

## ***Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

English Language Arts, 9th Grade

### WHAT'S THE STORY?

"Speak up for yourself - we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows that this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In this powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many disenfranchised teenagers while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself.

### CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

*The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.*

- **Unit 1: Personal Identity**
  - Essential Question: "How does the process of reading, speaking and writing inform our ability to grasp our own identity?"
- **Unit 2: The Individual and the Community**
  - Essential Question: "How does community influence identity?"

### KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. RL.9.1
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development. RL.9.2
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. RL.9.4
- Analyze and evaluate the representation of a subject or a key scene in multiple mediums-- including media, artistic, and other visual formats. RL.9.7
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to

- comprehend more fully when reading or listening. RL.9.10
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.9.11
  - Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.9.12
  - Read and comprehend high quality dramas, prose, and poetry of appropriate quantitative and qualitative complexity for Grades 9-10. RL.9.13
  - Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RL.9.3
  - Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. RL.9.5
  - Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature. RL.9.6
  - Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work. RL.9.9