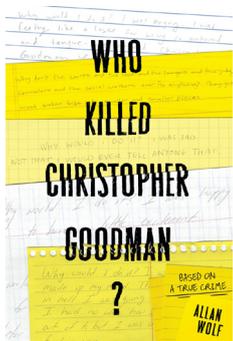




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Who Killed Christopher Goodman?

by Allan Wolf
ISBN: 9780763656133
June 2017

Outline:

Everybody likes Chris Goodman. Sure, he's a little odd. He wears those funny bell-bottoms and he really likes the word ennui and he shakes your hand when he meets you, but he's also the kind of guy who's always up for a good time, always happy to lend a hand. Everybody likes Chris Goodman, which makes it especially shocking when he's murdered. Here, in a stunning multi-voiced narrative — including the perspective of the fifteen-year-old killer — and based on a true and terrible crime that occurred when he was in high school, author Allan Wolf sets out to answer the first question that comes to mind in moments of unthinkable tragedy: how could a thing like this happen?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Allan Wolf is the author of many award-winning books for children and teens, including *The Watch That Ends the Night: Voices from the Titanic*, *New Found Land: Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery*, and *Zane's Trace*. Allan Wolf lives in Asheville, North Carolina.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:
• Secondary years 7-10
• Ages 12+

Key Learning Areas:
• English

Example of:
• Fiction

Themes/Ideas:
• Murder
• Drug use
• Friendship
• Mystery
• Coming of Age

National Curriculum Focus:*

Year 7
ACELT1619
ACELT1620
ACELT1621
ACELT1803
ACELT1622
ACELT1625
ACELT1805
ACELY1804
ACELY1724

Year 8
ACELA1543
ACELT1626
ACELT1627
ACELT1628
ACELT1807
ACELT1632
ACELY1732

Year 9
ACELT1633
ACELT1771
ACELT1634
ACELT1636
ACELY1742
ACELY1743
ACELY1744

Year 10
ACELT1639
ACELT1640
ACELT1641
ACELT1812
ACELT1642
ACELT1774
ACELY1749
ACELY1750

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities:

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the book – how close were your predictions to the actual novel?

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

What is the purpose of this novel (i.e. to entertain, to inform or to persuade)? How can you tell? Write a paragraph about the novel using only informative language that is unbiased. Write another paragraph using persuasive language to convince the reader to share your opinion of the novel.

What are the themes in this novel? Identify and list the themes as a class or in small groups. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

This novel is written in short chapters from the perspective of each of the characters. Why do you think the author chose to write the novel this way? Why do you think each character's chapters are written in a different style (i.e. poem, prose, dialogue only, etc.)? How might the novel have been different if it were written from only one character's perspective?

The reader never sees any of the events from Christopher Goodman's perspective. Why do you think the author chose not to include this perspective?

The ensemble of characters are brought together by the events of the novel. Take a large sheet of paper and write 'Christopher Goodman' in the centre, surrounded by the names of the other characters (Doc, Leonard, Squib, Hunger, Hazel and Mildred). Draw lines connecting each character describing their relationship before and after Christopher was murdered. Mention key events in the novel that bring these two characters together. Also draw lines connecting each character to Christopher describing their relationship and how they are affected by his death.

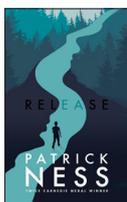
This novel is loosely based on true events. Read the author's note at the end of the book and have a class discussion on using real events as the basis for fiction. What responsibility do you think the author has to those involved in the real events? What do you think an author should consider when writing about real people?

Are all the narrators of this novel reliable? What is an unreliable narrator? What evidence from the text suggests that one or some of the narrators aren't always telling the truth? What does this say about a person's perspective of an event and the subjectiveness of memory? Choose a partner in class and write a recount of an event or incident where you were both present. Compare your recounts and discuss the similarities and differences of your recollections.

Allan Wolf has given each narrator (or voice) a title, i.e. Doc is "The Sleepwalker"; Leonard is "The Runaway", etc. Why do you think he gave them these titles? What is the significance of the title for each character?

The last few chapters explore the feelings of guilt and remorse felt by each of the characters. Have a class discussion on the power of guilt. Why do you think these characters (excluding Leonard) feel responsible for Christopher's death? Do you think they deserve these feelings? Compare this with Leonard's feelings. What do you think his reaction signifies about his mental state?

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