistic merit, and meaningful cultural sense to the whole vast corpus of written works available nowadays.

Literature will be; thus, written production that is creative and imaginative in what they constitute as a work at the same time it makes reference to a fictional or non-fictional reality according to their historical and sociopolitical moment; put together by “art and labour” (Widowson 18) so as to create “an invention or fiction and therefore ‘original’” (18) in the sense they are a unique product that will be considered as valuable according to the parameters just mentioned.

This can be seen, as Eagleton says, in that “there is no such thing as a literary work which is valuable *itself*, regardless of what anyone might have said or come to say about it. ‘Value’ is a transitive term: it means whatever is valued by certain people in specific situations, according to particular criteria and in the light of given purposes.” (Literary Theory: An Introduction, 10)

In other words, it is the uniqueness of these written works —given by the production of a reality allowed by their extraordinary use of the language— what articulates them to be considered as literature in this project. The process of making ‘realities’ by a proper and distinctive use of language at its best and most beautiful, but also setting boundaries to the sociocultural and political moment of history they are published in.

This point can be summed up, as Widowson states, by looking at this quotation:

I assume them to be constructions of written language whose ‘reality’ is comprised by that linguistic construction (their reality, in other words, is that encoded in their ‘fabrication’ — however much they may allude to a reality beyond their own). Similarly, they are ‘imaginary’ (products of the imagination) whose relationship to experiential reality in the material world exists only by way of their formal contrivance.’ (18)

Nevertheless, it is important to consider is the fact that the concept of literature has experienced many changes as centuries have passed by. In the first chapter of his book, Eagleton describes the changes such notion has gone through; claiming that in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century texts that contained “certain standards of ‘polite letters’” (3) were considered literary works; instead of the ones that included fiction, such as street ballads or drama. However, with the rise of poetry from the English Romantic Movement —Eagleton states— people began to associate the word ‘literature’ with ‘imagination’. It was then when the Romantic English Poets gave birth to a new concept of literature: since they built new universes and realities through the power of words, a relationship between the ‘imaginative’ (or imagination) and literature was established.

In *What Is Literature?* (1949), Jean Paul Sartre claims that ‘the writer must always bear in mind two aspects: the purpose of his writing and the audience towards which it is directed’ (54). Thus, the reason for writing is always to cause an aesthetic pleasure in the reader, or, in his own words, an ‘aesthetic joy’ (55). If the author succeeds in causing such effect on readers, then “the work is achieved” (58). Sartre also explains that the writer must clearly define his audience before starting to write; so he needs to adapt and elaborate his writing depending on his choice, defining how much information is presented and added, and what is necessary or not to include.

Roland Barthes also discusses the existing personal and meaningful relationship between reader and text, introducing the idea of reading as a pleasure; an intimate act of entering other's universe, a deep connection between two 'true people' — the writer and the reader (The pleasure of the text 15). Good literature inspires pleasure in their reading. Thus, in truly divine literature, the reader finds a sensual experience, a communion between writer and reader, a bridging between two minds outside of space and time that knows no barriers: "(...)The book creates meaning, the meaning creates life." (36)

The act of reading, then, goes beyond the cognitive aspect, for coherent cognitive relationships — or 'real world' ones— do not fill us with vitality as the universe offered in literature does. It supposes "(...) [to]fill, grant euphoria" (14), a discovery of the extraordinary and the unreal; an exploration of the text and the relativity of its reality: "The pleasure of the text is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas—for my body does not have the same ideas as I do." (23)

When talking about what literature is, it is not only about building up a suitable formal definition and setting parameters of acceptability regarding its works, but also about the masterpiece the writer achieves when creating: a unique personal relationship built between reader and text; a rich dialogue taking place from the very moment printed words trigger the creation of realities, an exchange of universes; an ongoing permanent dialogue among actors in reading. This must be understood as a basis of an extraordinary interaction, a wider perspective towards a better understanding of the matter from a pedagogical point of view.

## 2. Children's Literature.

If one starts to think about this matter, it is highly possible to arrive at the conclusion that children's literature is usually the first one we are faced to. In Seth Lerer's words: "From the beginnings of recorded culture, people have grown up with the books they learned and loved."

(Children's Literature: a reader's history, from Aesop to Harry Potter, 17)

From fairy tales to short stories, fables, poems, and even stories told as songs; there have always been literary works particularly created for children.

Even though setting a definition of this genre is not easy, it is necessary to state and define what kind of works will be considered as such and what characteristics distinguish it from others. To that end, Matthew Grenby's words on children's literature rise as crucial: "[Children's Literature is] (...) a category of books the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: children." (Children's Literature, 199). This definition; therefore, is determined by goal: it wants to be something in particular, for it is supposed to establish connections with its reading audience (children) with which it declares itself to be overtly and purposefully interested. "It is the only category of literature that is defined in terms of its intended readership." (199), Grenby says, and continues explaining it by stating that "Children's literature is not children's literature because it is written *by* children, nor because it is *about* children, but only because of who it was ostensibly written *for*." (199)

From a pedagogical scope, this literary genre offers a wonderful early starting point for encouraging kids to read at the same time it attempts to open their minds, discover new universes, explore different realities, foster their imagination, meet characters and identify with them, and so on. On this vein, Peter Hunt says

“ (...) To many readers, children’s books are a matter of private delight, which means, perhaps, that they are *real* literature—if ‘literature’ consists of texts which engage, change, and provoke intense responses in readers.” (Introduction: The World of Children’s Literature Studies, 1)

As a teacher of a second language, these works also represent a very good opportunity to teach vocabulary and other linguistic elements, due to the motivational and appealing potential of this kind of literary works. Seth Lerer states that “[Children’s Literature] shows children finding worlds within the book and books in the world” (27); so one of the main aims of children’s literature arises: to foster the habit of reading in kids and, hopefully, develop in them the love for literature by making them familiarize and get closer to words and especially with the realities presented in stories, tales, fables, and similar literary pieces. In his own words: “Learning how to read is lifetime, and life-defining experience” (1).

Later on, Lerer continues explaining his ideas on the topic by stating that we must be careful with what we consider as such, since there is a contradiction with the actual definition of the genre. This basically happens because of two reasons: we are not sure of what type of literature is especially for children (because of its content and language) and we are also not entirely clear on what children themselves consider as literature. It is important, then, to remember that a child’s mind works differently than the adults’ one. There is also a third meaning left behind: the author’s. One cannot be completely certain of what the author means by the story told, so a solid and

universal definition of children's literature becomes impossible to formulate—as happens with most genres, since there is no totally 'objective' way to discover and define them.

Another very important aspect to highlight when discussing about this kind of literature is its didactic nature; traditionally seen as attempting to educate children to “act like the civilised social beings adults want them to be” (Hunt 76) and defined as “stories we identify as encouraging children towards acceptable adult behaviour” (76) that carry a strong cautionary purpose, intended to warn the audience (children) about the terrible dangers to be faced in the 'world outside'. In relation to the latter, Grenby says that “a good example are the cautionary tales popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: long- forgotten stories and poems warning about the horrible fates befalling naughty children.”(7)

As children's literature is didactic in its origin and nature, it leads to see it as highly ideologized; for it is not possible to ignore the fact that it carries important ideas the author wants to deliver to the audience; a pre-determined underlying combination of values beliefs, and conceptions that serve as a skeleton for a narration seeking to fulfill a purpose meant by the author when writing. This, of course, will have an impact on the reader's mind, and—considering that the intended audience are children— this becomes highly important aspect when analyzing the genre.

Thereafter, all literary production belonging to this genre will not be free of somehow 'secondary' elements that depict a more complex intention; for childhood is the earliest stage of life: one in which mind, heart, and soul start being molded as basis of what we are going to be as adults later on. Regarding this, Peter hunt says:

“(...) we can reflect on the direct or indirect influence that children's books have, and have had, socially, culturally, and historically. They are overtly important educationally and commercially—with consequences across the culture, from language to politics: most adults,

and almost certainly the vast majority in positions of power and influence, read children's books as children, and it is inconceivable that the ideologies permeating those books had no influence on their development.” (1)

For example, the morals present in this kind of literature imply an ideology that the author wants to point out. Also, the way the story is told carries an implicit set of ideas, values, intentions, and principles itself. Even though characters and their story may be fictional, and even though children are usually aware of this; they are able to identify their attitudes, relationships, personalities, and realities; hence, ultimately relating themselves with them and connecting such elements to their own experiences; which ends up making the stories effectively significant for them.

These unique features and techniques —that appear as natural and simple at first sight— would then end up delicately implanting the author's ideology and convictions in the children's mind, something achieved by no other mean than the use of language. In *Language and ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992), Stephens points out, that by being exposed to these works, children are able to “[mirror] other forms of subject/sociality interactions, so that the creation of characters as intersubjective constructs functions as a model for the construction of reader subjectivity.” (6)

Usually, by the end of the story children's ability to grasp the ideology behind the text appears, and; therefore, its potential impact on their shaping and conceptions of the world and ideas will be triggered as an either short-term or long-term consequence. Once again, the author's intended underlying meaning and message appears as a guide or starting point for children to build their conception of the world; one of this genre's main —and often underrated— characteristics.



The question of how texts influence their audience has always been of particular interest for those in the field of children's books. The books have always had a strong element of the didactic, and they have generally been assumed to have directly beneficial effects on their readers. (Hunt 163)

### 3. Young Adult Literature.

“Of all passages, coming of age, or reaching adolescence is the purest, in that  
it is the loneliest.”

— David Van Biema, *The Journey of Our Lives*.

Technically, Young Adult Literature is described as “anything that readers between the approximate ages of twelve and eighteen choose to read either for leisure reading or to fill school assignments.” (Nilsen and Donelson 23); but for the sake of this paper and its pedagogical aims, I will construct a deeper and more structured meaning of the genre.

When introducing young adult literature, narrowing its definition can be difficult, as it is defined in multiple ways: “Young adult (YA) literature is an evolving genre, with consistent changes occurring in the structure and mode of reading.” (3), claims Robyn E. Howell in her paper *Young Adult (YA) Literature: details and trendsetting*. This can be attributed to two main reasons: firstly, the concept is a much recent conception within the literary world and to the eye of experts; and, secondly, because the grammatical components of its technical conception are constantly moving and evolving according to the social and cultural elements that gave birth to the notion in the first place.

In relation to the latter, Michael Carter says “The term ‘young adult literature’ is inherently amorphous, for its constituent terms ‘young adult’ and ‘literature’ are dynamic, changing as culture and society — which provide their context — change.” (The value of Young Adult Literature, 1); whereas several authors refer to the age group as a general concern. For example, Latrobe states it as “literature written for students in grades 7-12” (*An Introduction to Ten Outstanding Young Adult Authors in the United States (Children's Literature)*, 68); while Naomi

Bates —a former US librarian— offers another point of view, suggesting that the age group the genre targets shifts and moves with the times (363), defining it as literature written for teens, with a teen or teens as the central protagonists(364); and Cart — a previous Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) president— suggests the age range is until age 25, when the human brain reaches maturity (4).

In order to fill practical ‘technical’ reasons, this paper will concretely consider young adult literature as any literary material teenagers or pre-adults choose to read —either as assignment or just for pleasure —that is appealing to their current reality because it is related to the emotional, intellectual, and developmental components of a young adult reader in the real world.

Nevertheless —and either the description of the genre is narrowly or widely elaborated— its true value cannot be assessed if not found in the way the needs of its readers are addressed, since the transition from adolescence to adulthood is at the core of most of the works belonging to it; developing stories that talk about issues their target audience is going through at the moment they read. This can be depicted and better explained through the following quote:

Often described as ‘developmental’, these needs recognize that young adults are beings in evolution, in search of self and identity; beings who are constantly growing and changing, morphing from the condition of childhood to that of adulthood. That period of passage called ‘young adulthood’ is a unique part of life, distinguished by unique needs that are – at minimum — physical, intellectual, emotional, and societal in nature. (Cart, 2)

Even though the “genre” is commonly thought as featuring a troubled teenager in constant search of answers and attempting to build his identity, young adult writers have created thousands of

variations on this theme; but the reason the word *genre* is put between quotation marks is that it differs from what are traditionally defined as literary genres: the multiplicity of ways to present and develop the plot of the story causes such difference with the most ‘colloquial’ definitions. Protagonists might take important steps toward growing up while living several experiences in many different settings, such as travelling outer space, challenging nature by climbing a mountain, finding their way home after being lost, attending a courtroom either as a witness or on trial, narrating part of a love relationship or facing up to a disaster in their family or personal life. No matter these changes, reading allows teens to better understand characters’ actions and relate to their stories, so as to make insightful decisions or elaborate opinions regarding their own lives or current realities based on those elements.

At this point, establishing a comparison between children’s literature and young adult literature becomes possible. Whereas the former works in didactical terms, using archetypes and seeking to educate and transmit a certain ideology; the latter is committed to identification with its readership by offering an opportunity to see themselves reflected in the pages at the same time it seeks to solve the intrinsic tension, need to belong, search for answers, feeling of solitude, and continuous self-discovery that young adulthood is. As Cart points out “(…) To see oneself in the pages of a young adult book is to receive the reassurance that one is not alone after all, not other, not alien but, instead, a viable part of a larger community of beings who share a common humanity.” (3)

Another important difference is while children’s literature presents an often concrete fix reality — in order to make it as familiar for kids as possible—, young adult literature provides a fictional landscape to which readers can relate and which “includes real life problems with solutions and possibly cathartic moments for the readers” (Howell 27). Eventually, this identification will contribute to produce members of a future society through fostering not only love for reading and

literacy but also raising empathy towards others and tolerance for the differences both in terms of personality and sociocultural realities. Regarding this, Howell refers as characters in young adult literature depicted as some kind of model teenagers can relate to and whose “experience in the world helps to shape, mold, and make them, in most cases, better human beings and more able to cope with the adult world they are about to enter” (27).

It is important to mention that a proper analysis and definition of this literature requires careful consideration of all elements previously stated, since they contribute to its development and clarifying traits; but at the same time a critical eye is put on the stories told as they often contain lessons for readers to absorb that can also be targeted as controversial or questionable for some skeptic critics that do not blindly trust the well known benefits young adult literature offers and consider the intended readership as very conveniently persuadable.

Despite young adult literature is not necessarily a mirror of the world — but rather an experience or a form of living while going through pages— this genre is highly important in terms of human development, and finds value in the ability to expose truth to youngsters as a helpful frame of reference capable of equipping them with necessary tools to face the “impending adulthood and for assuming the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (Cart 3). In addition, young adult literature provides an undeniably powerful voice for the youth, for while reading answers to life-changing truths and worries can be found.

#### **4. The Bildungsroman.**

The Bildungsroman as genre —also known as coming of age literature— focuses on the transition and rites of passage of an adolescent and/or young adult to a more mature stage of life and is recognized for how it educates its readers about personal growth and self-consciousness as the story develops. Literary works of this kind allow individuals to understand such process and its characteristics, as they tend to present the main character's departure from their stage of being an adolescent to entering adulthood; being often described as “a ‘novel of education’ in which the central character learns about the world as he or she grows into it.” (Peck 11)

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the coming of age genre had literary elements and functions that prominently differed from other types of novel genres. By acknowledging the true definition of it, a true establishment of what the genre consists of is possible; at the same time distinguishing their difference with similar ones is allowed. . Even though these novels are closely associated with adolescent/young adult fiction and get usually confused with others due to its blurry definition; it is very important to bear in mind that as situations and circumstances in life change, conditions in the genre must change too. Subsequently, the literary basis of the bildungsroman are still the same but has adapted to the current personal conflicts and dilemmas.

On this matter, John Au points out that “(...)Many readers tend to know that these coming of age books exemplify growth through rites of passage and obstacles in life; however, those qualities can be found in almost any book, especially in the young adult section.” (The Bildungsroman Genre: Defining the Old and New, 2) so the importance of creating a more exhaustive definition of the subject is a key stone for the sake of this paper and the clarity of the readers.

The genre's etymology comes from German and means 'formation novel', which leads to the inherently implied characteristic literary values that made it significant and—even though having blurred over time and sociocultural changes— became popular and distinctive of these kind of works in comparison to other book genres targeted towards a youth and adolescent audience.

While some authors emphasize its educational aspect pointing out that it is "known for narrating stories on the subject of coming of age and rite of passage [...] recognized for educating its readers about personal growth and self-consciousness." (Au 1); others emphasize that it seeks to fulfill an purpose of identification by means of a transitional literary element for readers: "the bildungsroman is a kind of pre-novel, or preamble, because it only recounts the start of a person's life until he is armed for existence, ready to live his novel" (Telnes 25)

By this time, it becomes pretty evident that the basic purpose and meaning of this genre and its novels is to form and/or educate the reader, but it is still necessary to state what kind of education it is so as to avoid confusion again. In the case if these novels, the psychological, sociocultural, and philosophical elements help educate the protagonist—and at the same time it does so with the readers, for they closely relate to him or her— about developing personality, elaborate reflections on relevant issues according to the life period they currently live in, and think about principles or morals. At the same time, bildungsroman also portrays how the main character is significant and finds a place or path in life through personal growth, discovery, resolution, and how they deal with it under particular circumstances, so both the 'real' references to the world of experiences and the aesthetical help developing a style and finally define how the story is written and why elements were needed.

Up to a point, then, "researchers have portrayed the genre's typical plot with a protagonist trying to understand culture in order to mature or fulfill human achievement", (Au 5) but at the same



time have also “clearly acknowledge the fact that this genre is not based on actions and deeds, but on how it is connected psychologically.” (Au 6) and stated that “coming of age novels present more of the people and the surroundings influencing the protagonist and explaining to us the gradual formation of his inner self [...] Also, this type of novel shows more events and happenings with their emotional effects on the protagonist, whom we should see becoming through himself.” (Hardin 17)

Before moving on in this paper, attention must be paid to Bakhtin’s ideas on this issue so as to achieve better closure. In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, he addresses the topic from both a historical and a literary perspective, so his analysis highlights areas of the genre that are pertinent to what this paper aims to.

For example, when talking about the origins of bildungsroman, he sets its starting point from the basis that “the hero is a constant in the novel's formula and all other quantities—the spatial environment, social position, fortune, in brief, all aspects of the hero's life and destiny—can therefore be variables.” (21)

It is when the three main elements that gave birth to the novel as genre (time, place, and hero) blend and change together and differ from the previous typical scheme of limited combinations that the bildungsroman is born. Time, place and hero are not just fixed categories, but become dynamic, malleable and inseparable.

Regarding the structure of bildungsroman, Bakhtin focuses on a series of elements and literary aspects that change at the same time the previous 'traditional novel' structure mutates from an idyllic reality (present in pastoral novels of the Romantic Movement, for example) to a different place in which reality constitutes the entire contrary. In the first ones, a young and innocent protagonist is portrayed in a safe, unpolluted, natural, and timeless space of exception that appears as his 'comfort zone'; generating almost no difficulty for the main character to develop his story in a peaceful way with almost no contrasts found. "The image of man in the novel—which is barely distinguishable—is quite static, as static as the world that surrounds him. This novel does not recognize human emergence and development." (11), Bakhtin claims; and continues to talk about this issue by saying that "events change his destiny, change his position in life and society, but he himself remains unchanged and adequate to himself" (20); so no matter the existence of conflicts or questions, the protagonist never ultimately experiences greatest changes in terms of both inner and external realities. By now, it has been set that such role is a central one, but it is still a non dynamic one; just as Bakhtin explains when saying that

"(...)Given all the possible differences in construction, in the image of the hero itself there is neither movement nor emergence. The hero is that immobile and fixed point around which all movement in the novel takes place. The permanence and immobility of the hero are prerequisite to the novelistic movement." (21)

On the contrary, in the bildungsroman the protagonist has to leave that safe zone and move to a different one, where time and space are both corrupted. Now, everything happening in the novel directly impacts on the hero, who will have to face trials — suffering, sorrow, grief, pollution, the effect of time on his body, and similar ones— that will unleash an inner battle in which the consequences of his actions will significantly impact on reality as “he emerges along with the world and reflects the historical emergence of the world itself” (23). Also, the hero moves from one stage of life to another in which, due to all challenges he has experienced and the lessons he has had to learn, he is not the same anymore and the notion of the ‘hero of emotions’ rises.

“He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man.” (23)

## 5. Stephen Chbosky's Biography

Stephen Chbosky is an American novelist, screenwriter, and film director. He was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1970.

In 1992, he graduated from the University of Southern California's screenwriting program. He wrote, directed, and acted in the 1995 independent film *The Four Corners of Nowhere*, which got him his first agent, was accepted by the Sundance Film Festival, and became one of the first films shown on the Sundance Channel. In the late 1990s, he wrote several unproduced screenplays, including *Audrey Hepburn's Neck* and *Schoolhouse Rock*.

In 1994, Chbosky was working on a very different type of book than his most well known work —*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*— when he wrote the line, "I guess that's just one of the perks of being a wallflower". He recalls that he wrote that line and stopped, realizing somewhere in that sentence was the kid he was really trying to find.

After several years of gestation, Chbosky began researching and writing *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, an epistolary coming of age novel that follows the intellectual and emotional maturation of a teenager—who writes under the alias of Charlie— over the course of his first year of high school. The book is semi-autobiographical, as he has said. This novel, his first one, was published by MTV Books in 1999, and became an immediate popular success among teenage readers. By 2000, it was MTV Books' best-selling title, and *The New York Times* noted in 2007 that it had sold more than 700,000 copies.

In 2000, Chbosky edited *Pieces*, an anthology of short stories. The same year, he worked with director Jon Sherman on a film adaptation of Michael Chabon's novel *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, though the project fell apart by August 2000. He also wrote the screenplay for the 2005 film

adaptation of the Broadway rock musical *Rent*, which received mixed reviews. In late 2005, he started writing the film adaptation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

He wrote the screenplay and directed the film on his novel. Production took place in mid-2011, and the film was released in fall 2012. It starred well known young cinematographic stars such as Logan Lerman, Ezra Miller, and Emma Watson.

Chbosky was nominated in the Best Adapted Screenplay category for the 2013 Writers Guild Awards and the film won the 2013 Independent Spirit Awards for Best First Feature, as well as the 2013 People's Choice Award for Best Dramatic Movie.

The writer currently lives in Los Angeles, California.

#### 4. **The Perks of Being a Wallflower.**

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a novel written by Stephen Chbosky —an American author— that belongs to Bildungsroman literature and was first distributed on February 1, 1999, by MTV Publishers.

Set in the early 1990s, this story follows the life of an introverted teenager who writes his own story through a series of letters he signs under the alias of ‘Charlie’ — assuming both the role of protagonist and the one of narrator. During the whole novel, Charlie takes the readers through his freshman year of high school as a new student in a Pittsburgh suburb; a setting in which he is the *wallflower*: shy, awkward, quiet and likely to isolate, he is not interested in participating in social activities. Even though he has no feeling of belonging or fitting social circles, he is highly intelligent for a boy his age and regardless he is unpopular at school, his figure is depicted as an unconventional thinker; very sensitive and empathetic.

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is an epistolary novel that features Charlie —a young man in High School— writing letters to an unnamed friend; letters in which he combines a melancholy mood with intensity and a little naiveté when approaching the situations and people around him. Through his narrative, the reader learns about his family, classmates, teachers, and friends but mainly about his own moods and reactions.

Chbosky intelligently uses an old fashioned genre, the epistolary novel, to tell a story about estrangement and memory. Charlie, the main character and protagonist of the story, is in a search to make sense of a past he has needed to forget about (of which the reader receives dosaged information) and a present that makes him a ‘wallflower’.

Charlie's process is one of maturation and coping with what it means to grow up. He seems to be isolated from his own family, his peers at school, and even a little from himself.

What Chbosky seems to suggest is that isolation and introspection are the seeds and motivators for confessional art. Charlie starts writing because he feels different, isolated, and needs to get back to a core he has been set apart from, so his journey is one of returning home and returning to meaning through learning to communicate again.

Letters and writing are the first step to reach an audience and an affective "other", so the process is actually discovering the perks of *being invisible* (as the Spanish translation dubs the more complex concepts of "wallflower") and finding out that being *visible* may bring greater dangers by making you more vulnerable, but at the same time, more satisfactions as you become "someone".

In addition, Chbosky's writing style in *Perks* is very familiar, appealing, and close to the reader; something that helps creating a more intimate connection between the text and the reader. This 'atypical' writing decision is both innovative and risky, but has proven to be smart enough to softly develop the plot and engage the reader with Charlie's vivid accounts.

## NEEDS ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section of the project is to study the main students' group characteristics and give the teacher a clear vision on the current class' status.

In order to achieve this, two areas of such reality will be taken into account: firstly, the school's mission statement, aims, and student's intended profile will be presented — for they define the educational setting in which students get along and directly determine what kind of person studies there— and; secondly, questions about students' interests, previous conceptions, preferences, background knowledge, disposition towards the subject, and level of knowledge will be posed.

Through a short survey, students will have to answer seven questions in order to provide information for the teacher so as to make suitable pedagogical choices regarding the content unit's design and in terms of syllabus, objectives' settlement, and development of activities/tasks. This procedure will also help to determine the gap between the existing skills, knowledge and abilities of the students and the desired ones; as an effectively way to achieve such level and goals; for once the breach is determined, better decisions on the type of training required —if this is the preferred action— and the form of delivering the contents can be taken. At the same time, a needs analysis helps raising students' self-awareness and identify where they are in terms of their knowledge, skills and competencies versus where they or the teacher wish to be (learning goals). Logically, learners tend to perform better when they actually see a reason or relevance underlying a unit of study, which helps; at the same time, to make possible a better support from the teacher for them.

For this purpose, the next section of this project expound the school's fundamental guidelines, while the document that has been designed based on the school's educational an moral principles



(so that it is suitable for all students of the chosen class to answer) can be found on appendix n°1 at the end of this project. It is worth noting that before students start writing down their answers, each one of the survey's question will be properly explained to them, since they may contain unfamiliar terminology or examples may need to be provided in order to avoid confusion.

• **School's guidelines:**

*Name of the institution:* St Margaret's British School for Girls.

*Type of institution:* Bilingual, single sex, and private school

*Religion of the School:* Secular.

*Location:* 150 St Margaret's Street, Bosques de Montemar, Concon.

*Number of students:* 99

*School's mission statement:* St Margaret's has based its education on its motto "*Recte Fac Nec Time*" (*Do right – Fear Not*), within boundaries of Christian values, and pursues educating young ladies who are considerate, committed to the community, and to the world, tolerant, with integrity, enriched in knowledge and disciplined in manners.

To achieve this, the school has developed a demanding academic curriculum, strengthened by a full command of the English language that enables each pupil to reach her highest potential, confident of her capabilities, and prepared to make a worthwhile contribution to society.

*School's aims:*

1. English culture:

Achieve English language that enables them to understand and express ideas using varied styles of communication with confidence and creativity.

Offer clear opportunities to develop cultural awareness.

To prepare each student to achieve the appropriate level so they can successfully pass the Preliminary English Test and the First Certificate Exam, both from the Cambridge University.

Make the participation of girls in sports activities a development of values such as fair play, commitment, and teamwork that will take part of their lives.

2. Intellectual development:

Provide students a variety of learning styles that enable them to appreciate and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Train students in understanding the global context of interaction between language and cultures.

Ensure that students acquire the attitudes, skills, and understanding to initiate and respond to changes in itself, in society, and technology.

Prepare students to face national and international tests according to their capabilities.

3. Values development:

Promote in each student the development of ethical, moral, and spiritual values which lead to be responsible citizens who respect the tradition, culture, and environment.

Motivate and guide each student's confidence and ability to handle pressure, risk, and failure as well as success.

Promote personal and social development of students by providing opportunities and guidance in situations where decision-making, leadership, responsibility, and initiative shows, so they may acquire the skills and confidence to take control of their own life.

*Students' profile:*

School's girls strive to be:

- Bilingual: achieve mastery of English language enables them to understand and express ideas using several styles of communication with confidence and creativity. They also successfully pass international exams demonstrating mastery of the language.
- Tolerant: our students acquire a cultural awareness that enables them to appreciate their own culture and traditional values of other individuals and communities.
- Athletes: participate in sports to strengthen their physical development as well as training to support its value against life through fair play, commitment, and teamwork.
- Balanced: St Margaret's students develop confidence and ability to handle pressure, risk, and failure as well as success. They appreciate and understand their feminine essence, its strengths and weaknesses.

- Flexible: students acquire attitudes, skills, and understanding to initiate and respond to changes in themselves, in society and technology.
- Proactive: they develop decision-making, leadership, responsibility, and initiative towards their learning so that allows personal, social, and emotional growth to regulate their lives.
- Respectful: maintain a discipline act, courteous, honest, and prudent at all times in order to achieve responsible use of their freedom and contribute to their family and society.
- Rich intellect: students develop their cognitive potential through a methodology that encourages the acquisition of skills and abilities in different areas of knowledge and art.

## RATIONALE

### **Bibliographic card:**

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*  
Stephen Chbosky  
MTV Books/Pocket Books  
First Edition  
February, 1999  
USA

### **1. The ‘what?’ component**

This unit is designed to guide students through Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, a novel that spans several themes and experiences typically encountered during adolescence. This pedagogical proposal is designed to be taught to students from age 15 to 18, having as a very important pre-requisite to be put into practice that the learners manage a pre-advanced or an advanced level of English and preferably study in a bilingual school, so that their level of familiarization with the target language and its skills —reading, speaking, listening, writing, and grammar— is high and they are immersed into active practice of the same.

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* has been chosen, then, as a pedagogical tool to effectively teach a second language to students of 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Year of High School *through* English literature rather than only using it as a reading ‘comprehension’ tool for, as McKay points out, “literature is ideal for developing an awareness of language use” (Literature in the ESL Classroom, 530).

Properly supported and solidly justified in its pedagogical choices —on both the curriculum and the syllabus design— this project will aim to combine and balance both the institution’s and the

teacher's point of view on the subject; so as to achieve the previously mentioned learning goals through the design of a syllabus that follows their current English Department guidelines and program and attempts to accomplish its broader aims. Due to this, working with this novel addresses the previously expected educational experience and provides a suitable basis and environment for students to take advantage of their learning potential at its best.

## **2. The 'why?' component**

Taking into account the results of the needs analysis, the first aspect to be highlighted is that most of their answers regarding what kind of subject they would like to read about were connected to ideas that *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* deals with. These answers included topics such as love, friendship, family, music, sports, sexuality, and emotional problems.

Based on this, the choice of working with this novel aims to take advantage of it as being part of a highly appealing genre for teenagers, who are both the target audience of the book and the age group this content unit is intended for. Regarding this, McKay states that:

“If literary texts are to be used successfully in the classroom, they must be carefully selected and approached in a manner which promotes an aesthetic interaction between the reader and the text.” (529)

The story *Perks* narrates develops in a similar setting to the one any teenager—as in the case of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of High School students this project is intended for—daily live in and also portrays the same stage of life they are (adolescence).

Bottino refers to the importance of such sociocultural identification in language learning terms by stating that it is “seen as means of transmitting important ideas and feelings, also sometimes

universal, in the target language” (211) and as “a way in which students encounter a wide variety of words and expressions” (211)

While reading, the traits of the Bildungsroman described above appear throughout the novel, strongly setting the pace of Charlie’s journey: a process of maturation that is long, arduous and gradual; involving repeated clashes between his needs, desires, points of view, morals/judgments and the world outside his mind and heart—something that happens at various levels, such as love, friendship, school performance, family issues, etc. As *Perks* does not only examine the hard facts of growing up, but focuses deeply on the youth’s feelings and thoughts about them; the novel’s importance is not just being considered as a novel of development; but as an appealing literary work in which the hero (Charlie) actively shapes himself both from within and without, something that creates personal harmony and balance between the main character and the world at the same time it focuses on his educational journey towards a meaningful idea of himself and his role in the world.

If the students’ preferences on activities to work with, perceptions about their own learning process, potential spotted difficulties towards the subject, and predispositions to the act of reading itself are equally considered; then the pedagogical challenge of engaging them with reading and motivating them through innovative pedagogical activities finds here an advantageous starting point. At the same time, these considerations help to assure pedagogical goals, such as an emphasis in fostering independent and critical thinking, continuous reading, reflection, and a deeper analysis of what is read. Also, the same favorable outlook is offered by the school’s setting, structure, community, key principles, human environment, facilities, and the characteristics of its educational project.



At this point, all the previously described literary and educational aspects do nothing but confirm the personal choice of this novel as a basis for the project, pointing out that the expanse of social and cultural issues —also coupled with several and constant literary references to American literature and its value— present in the story it develops is highly rich; another reason why the novel stands out as a wholly relevant experience in several aspects of the students' learning process.

### 3. The 'how?' component:

The results of the needs analysis regarding the students' likeness or distaste for reading indicated that, even though they are highly familiarized with the activity and are used to reading as a requirement for school, it is not something most of them enjoy dedicating time to; especially if it is not compulsory for them in order to be graded.

Among the main reasons that students argued not to like reading are considering it boring, time consuming, confusing, and difficult to do. In other words, almost all of them stated that they do not feel comfortable when asked to work with a book in any level other than memorizing facts, dates, names, and other 'useful for a reading comprehension test' information. In contrast, some students answered they see in reading a good opportunity to expand vocabulary, spend their free time, and learn about themselves, others, or specific topics.

It is necessary for a well designed syllabus, then, that both aspects of these results are taken into account at the moment of making choices on its style, content, and activities; so as to address their stances towards the subject and achieve the expected learning outcomes and goals.

In terms of activities and topics, *Perks* offers a wide scope of material to work with. For example—and because the book is written as a series of letters—it can be seen as an example of journalism (first, at a very basic level and then becoming better as the novel develops); which is a useful writing technique whereby students can obtain an outlet for their own writing practices and all the linguistic and grammatical skills such task requires to be effectively performed. Also, students can be asked to keep a journal and/or to respond to the protagonist's letters so as to

engage them with the story and involve their perspectives as avenues to pursue, requiring the class to dive into specific excerpts in a more thorough or personal manner.

Class discussion and a developed line of inquiry can allow the teacher to steer learners towards several assorted areas of focus. For example, when discussing definitions of the reliable and unreliable narrator (a common and useful literary device), students will notice that Charlie could certainly be dubbed reliable, yet he is sometimes inaccurate in his assumptions; here the protagonist is a victim of his own naïveté, complicating how reliable his voice actually is.

Other areas of the book that can be used for discussion and investigation can be worked to tackle the veritable whirlwind of social dilemmas, such as stated and unstated rules of behavior among peer sub-groups, drug and alcohol abuse, dating roles and expectations, sexual identity, alternative lifestyles, pressure for success, physical and emotional abuse, mental illness, needs of accelerated students, teen counseling, pregnancy, STDs, etc.

Through a careful design of the course's syllabus and lesson planning, students will be able to discover, work and reinforce their learning capabilities at the same time they become aware of their sociocultural and emotional reality; as they understand that, just like them, the characters in the book face emotional and moral challenges every day, and also understand that they are not alone but going through a natural phase in life: a transition within the process of growing up. This sense of belonging will be a highly important dimension of the project, considering its particular interest in dealing with the emotional area and the students' personal values; a dimension this novel gives the green light to so as to pose a discussion and reflect on by properly guiding the learners while they look into their own minds and hearts.

This project will aim to engage students with reading by designing innovative pedagogical activities; foster their critical thinking abilities through questioning the text and reflecting on what they read, and also creating self-awareness of their learning potential through guided classroom and take-home work as a complement of each other.

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Having articulated most of the reasons that justify the use of this particular literary work and its educational significance for a literature class; a fourth dimension must be included in order to explain the principles underlying the syllabus design, teaching method, and planning for classroom instruction that is going to be used, stating a reflection on what and why is there to be applied when teaching.

Based on the Needs Analysis results, the types of syllabi chosen for this project have a *learner-centered* approach and are specifically *content-based, skill-based, and notional/functional*.

This project is designed taking into consideration “a movement towards learning-centeredness in higher education” (McDonald 2007), which means to stop focusing on the teacher and his role but assessing quality teaching and learning through shared responsibilities, self awareness of the students’ own learning process, and independent learning. This way, the syllabus, as Grunert states, moves “beyond mere communication to a learning aid” (The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach, 1997) and becomes an effective teaching tool; for a learning-centred approach asks teachers “to consider how each and every aspect of your course can most effectively support student learning” (3).

In addition, the principles that sustain such approach arise as suitable for the learning goals this course has, as it “defines student responsibilities for successful course work [...] describes active

learning and [...] fosters critical thinking and independence” (5) so the developmental needs of students—which in this project correspond to the needs analysis results—are acknowledged and used as useful information in the design of the course and help to make suitable pedagogical choices according to them.

“The emphasis is upon the learner, who it is hoped will be engaged in the implementation of the syllabus design as far as that is practically possible. The learners’ awareness of the course they are studying helps them increase their interest and motivation, attached with the positive effect of developing the skills required to learn.” (Mohseni, 2008)

Regarding the content-based syllabus, it is intended to focus on teaching specific information and content by using the actual language students are being taught. About this, Mohseni states that “although the subject matter is of primary and vital importance, language learning occurs concurrently with the content learning.” (n.p.) and highlights that “learners are at the same time language students and learners of whatever content and information is being taught” (n.p.)

This supposes dealing with information in order to develop further work of the communicative purpose and conceptual meaning of language (i.e. *notions* and *functions*), so the application of a notional-functional syllabus approach which deals with the content of the language teaching assuming it is a number of *functions* that are performed on using the language or *notions* that language is utilized to express arises as suitable in this respect. In other words, this approach seeks for “what a learner communicates through language” (Mohseni, n.p.) and considers “grammatical items and situational at subsidiary level of importance” (n.p.) in order to achieve the communicative purpose of language and its conceptual meaning.

Finally, a skill-based syllabus approach will also be considered at the moment of designing, since the content of the language teaching is considered in this project to be a collection of specific abilities that may play a part in its usage; meaning, as Reilly states, that “skills are things that people must be able to do to be competent in a language” (Approaches to Foreign Language Syllabus Design, 1998) and assuming that lessons are “to develop more general competence in the language” (2) learning mostly incidentally “any information that may be available while applying the language skills.” (2)

## SYLLABUS DESIGN

### “Feeling infinite: Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* as a subject of language learning”

Teacher: Fernanda Lazo	Area: English Department
Lesson Period: Mondays 10:00 — 11:30 Wednesdays 12:00 — 13:30 (2 <sup>nd</sup> semester)	Sub Area: English Literature
Weekly Hours: 2 sessions per week (4 weekly pedagogical hours)	Number of Lessons: 14

#### 1. Course Description:

This is a pedagogical unit that will be taught as part of the regular 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Year of High School English subject classes. It consists of analyzing Stephen Chbosky’s novel ‘*The Perks of being a wallflower*’ as a subject of language learning rather than a mere reading comprehension exercise. It aims to develop students’ ability to relate the presented literary work to their own reality and experiences, to enhance the learning of a second language through fostering the love for reading as a habitual part of their lives, and to develop their



cognitive potential through a methodology that encourages the acquisition of skills and abilities in this area of knowledge.

## **2. General Objectives:**

The main goal of this content unit is to engage students with daily, meaningful reading tasks in English class and/or at home through the development of their self-awareness on both their interior world (emotions, feelings, mind, adolescence, etc.) and the one around them (school friends, parents, society, etc) is also stressed. The purpose of this pedagogical actions is that students feel motivated to read and know more about English literature so as to give them the chance to discover a second language at the same time they are guided to identify themselves with a story and its characters by enhancing their acknowledgement of the human value of a text to the readers as learners, acquiring the love for reading as a pleasure rather than an academic obligation.

## **3. Specific Objectives:**

During this course, students will distinguish specific characteristics of language and narrative of the novel that relate to their current reality, culture, and society as well as establishing pertinent bridges with the American ones. (e.g.: vocabulary, communicational situations or contexts of interaction, literary genres and forms, etc). Through guided reading, they will also be able to organize incoming information from what they read and express such understanding by the formulating reflections and drawing personal conclusions.

Students will assume the role of active participants within their reading process, being able to question and analyze what they read in order to foster critical thinking at the same time they apply what they have observed and learned through the designing of presentations and the redaction of a personal reader's log every week.

#### **4. Expected Learning Outcomes:**

- Students are expected to:
  - Apply reading strategies before, during, and after reading to aid in the construction and enhancement of meaning.
  - Identify, analyze, and explain the significance of the essential literary elements of novels (i.e. characters, setting, conflict, plot, climax, resolution, theme, tone, point of view, etc)
  - Participate in discussions and develop individual performance which demonstrates an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and sociocultural elements (i.e.: personalities, trends, beliefs, etc)
  - Demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension of the novel through participation in discussion and other learning activities.
  - Compare and contrast, in writing and through discussion, the literary elements and essential concepts of the works they are presently reading with those they have previously read or viewed
  - Produce material that allow them to put into practice what has been learned in an innovative and creative way
  - Understand and produce formal writing assignments and produce them on time when requested.

- Engage with reading and motivate themselves to assume the central role in their learning process.

- Evaluate their own performance according to established criteria and rubrics.

## **5. Contents and Themes:**

By reading *'The perks of being a wallflower'* the class will address aspects such as the coming of age, the value of friendship, the importance of the self and its interior world, ability and importance of adapting to new settings, loneliness, and love.

Bildungsroman literature and its relationship to the stage of life students are the central theme to be analyzed and worked through reading and reflection. At the same time, connections with the American sociocultural reality and its national literature will be established by paying attention to the references made in the novel to several American authors in relation to what Charlie narrates in his letters about the English assignments given by his teacher throughout the book.

## **6. Key concepts:**

Adulthood, adolescence, Bildungsroman, Coming of age, novels as a pedagogical resource for L2 classes, literature, L2 learning enhancement through reading.

## **7. Class Information:**

- **Number of Students:** 15 to 20
- **Grade:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Year of High School
- **Period:** English classes (three times a week)

- **Type of Syllabus used:** Content- based syllabus, Skill-based syllabus, and Notional/ functional syllabus.
- **Number of Lessons:** 18
- **Requisites:** being part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Year of High School English class group at St Margaret’s School.
- **Required Readings:**
  - **Course Materials:** ‘*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*’ — by Stephen Chbosky.
  - **Additional Materials:**
    - ‘*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*’ (chosen written movie script excerpts)
    - *Short readings (book reviews by the press and critics)*
    - *Worksheets and guidelines.*

- **Evaluations:**

Students will be assessed through both oral and written assignments. Self-evaluation and in-class participation will also be graded. These altogether will constitute the 100% of their evaluation.

- **Course Assignments:**

Oral Presentation (1)	20%
Written Essays (2)	50%
Reading Log (one every week)	15%
Students’ in-class participation (plenary, discussions, etc.) and self-evaluation.	15%

- **In-class Participation Rubric:**

This aspect is worth 15% of students' total grade, due to the significant increase in learning the subject matter when these specific goals are achieved. On the one hand, the teacher will be in charge of assessing this aspect as the unit goes on; while, on the other, students will be asked to evaluate themselves in an honest and self-critical way by using the same rubric. Both analyses will be averaged together in order to obtain the final grade.

- **Late Assignments and test absence:**

Both of them will only be considered acceptable and will be re-taken in case of medical problems and/or special cases properly explained and justified to the teacher. This is subjected to be previous examination of the case and consultation with the English Department chief and UTP.

- **Academic misconduct:**

In case any of the following disciplinary or responsibility misconducts happens, the internal regulations of the school and its regular conduct of actions will be followed and the pertinent authorities will be informed; so as to follow the corresponding steps in order to take measures of the fault:

- Plagiarism.
- Copying during tests, activities, or exams.
- Stealing official documents or others' property in the school.
- Repeated unjustified absence to lessons, tests or exams.

- Adulterating official documents, exams, tests, or similar.
- Drinking, smoking, or eating in the classroom.
- Using inappropriate language during lessons.
- Showing inappropriate behavior towards classmates, teacher, or any member of the educational community.

## SYLLABUS CHART

Class Topic	Session	Objectives	Classroom Roles (teacher and students)	Specific content	Notions / functions	Language skill (s)
1. "Introduction"	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To present the content unit to the class.</li> <li>- To explain in detail all the items in the course syllabus.</li> <li>- To clarify any further doubts students might have in relation to the syllabus.</li> <li>- To allow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher: To introduce and explain the contents included in the syllabus of the unit.</li> <li><i>This aims to help familiarize students with the objectives and topics to be worked with</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course syllabus guideline. (Description of the course, general objectives, specific objectives, expected learning outcomes, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking Informational Questions.</li> <li>- Asking Clarifying Questions.</li> <li>- Expressing and supporting ideas, beliefs, and opinions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Listening</li> <li>-Speaking</li> <li>- Reading</li> </ul>

	<p>students to read and analyze the course syllabus in order to ask questions, express opinions, and possible concerns.</p> <p>- To generate a respectful classroom environment that allows all participants to take part.</p>	<p><i>and give them a clear idea of what they will be faced to.</i></p> <p><i>The use of friendly, familiar, and clear language is key in this aspect so the explanation does not sound imposing, distant, or cold to the learners but makes sense to them so they 'see the point' of what is going to be taught at the same time it</i></p>			
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*creates a positive attitude towards the learning process and the work to be done in class.*

•Students:  
Recipients of the information presented, but, at the same time, dynamic and active participants in the process of getting to understand what is set in the syllabus

			<p>and how it will impact in their learning process. They are expected and will be fostered to ask questions, express their concerns and doubts, and speak out their minds in terms of expectations and opinions on the syllabus and its content. This will be done in a respectful and constructive way)</p>			
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<p>2. "Literature and youth"</p>	<p>2 and 3</p>	<p>- To introduce the notions and get students to be familiarized with the following terms: literature, young adult literature, novel, and bildungsroman.</p> <p>-To distinguish differences and similarities between such literary notions and genres.</p>	<p>•Teacher: guide in the presentation and delivery of the contents. This role is one of company and support during the lesson, so as to foster correct learning but without being invasive.</p> <p>• Student: main participant in the learning process. They are expected to start taking</p>	<p>-Literature</p> <p>-Young adult literature.</p> <p>-Novel</p> <p>-Bildungsroman</p>	<p>-Expressing needs and likes.</p> <p>-Describing people, places, and things.</p> <p>-Hypothesizing and speculating.</p>	<p>-Speaking</p> <p>- Writing</p>
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		- To express ideas and draw possible conclusions based on establishing connections with their own reality.	control of it with help and guidance from the teacher and through the activities.			
3. “The Perks of Being a Wallflower”	4, 5, 6, and 7	- To present the novel and its plot to the students. - To introduce the main characters of the story (first, in a general way and then in a deeper one)	• Teacher: will be in charge of introducing the class’ objectives and, gradually, presenting and delivering the new content. This is expected to be non invasive	- Literature, novel, young adult literature, and bildungsroman. - <i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	- Identifying the main events and characters of the novel in general. - Establishing and describing content, spatial, and temporal relationships	-Listening - Reading -Speaking

	<p>- To discuss the relationship the novel has with the concepts of novel, young adult literature, and bildungsroman.</p> <p>- To establish connections between the novel and their current reality.</p> <p>- To engage and motivate students with reading and discovering the novel by themselves.</p>	<p>and gradual guidance and support.</p> <p>• Students: They are expected to be in charge of the learning process by increasingly developing a critical thinking ability and establishing connections in relation to the story that may be explicit or implicit.</p>	<p>between <i>Perks</i> and the main literary concepts previously introduced and worked.</p> <p>- Making predictions.</p> <p>-Hypothesizing and speculating.</p> <p>- Comparing and contrasting.</p>	
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<p>4. “Social identity and adolescence: labels, conflicts, and sense of belonging”</p>	<p>8, 9, and 10</p>	<p>- To set a discussion about adolescence as the key pillar of the novel and its relationship to the emotional area of the characters, the ‘hero, and the readers.</p> <p>- To identify and explain the significance of such elements of the writer’s craft and novel structure (epistolary</p>	<p>• Teacher: guide and intermediary in the dynamic of the learning process and the exploration of the emotional aspect of the novel and themselves as readers/learners regarding it.</p> <p>• Students: analyzers and critical thinkers. They are expected to collect,</p>	<p>- Adolescence</p> <p>- Social identity</p> <p>- Social labels</p> <p>- The idea/feeling of belonging and acceptance.</p>	<p>- Identifying and being aware of stereotypes that exist in everyday life.</p> <p>- Orally reading with expression indicative of comprehension and tone.</p> <p>- Asking and answering questions logically and effectively.</p>	<p>- Reading</p> <p>-Speaking</p> <p>- Writing</p>
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		<p>writing, metaphors, sociocultural and literary references, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained.</li> <li>- To generate, develop and express new ideas or concepts through solid arguments and linguistic resources.</li> <li>- To produce, gather, and</li> </ul>	<p>examine, and interpret the information they have been reading.</p>			
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		<p>organize ideas and information in order to produce for an intended purpose and audience.</p> <p>- To discover each character's role in the novel and generate their own opinion about it and their relevance to the story.</p>				



<p>5. “Perks and beyond: friendship, love, sexuality, school, family, and others”</p>	<p>11 and 12</p>	<p>- To participate in in-class discussions and draft writing which demonstrates an understanding of diverse sociocultural perspectives.</p> <p>- To demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension of the novel and its topics/themes.</p>	<p>• Teacher: non invasive guide and intermediary within the learning process. Also, will be in charge of modeling and checking the written production</p> <p>students are expected to do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Friendship</li> <li>- Love</li> <li>- High School</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Mental health</li> <li>- Sexuality</li> <li>- Drugs and alcohol abuse</li> <li>- Sexual diversity</li> </ul>	<p>- Choosing and using relevant productive strategies that will help them to prepare the required assignments.</p> <p>- Effectively operating in small and large groups to accomplish a learning goals and objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Speaking</li> <li>-Listening</li> <li>- Writing</li> </ul>
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		<p>- To explore, discuss, and produce about a topic or theme.</p>	<p>• Students: main participants of the learning process and active agents within it. They are expected to apply what they have learned to produce suitable writing and rely on the proper literary knowledge and linguistic resources to demonstrate comprehension</p>			
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			of the content they have covered and worked so far in class.			
6. “The end...or not?”	13 and 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand and recognize what contributes to a person’s identity.</li> <li>- To build a closure and consolidation regarding the previously worked and analyzed literary and narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher: non invasive guide, intermediary, and monitor of the achievement of a proper closure of the learning process regarding the content unit.</li> <li>• Students: By now, they are expected be able to take</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Society (human and personal environment)</li> <li>- Identity.</li> <li>- Sense of belonging.</li> <li>- Personality</li> <li>- Meaningful literature.</li> <li>- Narrative</li> <li>- Writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using editing, proofreading, and publishing skills and strategies, and knowledge of language conventions, to correct errors, refine expression, and present their work effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading</li> <li>- Writing</li> </ul>

		<p>elements of the novel.</p> <p>- To check understanding of the value of the novel in terms of literature and emotions.</p>	<p>control full control of their learning process, to show mastery of the literary and linguistic aspect of the novel and the contents that have been covered. They are also expected show high proficiency in the linguistic skills, with special focus on reading and writing. Full awareness of</p>			
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			their learning process and the importance and value of the sociocultural and emotional component of their lives.			
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## DAILY LESSON PLANS

### Sample lesson 1

*Date:* August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014

*Grade/Class/Subject:* 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior High School /English

*Unit/Theme:* “The Perks of Being a Wallflower”

*Content Objective (s):*

- To activate previous knowledge and establish connections to the student’s background and reality.
- To present the novel and its plot to the students.
- To introduce the main characters of the story (first, in a general way and then in a deeper one)
- To discuss the relationship *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* has with the concepts of novel, young adult literature, and Bildungsroman.
- To establish connections between the novel and their current reality.
- To engage and motivate students with reading and discovering the novel by themselves.

#### Key Vocabulary

Literature, adolescence, novel, narrative,  
young adult literature, bildungsroman,  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower.*

#### Supplementary Materials

Whiteboard, data projector, computer,  
and questionnaire guideline

## SIOP Features

### Preparation

- X Adaptation of Content
- X Links to Background
- X Links to Past Learning
- X Strategies Incorporated

### Scaffolding

- Modeling
- Guided Practice
- X Independent Practice
- X Comprehensible Input

### Grouping Options

- X Whole Class
- Small Groups
- Partners
- X Independent

### Integration of Process

- X Reading
- X Writing
- X Speaking
- X Listening

### Application

- Hands-on
- X Meaningful
- X Linked to Objectives
- X Promotes Engagement

### Assessment

- X Individual
- Group
- X Written
- X Oral

## “The perks of being a Wallflower”

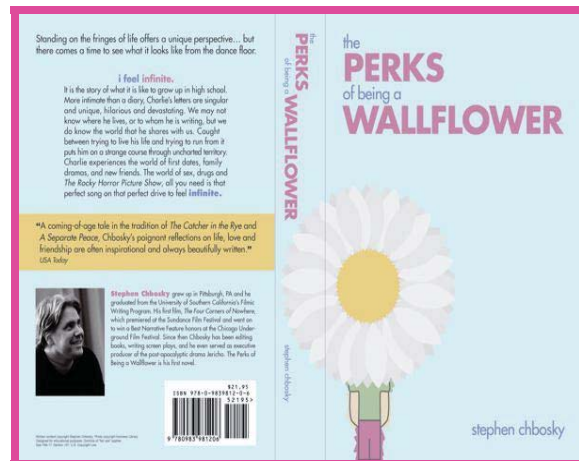
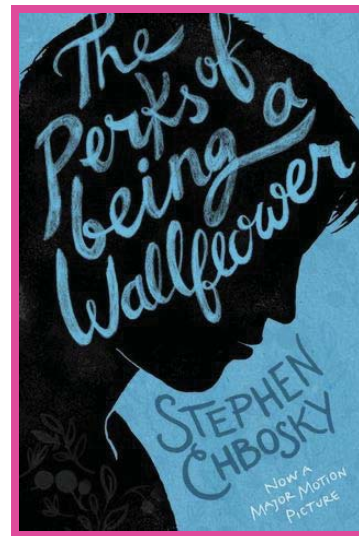
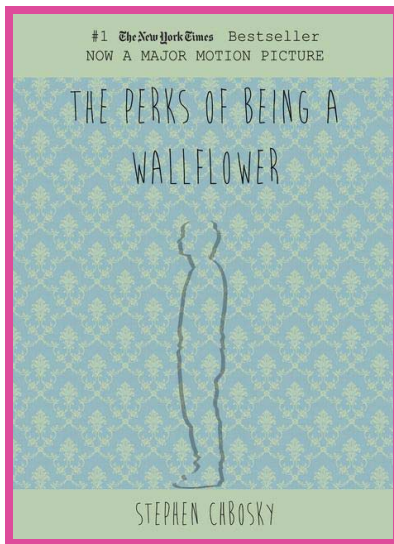
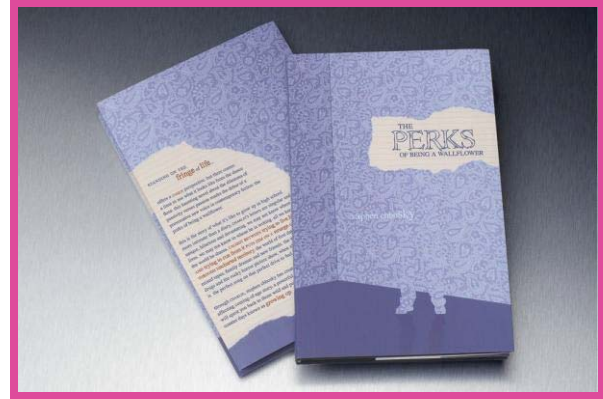
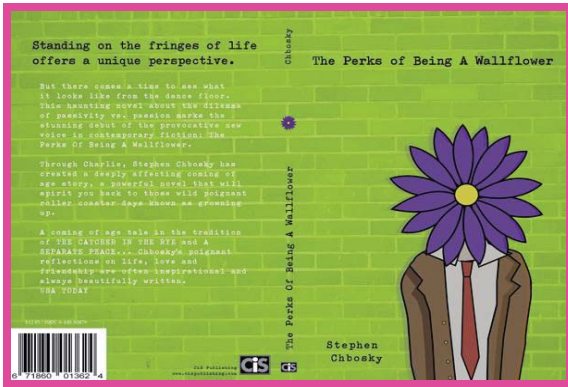
Time	Lesson Sequence
15 minutes	<p>The teacher will start by reviewing what was covered last class and setting a discussion/dialogue with the students about it so as to activate previous knowledge and state a connection with past learning. Questions towards such objective will be asked to the whole group and the pertinent answers will be written in a brainstorm on the whiteboard as a useful reminder for future reference. <i>(i.e. Could anyone help us remember what we worked about last class, please? Does anyone have something to add? What concepts or ideas of last week’s lesson do you remember the most? Do you think they are relevant? Why?)</i></p>
20 minutes	<p>The teacher will introduce <i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> by showing the students different versions of the cover of the book — that she has previously chosen — and some posters of the movie that is based on the novel through data projection.</p> <p>Emphasis will be put in the title of the novel and the differences between a movie and a book will be discussed. Students are expected to make predictions and express their opinions. <i>(i.e. What do you think these book cover mean? What do you think the novel is going to be about? What do you think the title of the novel means? Which one would you buy? Why? / Do you think a book and a movie based on it are identical? Why? Which one do you prefer?)</i></p>

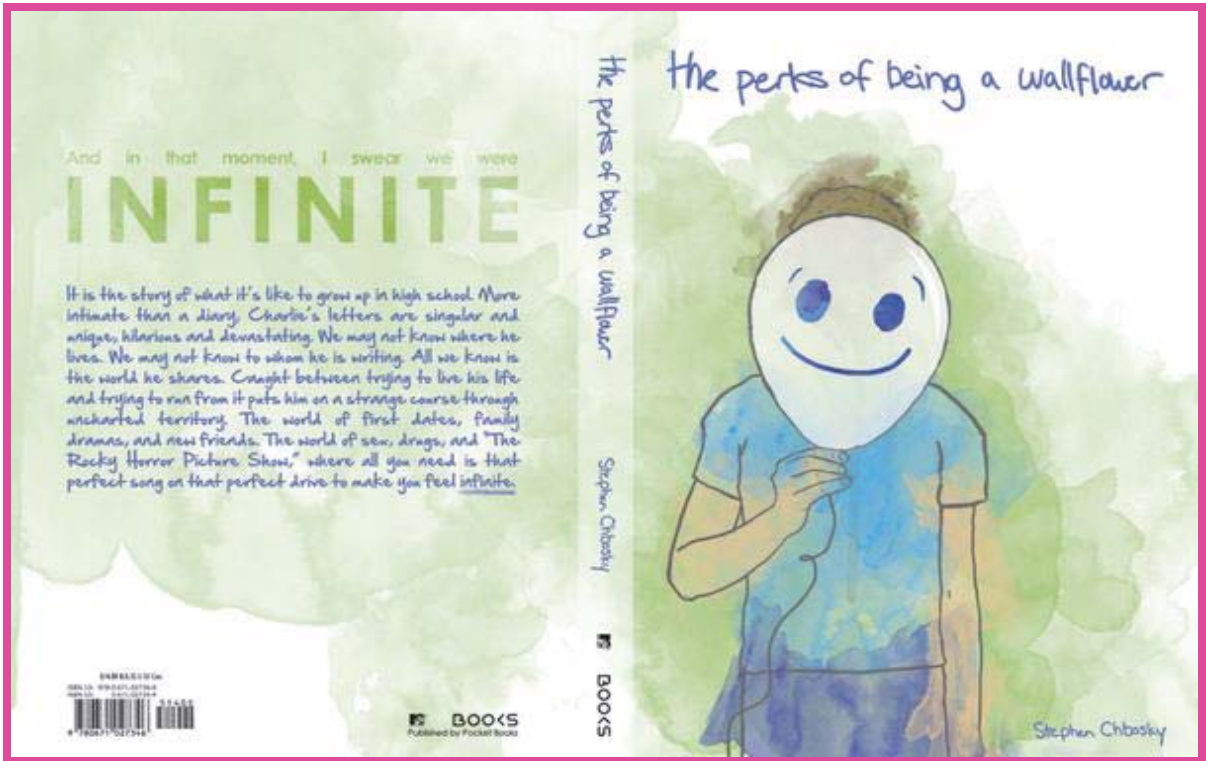


10 minutes	<p>Once the discussion has been set, the introduction will continue by showing the class an image that depicts the structure of a letter (similar to the ones that Charlie uses to tell his story in the novel) and also contains references to the novel itself. The teacher will explain, then, the fact that <i>Perks</i> is completely written in an epistolary way (through a series of letters) and narrated in the voice of a high school freshman named Charlie (who is the main character of the novel). Students are expected to make connections between the issues recently discussed and this new information.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Through a line of inquiry, the teacher will then engage the class in a discussion surrounding what it means to be a <i>wallflower</i>, eventually steering the conversation towards what it means then “being observant” and to empathize” with others.</p>
25 minutes	<p>A questionnaire will be given and explained to students. Instructions will remark the use of careful introspection while answering and emphasize that they only need to answer the first part of the questionnaire and fill in only what corresponds to the ‘before reading’ section (the questionnaires will be collected and then returned to them afterwards as part of a closure activity by the end of the content unit so they will be asked to keep it once they get it back). The teacher will explain that the answers provided by them are personal and subjective, so there are no right or wrong ones, because the point of the activity is to get them to feel comfortable so as to open up, freely express their opinion, or share experiences with the teacher and the class. It will also be stated that completing the activity will mean receiving 5 points for a future evaluation and to be given credit/no credit for their</p>

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>participation in this activity.</p> <p>Students will then silently complete the questionnaire.</p> <p>Before collecting the students' work, the teacher will randomly ask some students to share their answer for any of the questions they were provided. This is intended to create a respectful discussion in an environment that will foster tolerance and empathy among them and ultimately lead to relate their thoughts and answers to the earlier proposed themes: being observant, empathy, adolescence, novel, YAL, bildungsroman, what it means to be a <i>wallflower</i>, etc.</p>
<p>Homework</p>	<p>Students will be asked to read part 1 and 2 of the book and bring their notes and thoughts on them for the next class.</p>







FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

**"Brave, funny and dazzlingly effective."**  
MIMI POLYAK

"Chbosky's compassion for his characters is absent any hint of condescension. And that's reflected in performances that leave the feeling you've seen something good and true."  
- PETER TRAVERS, ROLLING STONE

"Screenwriter/director Chbosky deserves credit for insisting on adapting a story he knows best, and he takes a heartfelt approach."  
- ELIZABETH WEITZMAN, NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

"Perks" is no high-school comedy rehash; what Chbosky has made with the excellent young stars Emma Watson, Ezra Miller, and Logan Lerman is hilarious and heart-rending, and so real that the darkest threads run through it without apology."  
- JARED KUSHNAR, ELLE MAGAZINE

"The film visits dark areas of life, yet there's a joy in it which is quite uplifting. It captures the moment in all our lives when anything and everything seemed possible. It deserves to be regarded as a modern classic."  
- CHRIS TOOLEY, THE DAILY MAIL

**BEST PICTURE**  
PRODUCED BY  
 LIANNE HALFON JOHN MALKOVICH RUSSELL SMITH

**BEST DIRECTOR**  
 STEPHEN CHBOSKY

**BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**  
 STEPHEN CHBOSKY

**CRITICS CHOICE AWARDS NOMINATIONS**

**2** **BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY** STEPHEN CHBOSKY **BEST YOUNG ACTOR** LOGAN LERMAN

**WINNER** **NOMINEE**  
ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR BEST FIRST FEATURE



the perks of being a wallflower  
 BASED ON THE NOVEL BY STEPHEN CHBOSKY


LOGAN LERMAN EMMA WATSON EZRA MILLER

the perks of being a wallflower

BASED ON THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED NOVEL



COMING SOON

WE ARE INFINITE



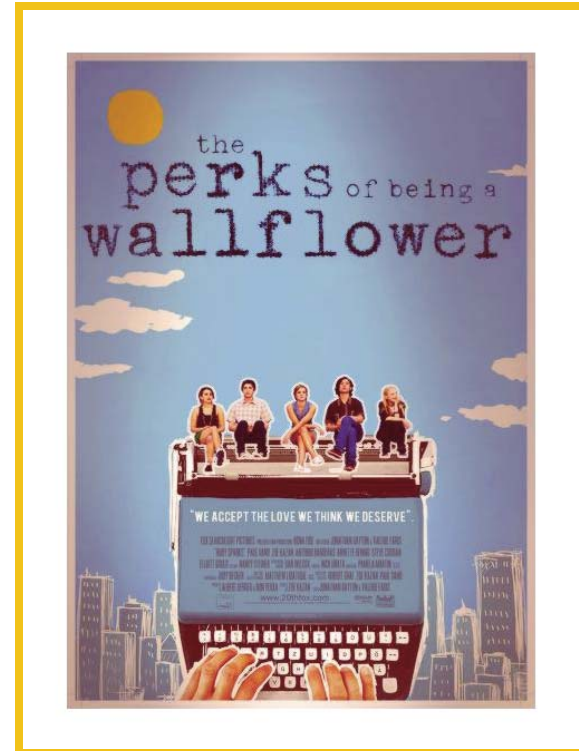
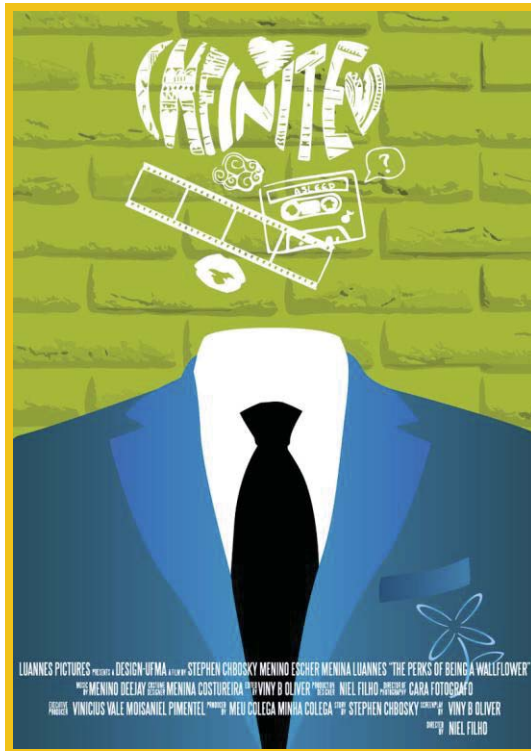
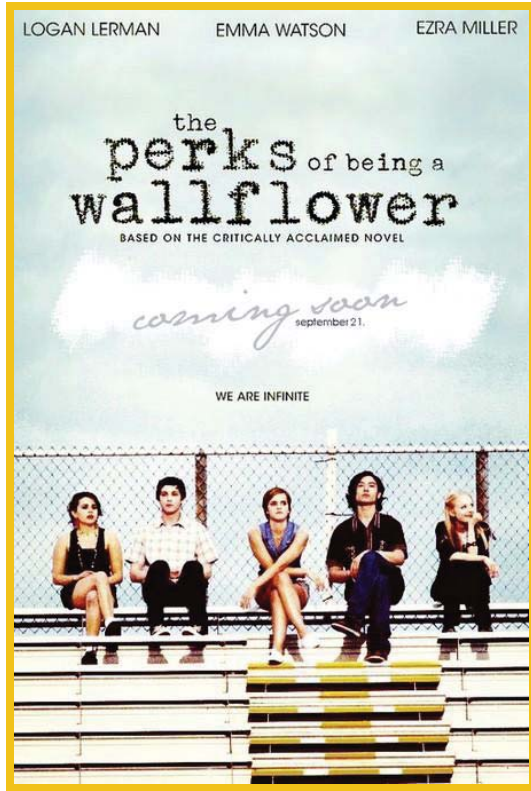
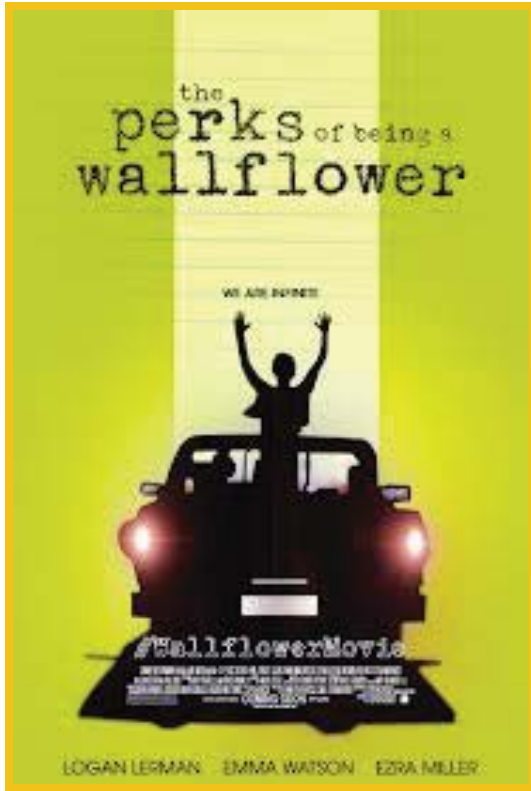
the perks of being a wallflower

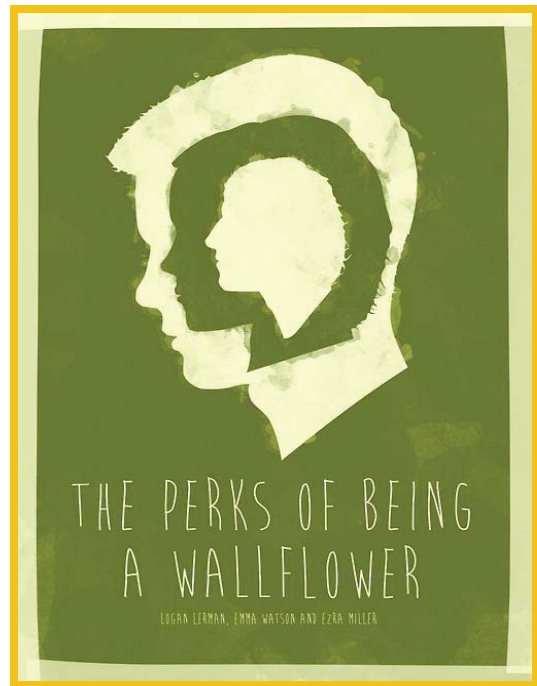
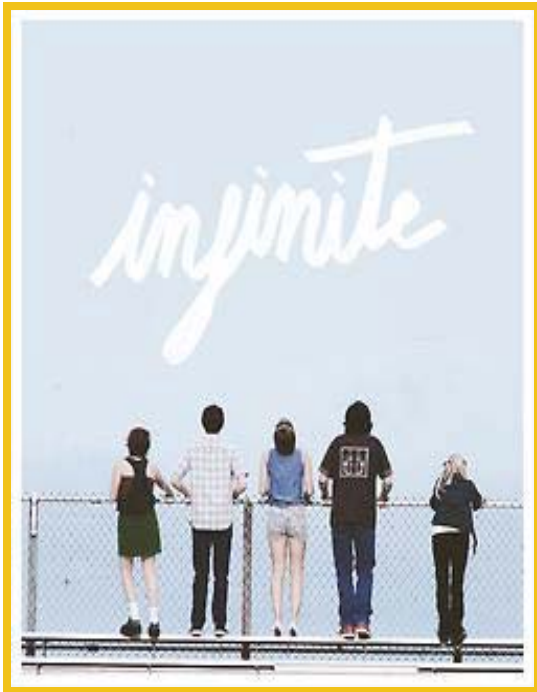
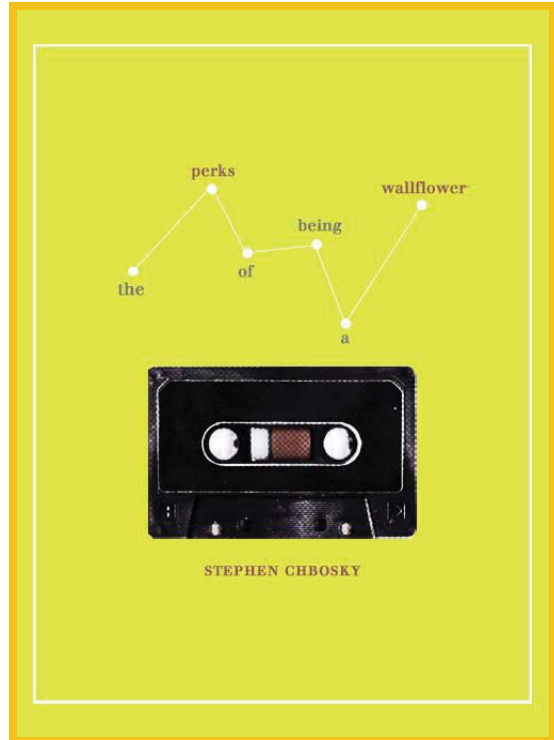
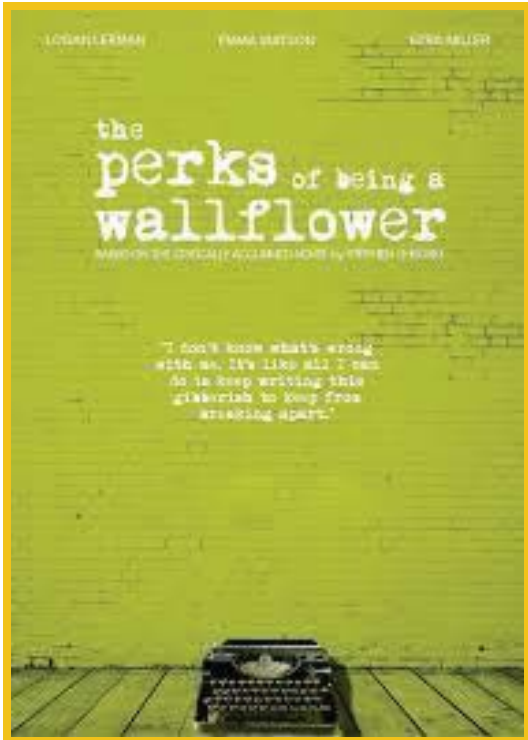
BASED ON THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED NOVEL

the perks of being a wallflower

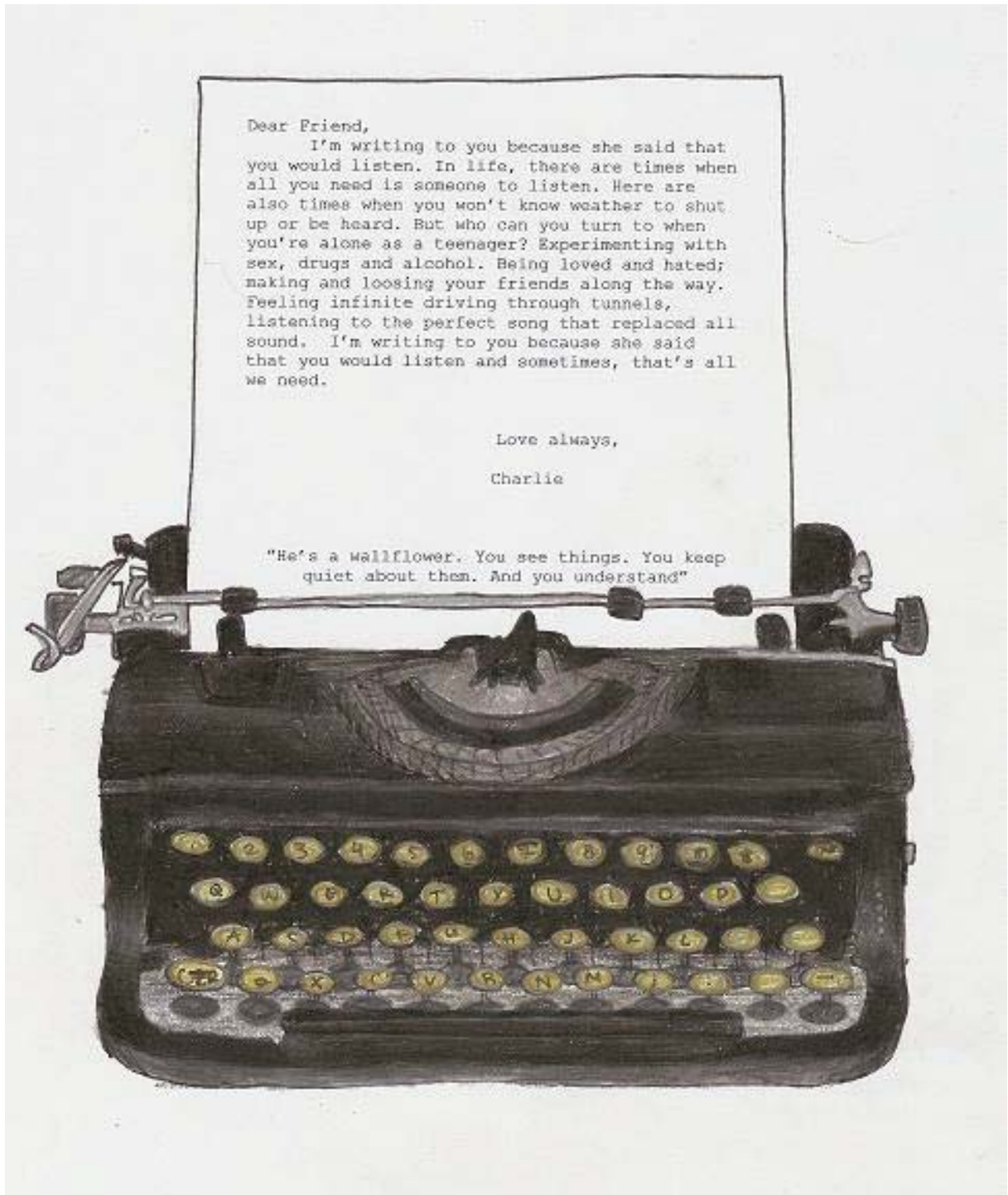
a book and film by stephen chbosky







## THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER: A LETTER-TOLD NOVEL



## The Perks of Being a Wallflower

### AGREE/DISAGREE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### •Step 1:

#### **Before reading *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*:**

- a) Answer the following questions. Remember there are no right or wrong answers but just points of view and opinions which are equally valuable 😊 Try to be as clear and concise as possible.
1. What do you think it would be like to suffer from a mental health disorder? (For example depression, extreme shyness, anxiety, panic crisis, stress, etc.)
  2. Do you know anyone who suffers from one? How is your relationship to that person? (*If you don't feel like mention a specific name, there is no problem. I respect your privacy and value your honesty 😊*)
  3. Do you consider yourself a friendly person? Why?
  4. Who is your favorite person in the world and why?
  5. Are you like or unlike your parents and in what ways?
  6. How do you let the people in your life know you care about them?
  7. Do you write in a diary or a personal journal? How might writing such thoughts to an anonymous stranger be different?

- b) Fill in the following questionnaire expressing whether you agree or disagree with each statement by providing a check mark (✓) if you agree or an x mark (✗) if you disagree.

**FOR TODAY’S CLASS (AUGUST 4<sup>th</sup>) ANSWER ONLY IN THE LEFT COLUMN**

*(“before reading...”)*

<i>Before reading</i>	<i>I think...</i>	<i>After reading</i>
	It is normal for teenagers like me to feel that adults do not really understand what they are going through.	
	Being able to express yourself freely in emails, texts, social networks, and instant messages is a great way to bond with friends and helps you to get through certain problems and challenges.	
	Making friends in high school is more difficult than it was in junior high school.	
	Many adults have forgotten what having a crush feels like and means for a teenager.	
	Drug use among teenagers is exaggerated by adults and the media.	

	Being in a relationship and all it means (kissing, holding hands, sexual aspect, etc.) should be reserved for someone you truly love.	
	Adults have no idea what really goes on at teenage parties.	
	Life experiences provide better education for teenagers than reading books.	
	Teenagers are closer to their siblings and friends than to their parents.	
	Bullying, physical/verbal violence, and intolerance are a normal part of High School	
	Keeping a journal or a diary is useful and helpful	
	Internet has helped improving people's relationships.	



## Sample lesson 2

*Date:* August 11<sup>th</sup>

*Grade/Class/Subject:* 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior High School / English

*Unit/Theme:* “Social identity and adolescence: labels, conflicts, and sense of belonging”

*Content Objective (s):*

- To set a discussion about adolescence as the key theme of the novel and its relationship to the emotional area of the characters, the protagonist, and the readers.
- To discover each character’s role in the novel and generate their own opinion about it and their relevance to the story.
- To collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained.
- To generate, develop and express new ideas or concepts through solid arguments and linguistic resources.
- To participate in in-class discussions and reflection which demonstrates an understanding of diverse sociocultural perspectives.
- To demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension of the novel’s topics, themes, and characters.

### Key Vocabulary

Adolescence, social labels, prejudices,  
high school, emotions, empathy,  
narrative, writing, metaphors,  
sociocultural and literary references,  
music,

### Supplementary Materials

Cardstocks, markers, pencils,  
computer, speakers, data projector,  
music playlist, printed guidelines of the  
novel’s playlist and chosen extracts of  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower.*

## SIOP Features

### Preparation

- X Adaptation of Content
- X Links to Background
- X Links to Past Learning
- X Strategies Incorporated

### Scaffolding

- X Modeling
- \_\_ Guided Practice
- X Independent Practice
- X Comprehensible Input

### Grouping Options

- X Whole Class
- X Small Groups
- \_\_ Partners
- X Independent

### Integration of Process

- X Reading
- X Writing
  
- X Speaking
  
- X Listening

### Application

- X Hands-on
- X Meaningful
  
- X Linked to Objectives
  
- X Promotes Engagement

### Assessment

- X Individual
- X Group
  
- X Written
  
- X Oral

## “The power of words”

<b>Time</b>	<b>Lesson Sequence</b>
30 minutes	<p>Students will arrive at the classroom and find the desks arranged in different small groups. Each cluster of desks will have a cardstock of a certain color of paper with a “social label” written on it and a blank piece of paper next to it. Written on the whiteboard will be the following questions: “What are Social Labels? What do you know about them?”</p> <p><i>Labels: Jock, gay, nerd, popular, skater, emo, goth, sporty, weirdo, junkie, wallflower, class clown, teachers’ pet, plastic, dyke, preppy, hot, rich, and hipster.</i></p> <p>Students will be asked to go around the classroom and write a word or two that define each specific label. When every student has written on each card, the teacher will ask a few students to hold up the different signs and read the words their classmates wrote about the specific label.</p> <p>Then, the teacher will ask all the students get in groups of 4 and discuss the different things that were written, what they think about them, whether they agree/disagree, and what this says about their present social labeling system</p>
40 minutes	<p>The teacher will now project on the board three previously chosen passages of letters in which Charlie talks about himself and the things that are no longer the same than when he started writing. Students will be asked to pay close attention to the way Charlie reacts to changes in his life. The whole class will participate in a</p>



<p>20 minutes</p>	<p>discussion about the previously mentioned issue, so that each student can interact, make questions, give opinions, and express thoughts and a collective analysis of the character's attitude and feelings is built.</p> <p>As a closure, the teacher will display images that depict the most common sociocultural issues affecting teenagers around the world nowadays. Students will be asked to identify them, discuss and reflect about and relate them to the ones mentioned by Charlie in the first section of the novel (discrimination, suicide, school violence, sexual issues, isolation, etc.) <i>Guided questions: How do these issues affect and concern Charlie? Is this a realistic portrayal of teenage life? How can we connect this to the previous activity? Do you think Chilean reality is similar to Charlie's? Why? Do you think words can cause an impact on a person's life? How? Have you ever been labeled? How do you feel about it?</i></p> <p>Students are expected to perform a comprehensive analysis of the presented issues and establish links with the previous activity.</p>
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## SOCIAL LABELS SAMPLE CARDSTOCKS

Popular

Junkie

Nerd

Class  
clown

Wallflower

Weirdo

Jock

Teachers'  
pet

# "CHARLIE VS CHANGES"

October 6, 1991

Dear friend,

I feel very ashamed. I went to the high school football game the other day, and I don't know exactly why. In middle school, Michael and I would go to the games sometimes even though neither of us were popular enough to go. It was just a place to go on Fridays when we didn't want to watch television.

(...) But this time, I went alone because Michael is gone, and Susan hangs around different boys now, and Bridget is still crazy, and Carl's mom sent him to a Catholic school, and Dave with the awkward glasses moved away. I was just kind of watching people, seeing who was in love and who was just hanging around, and I saw that kid I told you about. Remember Nothing? Nothing was there at the football game, and he was one of the few people who was not an adult that was actually watching the game.

(...) Now, normally I am very shy, but Nothing seemed like the kind of guy you could just walk up to at a football game even though you were three years younger and not popular.

"Hey, you're in my shop class!" He's a very friendly person.

"I'm Charlie." I said, not too shy.

"And I'm Patrick. And this is Sam." He pointed to a very pretty girl next to him. And she waved to me.

"Hey, Charlie." Sam had a very nice smile.

They both told me to have a seat, and they both seemed to mean it, so I took a seat. (...)

Love always,

Charlie

PAGES 28 —31

February 8, 1992

Dear friend,

I have a date for the Sadie Hawkins' dance. In case you didn't have one of those, it's the dance where the girl asks the boy. In my case, the girl is Mary Elizabeth, and the boy is me. Can you believe it?!

(...) When I went to The Rocky Horror Picture Show that night, Mary Elizabeth was really mad because Craig didn't show up. Nobody knew why. Not even Sam. The problem was nobody was there to play Rocky, the muscular robot (I'm not quite sure what he is). After looking around at everybody, Mary Elizabeth turned to me. The next thing I know, I was wearing nothing but slippers and a bathing suit, which somebody painted gold. I don't know how these things happen to me sometimes.

(...) That's when Mary Elizabeth asked me to the Sadie Hawkins' dance after she said, "You looked really good in your costume." I like girls. I really do. Because they can think you look good in a bathing suit even when you don't.

(...) I told my sister about having a date for the dance, but she was really distracted. Then, I tried to ask her advice about how to treat a girl on a date since I've never had a date before, but she wouldn't answer.

After I finished, I just laid around in my bed, looking at the ceiling, and I smiled because it was a nice kind of quiet.

Love always,

Charlie

PAGES 133 —137

June 22, 1992

Dear friend,

(...)I don't know what's wrong with me. It's like all I can do is keep writing this gibberish to keep from breaking apart. Sam's gone. And Patrick won't be home for a few days. And I just couldn't talk with Mary Elizabeth or anybody or my brother or anybody in my family. Except maybe my aunt Helen. But she's gone. And even if she were here, I don't think I could talk to her either. Because I'm starting to feel like what I dreamt about her last night was true. And my psychiatrist's questions weren't weird after all.

I don't know what I'm supposed to do now. I know other people have it a lot worse. I do know that, but it's crashing in.

(...)I'm sorry, but I have to stop this letter now.

(...)But first, I want to thank you for being one of those people who listens and understands and doesn't try to sleep with people even though you could have. I really mean it, and I'm sorry I've put you through this when you don't even know who I am, and we've never met in person, and I can't tell you who I am because I promised to keep all those little secrets. I just don't want you to think that I picked your name out of the phone book. It would kill me if you thought that. So, please believe me when I tell you that I felt terrible after Michael died, and I saw a girl in class, who didn't notice me, and she talked all about you to a friend of hers. And even though I didn't know you, I felt like I did because you sounded like such a good person. The kind of person who wouldn't mind receiving letters from a kid. The kind of person who would understand how they were better than a diary because there is communion and a diary can be found. I just don't want you to worry about me, or think that you've met me, or waste your time anymore. I'm so sorry that I wasted your time because you really do mean a lot to me and I hope you have a very nice life because I really think you deserve it. I really do. I hope you do, too. Okay, then. Goodbye.

Love always,

Charlie

PAGES 238—248

# LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND...



## Lesson Sample 3

Date: August 13<sup>th</sup>

Grade/Class/Subject: 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior High School / English

Unit/Theme: “Social identity and adolescence: labels, conflicts, and sense of belonging”

Content Objective (s):

- To identify and explain the significance of the narrative elements present in the writer’s craft and novel structure (epistolary writing, metaphors, sociocultural and literary references, etc.)
- To collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained.
- To generate, develop and express new ideas or concepts through solid arguments and linguistic resources.
- To produce a written work that combines both their knowledge about the novel and its features as well as their ability to express themselves based on what they have read and learned.

### Key Vocabulary

Music, emotions, feelings, identification, empathy, narrative, writing, metaphors, sociocultural and literary references.

### Supplementary Materials

Computer, speakers, data projector, the song “Asleep” by The Smiths, printed guideline of the song’s lyrics, paper, pencils and/or pen.

## SIOP Features

### Preparation

- X Adaptation of Content
- X Links to Background
- X Links to Past Learning
- \_\_ Strategies Incorporated

### Scaffolding

- X Modeling
- \_\_ Guided Practice
- X Independent Practice
- X Comprehensible Input

### Grouping Options

- X Whole Class
- \_\_ Small Groups
- \_\_ Partners
- X Independent

### Integration of Process

- X Reading
- X Writing
  
- X Speaking
  
- X Listening

### Application

- X Hands-on
- X Meaningful
  
- X Linked to Objectives
  
- X Promotes Engagement

### Assessment

- X Individual
- \_\_ Group
  
- X Written
  
- X Oral

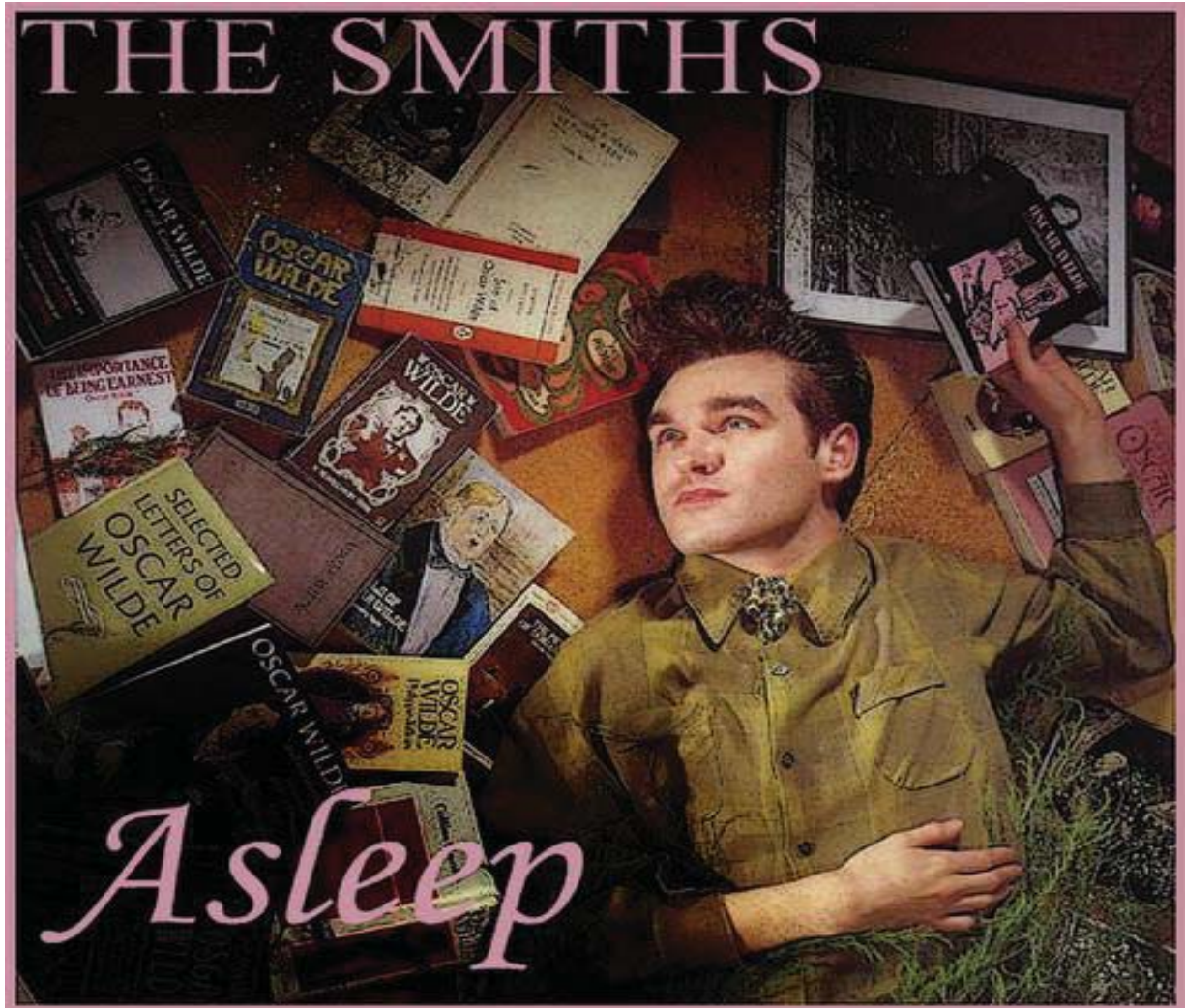


## “Infinite playlists”

<b>Time</b>	<b>Lesson Sequence</b>
20 minutes	<p>The teacher will start the class by displaying the cover of <i>Asleep</i> by The Smiths and mentioning the fact that, within the novel, Charlie discusses it and reflects on importance of that song and how it has affected his life.</p> <p>Next, the teacher will pose a discussion about the song and in what way(s) it is special, important, and meaningful to Charlie. Students are expected construct a class dialogue on such issue and actively participate by giving their opinion and sharing their view to contribute to the discussion.</p> <p>The teacher will distribute a handout with <i>Asleep</i>'s lyrics and once all students have it, she will play the song (with the lyrics on screen) once or twice, so that students get familiarized with what the song is about at the same time they read as they listen.</p> <p>After having played it, students will then be asked why and in what ways do they think Charlie is connected to the song and how it affected him and. They will also be asked about how do they think having a soundtrack make the book more meaningful.</p>

10 minutes	<p>Once the discussion has come to a closure, students will be asked to do a timed writing activity whose topic will be the writing about a certain song that has been or is significant and important to them.</p> <p>Having introduced the writing assignment, a couple of minutes will be dedicated to answer questions and after all doubts have been clarified, students will be allowed to begin writing.</p>
30 minutes	<p>Students will write.</p>
20 minutes	<p>Once the time is up, students will be asked to turn in their papers. The teacher will ask for a volunteer student to share her song. If there is none, a random one will be picked to do so.</p> <p>The student will tell the rest of the class the name of the song and what it is about. The teacher will play it on the computer so that everyone gets a more complete and better idea of it.</p> <p>Once we have played the song, the student will be asked to explain to the class the reason why she chose that song and why it is important and meaningful to her. The teacher will write each song title on the whiteboard.</p>
10 minutes	<p>As a closure, students will vote to choose 10 more representative songs from the ones individually chosen. Once the “Class playlist” has been designed, students will collectively choose a name for it.</p>

# "INFINITE PLAYLISTS"



*Asleep* by The Smiths (with lyrics) — YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNIJAUVC7sQ>

♪ Asleep - The Smiths ♪

Sing me to sleep	Sing to me
Sing me to sleep	Sing to me
I'm tired and I	I don't want to wake up
I want to go to bed	On my own anymore
Sing me to sleep	Don't feel bad for me
Sing me to sleep	I want you to know
And then leave me alone	Deep in the cell of my heart
Don't try to wake me in the morning	I really want to go
'Cause I will be gone	
Don't feel bad for me	There is another world
I want you to know	There is a better world
Deep in the cell of my heart	Well, there must be
I will feel so glad to go	Well, there must be
	Well, there must be
Sing me to sleep	Well, there must be
Sing me to sleep	Well...
I don't want to wake up	Bye bye
On my own anymore	Bye bye
	Bye...

## ***Student's handout: "Infinite Playlists"***

### **• Writing activity:**

Now that we have had access to Charlie's special song, it is your turn to tell us about yours!

You will have 40 minutes to write a short composition about your special song.

Make sure to state the following aspects:

- ★ Which song is it? (name, author, year, album, style, etc.)
- ★ Why it is important to you? (is it connected to a person? To a place? To a time? To a feeling?, etc.)
- ★ How it has helped you?
- ★ Anything else that you consider relevant about that song in your life.

GOOD LUCK, AND LET THE WRITING BEGIN!



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: SHORT SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

- Answer the following multiple choice questions by marking an “x” in the box of the alternative that best represents your preference.

1. *Do you like reading?*

Yes

No

2. *If your answer is yes, please pick one or more reasons from the following list:*

To build vocabulary

To escape yourself (or others)

Pleasure or amusement

To improve your memory

To foster your imagination

To know yourself (or others) better

To pass the time

To be smarter

To learn (about others, about yourself, or about subjects)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. *If your answer is no, please pick one or more reasons from the following list:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I think it is boring                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> I think it is time-consuming    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is difficult for me to get the meaning of some words |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I rather watch TV or a movie                            | <input type="checkbox"/> It makes me sleepy              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is difficult for me to stay focused                  | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not think it is 'for me'   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It makes me feel frustrated                             | <input type="checkbox"/> I rather spend time on internet |

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Pick one or more subjects you would like to read about:*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty and its meaning           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional problems                | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity (sexual, racial, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addictions (drugs, alcohol, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disease and disability            | <input type="checkbox"/> Family                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heroes                            | <input type="checkbox"/> History                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairy tales, myths or legends    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion and spiritual life       | <input type="checkbox"/> Adulthood                        |

Sexuality

Music

Friendship

Sports

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. *How often do you read?*

Everyday

Once a week

Once a month

Just for school

Never

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. *What kind of reading activities do you enjoy the most?*

Shared reading

KWL

Reading journals

"You be the author!"

Book reviews

Book Talks

Poster activities

"Book Jeopardy"

D.E.A.R Time / S.S.R

Essays

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



7. *What kind of reading/learning strategies do you use?*

Skimming

Outlines

Scanning

Conceptual Maps or graphic organizers

Highlighting

Glossaries

Underlining

Charts

Summaries

Thinking aloud

Predicting

Inferring

Annotating the text

SSQ (stop, summarize, question)

None

I don't know

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. *What are your expectations on a literature course? Specify and be as concise as possible.*

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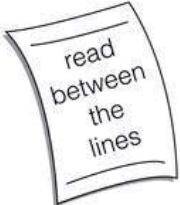



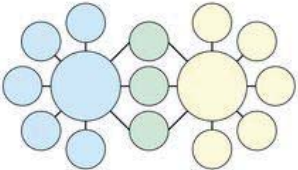

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# Reading Comprehension Strategies

<p>Re-read the Text</p> <p><b>more information = more understanding</b></p>	<p>Activate Prior Knowledge</p> 	<p>Use Context Clues</p> 
<p>Infer Meaning</p> 	<p>Think Aloud</p> 	<p>Summarize the Story</p> <p><b>Characters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ <b>Setting</b></li> <li>↳ <b>Problem</b></li> <li>↳ <b>Solution</b></li> </ul>
<p>Locate Key Words</p> 	<p>Make Predictions</p> <p>think → pair → share</p>	<p>Use Word Attack Strategies</p> <p><b>rereading</b></p> <p><b>re · read · ing</b></p> <p>prefix   root   suffix</p>
<p>Visualize</p> 	<p>Use Graphic Organizers</p> 	<p>Evaluate Understanding</p> <p>what did I learn?</p> 

9.

**APPENDIX 3: IN CLASS PARTICIPATION RUBRIC**

<i>Category</i> <i>(Points)</i>	<i>Excellent</i> <i>(2)</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>(1,5)</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>Needs</i> <i>Improvement</i> <i>(0.5)</i>
<b>Attitude</b>	Student is always respectful of his or her self, others, and teacher, has a positive attitude, and does not criticize anyone else's ideas or work.	Rarely is critical of ideas or work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the activity (ies). Usually treats others and self with respect.	Often or occasionally has a positive attitude about the activity (ies) and behaves in a respectful manner.	Often is critical of the work or ideas of others. Rarely behaves in a respectful manner.
<b>Focus on Class Work</b>	Consistently stays focused on in-class work and what	Focuses on in-class work and what needs to be	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some	Rarely focuses on class work and what needs to be done.

	needs to be done. Very self-directed.	done most of the time.	of the time. Often must be reminded by the teacher about what needs to get done.	
<b>Contributions</b>	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion. A strong student who tries hard.	Sometimes provide useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion. A satisfactory student who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
<b>Working with Others</b>	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of	Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often disrupts or

	<p>others.</p> <p>Students can feel safe volunteering in this student's presence.</p>	<p>others.</p>	<p>others, but sometimes is not actively listening or responding.</p>	<p>discourages others' attempts to participate.</p>
<b>Preparedness</b>	<p>Brings needed materials to class and is always ready to work.</p>	<p>Almost always brings needed material to class and is ready to work.</p>	<p>Often brings materials but sometimes needs to borrow.</p>	<p>Seldom brings materials and/or is rarely ready to get to work.</p>
<b>Time-Management</b>	<p>Routinely uses time well to ensure things get done on time. Student never asks to adjust deadlines.</p>	<p>Usually uses time well, rarely misses deadlines.</p>	<p>Tends to procrastinate, does not use school time or schedule provided to get work completed.</p>	<p>Rarely gets work done by deadlines, always asks for extensions or does not submit work despite time in school.</p>

<b>Quality of Work</b>	Provides work of the highest quality that reflects the student's best efforts.	Provides quality work that reflects an effort from the student.	Work occasionally needs to be redone or does not reflect any time or effort.	Provides illegible work that reflects very little effort or does not turn in any work.
<b>Handbook</b>	Student is aware of and follows all rules in the student handbook, such as plagiarism, food, drink, tardies, etc.	Student seems to nearly always know and follow rules as outlined in the student handbook.	Student has broken a few rules during this marking period or has made no effort to make him or herself aware of the rules.	Student does not follow rules as explained in student handbook.
<b>Behavior</b>	Student is awake and engaged in class on a daily basis, and	Student is awake and engaged in class nearly every day,	Student is awake most of the time but has fallen asleep or done	Student frequently sleeps and/or disrupts class.

	shows no disruptive behavior.	and shows no disruptive behavior.	nothing for a few classes. Show no disruptive behavior.	
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*Total Points: 18 / Maximum Grade: 7.0*

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