

SOME KIND OF HATE

SARAH DARER LITTMAN

EDUCATOR GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK & GUIDE

Declan Taylor is riding high. His pitching helped the baseball team win state, and the future looks bright. But when an accident puts the future he imagined for himself in doubt, he finds himself heading down a rabbit hole that will change his life—and the lives of everyone around him—forever.

In *Some Kind of Hate*, Sarah Darer Littman has crafted a true conversation starter for readers using a dual perspective. How do the circumstances of our lives lead to hate and how does hate transform us from the inside out?

This educator guide asks students to explore difficult and sometimes painful topics. Many students have had a front row seat to these issues. This guide serves as a reflection tool to help them process, critically analyze, and understand the world around them. The activities below give students opportunities to tackle complex topics and ideas and foster open communication, expression, thoughtfulness, and perspective. Sarah, yet again, empowers students to dive deep into language and universal themes through her rich, vibrant stories and through characters who are just as confused, flawed, and interesting as any real-life friend.

This guide will introduce essential terms that students will want to be familiar with in order to engage with the book and the activities provided. Visit the Resources section on Sarah's website somekindofh8.com for working definitions in order to give students common language and comfort while dialoguing about the book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Darer Littman is the critically acclaimed author of many young adult and middle grade novels including *Some Kind of Hate*; *Deepfake*; *Anything But Okay*; *Backlash*, winner of the Iowa Teen Book Award and the Grand Canyon Reader Award; *Life, After*; *Purge*; and *Confessions of a Closet Catholic*, winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award. She is also an award-winning news columnist and teaches writing in the MFA program at Western Connecticut State University and with the Yale Writers' Workshop. Sarah writes books about topics that hit teens straight in the heart—tackling the tough questions and challenging our beliefs. She lives in Connecticut in a house that never seems to have enough bookshelves. You can visit her online at sarahdarerlittman.com.

PRE-READING/JOURNALING/VOCAB

Journaling presents the opportunity for students to release pent-up, negative emotions and prevents us from turning our anger into destructive actions. It is an effective way to channel intense feelings into healthy and productive, internal fuel.

Writing our thoughts and feelings, causes us to pause, think, feel, analyze, and sometimes take action.

Before you begin journaling, just a few notes to communicate to students:

- During journaling, if anything bothers, upsets, or triggers you, do not hesitate to speak up. You can write a note on a Post-it and slide it to your teacher or ask to speak before, during, or after the task. Please know that your teachers are here to listen and part of the reason we are engaged in this learning and inquiry is to give you a voice. It's absolutely okay to use it.
- If you aren't comfortable writing about your own personal stories, then you can answer any question by removing yourself and writing about "a friend" or about something you've witnessed. It is absolutely okay to write in third person if it helps you express your ideas more freely and cope.
- Your thoughts, feelings, and experiences matter. This is a time for you to have space to think through and explore what matters to you without judgment; utilize the opportunity to express yourself and learn compassion for others.

WRITING PROMPTS FOR JOURNALING:

1. How safe do you feel at school when it comes to violence? Brainstorm some ways in which you and your classmates can help create safer schools. What steps might administrators and other adults take to ensure schools are safe for all students?
2. Have you seen incidents of hate in recent years? What are they and how did you feel when learning about these incidents?
3. What does the word *hate* mean to you? How does hate show up in the world around you? Find examples of hate within the past year that have affected you in some way and explain their effect on you and the way you see the world. What do you think is happening in our world today that contributes to this kind of hatred?
4. Culture can be defined as "the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular group of people" (merriam-webster.com). Culture can include your ethnicity, religion, language, gender identity, etc. Culture can also be created by groups you belong to who establish their own norms and beliefs like skateboarders, environmental activists, etc. Which cultures do you identify with? Journal about one culture that you identify with and include the following:
 - a. Where do you gain pride in being a part of this group? What do you love about being in this group?
 - b. What stereotypes, judgments, and/or issues have arisen by being a part of this group?
 - c. Have you ever been ostracized or singled out for being different? What was that experience like?
 - d. What social justice issues, if any, affect this group?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How does the title of the book engage you as a reader, and what does it tell you about the central idea of the novel?
2. How do class and money play a role in Declan's life? What foreshadowing signals or signs lead to Declan's transformation?
3. How do Declan's views of what it means to be a man impact him? How do Declan's evolving views of girls and women affect his relationship with his sister, Kayleigh? Is misogyny as harmful for men as it is for women? Why or why not? Explain your thinking.
4. What are ways in which you can determine whether something you read online is factual and reliable? Come up with a set of rules for verifying information. Identify the top five strategies you'll use when determining whether to believe what you read. Check out libguides.ala.org/InformationEvaluation for additional strategies.
5. What is an affinity group? What role does Jake and Arielle's youth group (affinity group) play in their personal relationship and in how they deal with issues that arise in their lives?
6. Why might the author have written the town of Stafford as a community lacking in racial diversity? How can diversity contribute to/enhance a school community?
7. How can you safely support people in your community when they are targeted by bullies or bigotry? What techniques can you use to help a friend when times are tough?
8. How does hatred hide and disguise itself throughout the novel in events or interactions that seem like games or harmless gestures?
9. What does it mean to prey on or exploit? Do you think the group Declan meets through *Imperialist Empires* preys on his situation? Why or why not? If yes, in what ways do they use his misfortune to their advantage?
10. What does it mean to have grit and determination even in the face of great setbacks or obstacles? How do we cultivate strength through adversity? When we make mistakes, what are some ways to own them? What does forgiveness look like to you? How might the characters in the novel respond to these same questions?
11. What does it do for the reader to have the story told through both Declan's and Jake's eyes? Why might the author have written the book from both viewpoints? What do you think she's saying about life when using this technique?

SET-UP FOR SOCRATIC SEMINARS/DISCUSSION PROTOCOL

A Socratic seminar is a form of discussion that asks open-ended questions. Students focus on listening closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and continuing the conversation with more questions and comments that lead to a deeper understanding of the topic. It is an opportunity for all students to have their voices heard.

Before jumping into any of the following discussions and activities related to *Some Kind of Hate*, be sure to get students involved in the process of creating a comfortable and open atmosphere for class discussions and activities. We want students to feel safe in order to be brave. Do not skip this step. It is really, really important.

- Have students journal about what makes them feel comfortable enough to share in and out of class with peers and with teachers or other adults.
- Discuss and share their thoughts as a whole class.
- With student input and ownership, create a set of guidelines to follow; make sure the guidelines are concise, realistic, personal, and relevant to students and to your specific class. A sample is shared to the right.
- As you begin discussions, consider appointing discussion leaders who can help facilitate and encourage input from all students.
- While discussions are underway and evolving, give students the task of writing down important/intriguing thoughts that they or their peers have shared. A sample note-taking table is provided.

SAMPLE GUIDELINES*

1. Body language and eye contact: Truly listen in our body, face, eyes, etc.
2. Nonjudgmental listening, confidentiality, and engagement: Discussions about complex topics may cause us discomfort. Stretching ourselves is part of learning. Stretching ourselves is also only possible through trust that others will not share our words.
3. “Accountable talk” and “One Mic”: Listen. Give others a chance to speak. Avoid language or behavior that shuts others down.
4. Opinions matter; agree to disagree: Value others’ perspectives, even when we disagree. Making mistakes is normal. We won’t always have the answers.

*Guidelines inspired by *Not Light, But Fire* by Matthew R. Kay

Sample Note-Taking Table for Use with the Following Activities

Thought-Provoking Questions You Might Want to Ask	Major Takeaways
What questions pop into your head during the discussion? What are you curious about?	What ideas are repeated or resonate with you?

DIGITAL DIFFERENTIATION: Students in an online classroom can be separated into breakout rooms or separate chats in order to discuss. Teachers may also want to assign groups of students to shared documents (think Google Doc or Jamboard) where they can work on notes together in order to retain accountability.

“MORE THAN JUST TALK” INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed to help students explore deeply and thoughtfully the issues raised in *Some Kind of Hate*. Before beginning any of the activities you may want to inform parents of the complex, sometimes painful topics in the book. Encourage parents and guardians to speak with you and their students on these topics to foster open communication and feedback and help support the lessons.

PRIVILEGE WALK

Before you begin this activity be sure you have cultivated a trusting environment through icebreakers, discussion of classroom norms, and student-generated guidelines.

This activity isn't about shaming people for being privileged or not privileged. It's about exploring the ways in which we each have privilege and also how we are all connected through common humanity and struggle. In *Some Kind of Hate*, we see characters struggle with not only bigotry but also ways in which they may have privilege. Examining our place in the world helps us understand how to become true allies to others so we don't get lost in stereotypes and mistruths. Students can use this as an opportunity to see how different we all are but also how we all have places where we can lean on one another, become allies to others, and fight prejudice in our society. There are many privilege-awareness activities for educators to experience with their students.

The following is inspired by peacelearner.org/2016/03/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan/.

Materials Needed:

- Printed privilege statements
- Patience and open-mindedness!

Steps:

1. Have students line up in a straight, horizontal line across the middle of the room. Be sure students have space to move forward during the activity.
2. Read a selection of privilege statements aloud. For inspiration and examples of privilege statements, visit peacelearner.org/2016/03/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan or kinecteducationgroup.com/post/privilege-activity or generate some statements on your own.
3. Let students know to move forward if they are comfortable sharing if a statement applies to them. If students are uncomfortable moving in response to a question, it is absolutely okay for them to remain where they are.
4. When you have finished the statements, ask students to notice where they are in the room in relation to their peers. Ask them to think about how this activity might connect to *Some Kind of Hate*.
5. After the activity, students work with a partner to generate their own discussion questions to contribute to the Socratic seminar discussion that will follow. Students may come up with open-ended questions to ask their peers, such as:
 - a. How did it feel to move a certain amount of steps? Do you think people felt better if they were farther ahead or behind in this activity? Explain.
 - b. Were you surprised by anything? Explain.
 - c. How can we relate this activity to the students, conflicts, and themes in *Some Kind of Hate*?
6. Students lead a class discussion using the questions they wrote. Encourage students to use the note-taking table during the discussion.

REAL WORLD CONNECTION

Have students go home and discuss the privilege walk activity with parents/guardians. Have them share the feedback and discuss how their own home understands privilege and identity. If students are not comfortable sharing at home or at school, offer students some journaling and free writing time in order for them to gather and explore their thoughts and feelings about this activity.

DIGITAL DIFFERENTIATION: Students in an online classroom can do this activity through the “thumbs-up” or “hands up” online feature or a preassigned gesture on the camera. Have students take ten seconds between each privilege statement to note how many students have raised their hands. Have them tally each question on their own, generate their own discussion questions, and pose their questions to the class aloud or through the chat feature.

BLOG IT UP! — STEREOTYPES

We all have had varying degrees of experiences with stereotypes, and *Some Kind of Hate* shows us how those stereotypes can become dangerous. This activity allows for students to explore the origins and harm in stereotypes surrounding many historically marginalized groups. Students will make real-life connections and see how stereotypes can twist the world and people around us.

Materials Needed:

- Technology for viewing websites. (If classrooms do not have this technology, consider trips to the library or printing/copying materials for students.)
- Graphic organizer with variations of the following suggested categories:

Stereotyped Group	Stereotype	Origin of Stereotype	Effect of Stereotype

Steps:

1. Display the following questions. Students brainstorm and discuss with a partner or small group:
 - What are some examples of stereotypes?
 - Based on your examples, come up with a definition of stereotypes. What do you think it means?
 - Why do you think people believe some stereotypes?
 - Have you ever been on the receiving end of stereotypes? Discuss. How did it make you feel?
 - Why are stereotypes erroneous and misleading, and sometimes even dangerous?
 - What is antisemitism? How have stereotypes been used in the past to hurt Jewish people and other groups?
2. Come back together as a whole class, and using the Socratic method–style discussion and notetaking organizer have students share their thoughts, ask questions of one another, and move the discussion forward.
3. In small groups, students use the graphic organizer to organize their research and their thoughts about stereotypes that exist surrounding two different groups of people in society. One of the groups they will research will be stereotypes about Jewish people. The other is their choice. Guide students to age-appropriate, academic websites, and to Sarah’s website somekindofh8.com for additional research links.
4. Tell students they will be creating a blog for teens using the information they found in their research about stereotypes and why stereotypes can be misleading, etc. Their blog should include:
 - Language that engages teen readers and is not boring! What would they want to read? What would make them actually care about learning about stereotypes? This is a challenge even for the most skilled writers.
 - Three to five facts that they learned in their research.
 - Encourage groups to share their work with their peers.
 - Discuss: How might Declan have benefited from this research? How might he have been affected by this knowledge?

REAL WORLD CONNECTION

Consider having students turn their blogs into a public service announcement by sharing their blogs with other students in their district. At the beginning of this project, so students can feel comfortable with what they choose to reveal, be sure to let students know that they may be sharing their blogs with students outside of their own class.

DIGITAL DIFFERENTIATION: Students in an online classroom can research during class and discuss in small break out groups. It may add an interesting twist to echo stereotypes they see on social media as they will have more access to this from home and may find themes and connections in the real world.

HOW CAN WE TELL?! CARTOON

How do we know when information is true? In the vast world of the internet, students (and many adults!) often fall into a rabbit hole leading them to belief systems and ideas that can be dangerous. This activity allows students to identify what makes a source credible or how to spot the fake in order to keep them from following the trail of information too far like the players of *Imperialist Empires* in *Some Kind of Hate*. This analytic and eyes-wide-open skill is essential to being a conscientious digital citizen. How can we avoid falling down the rabbit hole influenced by news and information that is untrue?

Materials Needed:

- Technology for viewing websites including computers, tablets, or phones. (If classrooms do not have this technology, consider trips to the library or printing/copying materials for students.)
- Graphic organizer with these suggested categories:

Real News	Fake News

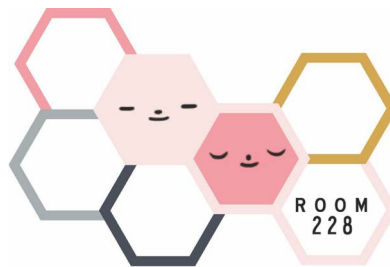
Steps:

1. Ask: How do we know when a news article/source is fake or real? It's not always easy to tell!
2. Students work with a partner or small group to create a T-chart to list characteristics of a real news article versus a fake news article. Students may research online while they discuss. Potential articles for research can be found on Sarah's website somekindofh8.com and feel free to use your own sites as well.
3. Discuss as a whole class:
 - What characteristics did your groups identify?
 - Why is it sometimes difficult for people to decipher if a news article is real or not?
 - Why is it important for us to be able to develop this skill when reading/viewing/listening? What problems might occur if we don't or can't figure out what is a reliable source?
 - How does this information connect to the themes, conflicts, and characters in *Some Kind of Hate*?
 - Some adults have difficulty with this skill. It's challenging for sure! Tell students they will create a one-square/circle cartoon that teaches adults how to use their analytic skills to figure out if a news article is real or not. The cartoon should include:
 - Artwork
 - Texts/facts from their research and class discussions
 - Humor! (But be sure not to stereotype adults!)

REAL WORLD CONNECTION

- Have groups share their cartoons with their peers and discuss what strategies their peers used that they loved and found effective in getting the message across.
- Students love competition! Consider having groups vote for one cartoon to submit to the local newspaper, representing the whole class, to spread the word in their community on how to identify when a news article is real or not.

DIGITAL DIFFERENTIATION: Students in an online classroom can research during class and discuss in small break out groups. You may also have them search for digital media such as videos, documentaries, news soundbites, etc. that add to the conversation and that can be shared and discussed in the online classroom.



This teaching guide was written by Room 228 Educational Consulting,
with public school teacher Morgan Cuffie as lead teacher.
Room 228 supports creating safe spaces that become brave spaces and leaning into discomfort.

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