



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Hello, I Must Be Going

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

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Outline:

Celeste and Sorrel, Reuben and Orlando: high school friends who hang out together all the time. When Sorrel gets hit by a car one rainy night, it's not surprising the others fall apart in various ways. But it's not just grief they're struggling with – it's parents. Unfair, demanding, challenging parents who are, quite frankly, making their lives a misery. That's why Sorrel decides she's not going to be properly dead till she's sorted out her friends' lives and can leave them with a clearer sense of what they want out of life. From the bestselling author of *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*, this is a tender comedic ghost story which touches on some important issues, like bullying, coming out, and the life-denying way the old want to live through the young and impose their failures on them. It's about the importance of being the person you want to be – or else, being miserable.

Author Information:

Dyan Sheldon is a popular and highly respected author of books for teens and pre-teens as well as a number of stories for younger readers. Her bestselling titles include *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*, *Confessions of a Teenage Hollywood Star*, *One or Two Things I Learned About Love*, *Tall, Thin and Blonde* and the picture book *The Whales' Song*, which won the Kate Greenaway Medal in 1990. American by birth, Dyan lives in London, NW1. Visit Dyan at www.dyansheldon.co.uk

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
- Ages 12+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- YA Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Loss/Mourning
- Supernatural
 - Guilt
- Sexuality



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Hello, I Must Be Going*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb.

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?

Exploring the text

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

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Keep a “Vocab Journal” while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

Choose a character from the novel. Explore how they are initially presented to us versus what we know about them at the end of the novel. What techniques does the author use to reveal the characters?

Hello, I Must Be Going tells the story from multiple perspectives: Orlando, Ruben, Celeste and their conversations with Sorrel. Why do you think none of the friends sought each other out when they started seeing Sorrel? Would this have changed the story if they did?

Explore the point's of view of the novel, Orlando, Ruben and Celeste. What are the positives and negatives of a novel with multiple voices?

What do you think would have happened if Sorrel didn't die in the accident? Could Orlando's, Ruben's and Celeste's stories have been told?

When Sorrel appears to each of her friends she changes how she appears. Why do you think she does this? List some of the different looks Sorrel uses.

Sorrel's friends, Orlando, Ruben and Celeste all have different problems in their lives. List what you think these are and how Sorrel will help.

Do you the parents of key characters play a key role in each of their stories? Why or why not?

Do you think Sorrel helped each of her friends? Do you think they could have overcome their problems without her presence? Why or why not?

At the end of each chapter Dyan Sheldon makes a comment about the dead in relation to Sorrel. Why do you think she does this?

Creative Responses to the Text

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

A novel will describe the setting and action in words, allowing the reader to visualise using their imagination. A comic strip or graphic novel uses illustrations to show the reader the setting, action and character's emotions. Create a comic strip of a key scene from the novel.

Imagine that a movie was being made of *Hello, I Must Be Going*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.

Create a mood board of the story including words and phrases from the text and photos and illustrations that match what you saw in your mind while reading the book.

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