

General Notes

This lesson would be given in two parts over two class periods. My goals (in addition to the Learning Objectives & Success Criteria outlined below) as an instructor to the students would be the following:

1. to get the students excited about literature by showing relevant & relatable life experiences
2. introduce the concept of social-emotional learning to the students
3. set the tone for the expectations of how students ought to treat each other in class.

This would be a two-day lesson with 90 minutes of class instruction each day. They are also allotted two additional days with me for reading and study skills so I would stretch this over the four days since I see them daily for 90 minutes each. I would incorporate multimodal ways of teaching, understanding, and assessment.

I included a few of the slides that I would use during the lesson as a visual representation to the lesson plan.

Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) Overview

TEKS 1A - Learning Objective: Engage in meaningful and respectful discourse by listening, responding appropriately, and adjusting communication to audiences and purposes.

Success Criteria (How Students Show They Have Met The Learning Objective):

- Students can complete and share a reading inventory survey. This shows how often the students are reading and the notes they are creating and will be able to use them in their future assessments.
- Students can share their opinions with others, listen to others' opinions in a respectful manner, and accurately paraphrase their thoughts.
- Students can actively participate in class discussions and respond appropriately to their peers.

TEKS 8A - Learning Objective: Analyze the author's purpose, audience, and message within a text.

Success Criteria (How Students Show They Have Met The Learning Objective):

- Students can explain the author's purpose for writing the novel.
- Students can explain the author's message in writing the novel.

Logistics Of Lesson Plan

Introduction Of Lesson

Have students write in their online journal a time they saw a person inadvertently act "awkward," "weird," or "embarrassed." They can use any social media, television, movie, or live source (meaning they witnessed it firsthand). I would like them to post links to social media, television, movies, or live sources.

I would ask them to explain the situation and why they thought it was embarrassing, awkward, or weird and begin the discussion—those that were appropriate we could share on the screen.

I will explain my example from *Breaking Bad*, the character situation, and show the movie clip of the scene as an example. I would do exactly what I am asking them to do.

Next, I would break them into small groups. At this early stage of the school year, I would let them self-group. I would ask them to share their own examples in their small group. I would ask them to discuss the idea of emotions and how the characters in their examples felt, with the understanding that there were multiple perspectives in the scenario. I would ideally like them to identify the feelings of each character.

Then I would ask each group to select one of their examples with a video clip or visual of the example and present it to the class. I would guide them on presenting and have them set up the video clip.

While continually emphasizing the feelings of character in their examples as valid and to be respected, even if they cannot fully empathize with the character.

I would conclude the introduction by asking them to sit and meditate on a moment they felt awkward, embarrassed, or weird in front of people. I would not make them explain or discuss but think about it and how they felt. Or how they felt on their first day of high school at a new school for those struggling.

Body Of Lesson

Here, I would discuss the introduction of the book *Turtles All The Way Down*. In it, I would describe many situations that require the reader to put themselves in the characters' shoes while giving a summary. I would really get the multimodal portion of things going here. I would use a clip of myself sitting and explaining the summary in a visual, exciting, or enticing manner.

Next, I would introduce the author and his previous works and emphasize how much John Green wrote this from a personal perspective. I would supplement this with a quick YouTube video explaining this better. I would really ask them why the author wrote this book if it shows how embarrassing, weird, or awkward it is. I would have them write their answer in their inventory/reading log.

Finally, I would have an audio version of these three “big” themes. I would use verbiage that matches their style to better relate to them. I would make a “social media-esq” video with audio and a random montage of awkward, embarrassing, or weird moments.

Next, we would start reading the novel together as a class. I teach first-generation English language learners, so I would have the audio version ready and have them follow along in the books. To aid in their understanding, I would have a simple (not deep) comprehensive overview where they would fill in the blanks of the characters, actions, roles, etc., all the while stopping when they needed a break.

After we had read sufficiently and discussed some of the themes associated with the reading, I asked them to imagine what each character would do in different hypothetical scenarios. This would vary depending on the class. But as an example:

Aza – The principal calls her into the office and accuses her of being rude to other girls and being a bully. What would Ava say? What tone would Ava use towards the principal?

Davis – Some other girl is at the house when Aza gets there. What does Davis do? How does he explain this to Ava?

Daisy–Davis sends her a text message behind Aza's back. What does Daisy do?

These examples help connect the students to the characters and try to put themselves into other people's shoes when faced with complex and exciting situations.

I would put the students into a group and have them act out the scenario with the caveat that they all must have a small speaking part as a narrator or actor. It would be short but encourage active participation and engagement in the novel.

Conclusion Of Lesson

I would have them fill out an online survey addressing some key questions I had about the lesson and if they learned. I would ensure they met the learning objectives and could complete the success criteria.

As a final assessment, I would present three different scenarios related to real life and ask them what the most appropriate and emotionally intelligent method of handling each situation would be. This would be their assessment for this lesson.

Turtles All The Way Down Reflection

I enjoyed the book. Anytime I read a book, I look up the author to get a deeper understanding of why the author wrote the book and to understand the perspective of the author's narrative. The whole time, I am reminded that it is young adult literature, but, like most young adult literature, it relates to adulthood. In the book, I just kept replacing high school with a work or office environment, and it rang true—the insecurities, the embarrassing moments, the power struggle of friendships and alliances. It was a serious but funny and gentle reminder that, as adults, we are all just kids trying to figure things out—just like Aza and Davis.

I liked the way the story handled the timeline issues. Whole weeks and months went by, sometimes in a matter of a page or two, e.g., the Dad Was missing for weeks, and Aza was in the hospital for a week. Other times, a few pages could be devoted to a five-minute scene, e.g., her discussions with her mom or the stargazing with David.

Every embarrassing scene Aza had or when she and Daisy fought towards the end reminded me that, as adults, we are all still just a bunch of kids.

The book reminded me of a movie scene from American Beauty that summed up the book. There is a scene in American Beauty where the main character describes his relationship with his daughter. He essentially says that (paraphrasing) he wants to tell his daughter that everything will be alright, the insecurities will fade, things will work out for the better, and she won't have to be nervous or afraid any

longer. But then he says (again, paraphrasing) that he cannot say that because he does not want to lie to her.

The whole time I was reading the topics, the coming-of-age, the doubting, the insecurity of personal, professional, and romantic relationships—all of those conversations and feelings are valid to young people and middle-aged adults.

That is what made the book so beautiful. By replacing a few key images, e.g., high school with an office or work building, a person could easily relate to Aza, Davis, Daisy, or any number of other characters in the story.

And the ending was good. It reminded me that some stories do not end "perfectly" or "happy," which is OK. At a young age and even as adults, we often want things to end in a certain way, and when they do not, it feels incomplete or wrong. But the story reminds me that there are just parts to life, and each part has its time and place. And when we move on from that time and place, it does not mean that we do not carry our lessons, loves, hates, desires, and passions from that time, but instead, we appreciate them for what they were and hopefully use them to help us in the present and the future.

A photograph of a library aisle. The shelves are filled with books, and several warm-toned pendant lights hang from the ceiling, creating a soft, ambient glow. The perspective is from the end of the aisle, looking down its length.

ENGLISH I

YOUR THOUGHTS. YOUR OPINIONS.

Think of a time someone (you, someone you know, someone you do not know) did something embarrassing, awkward, or weird.

In your own words describe that scene. Explain it clearly so that if I read it, I would understand.

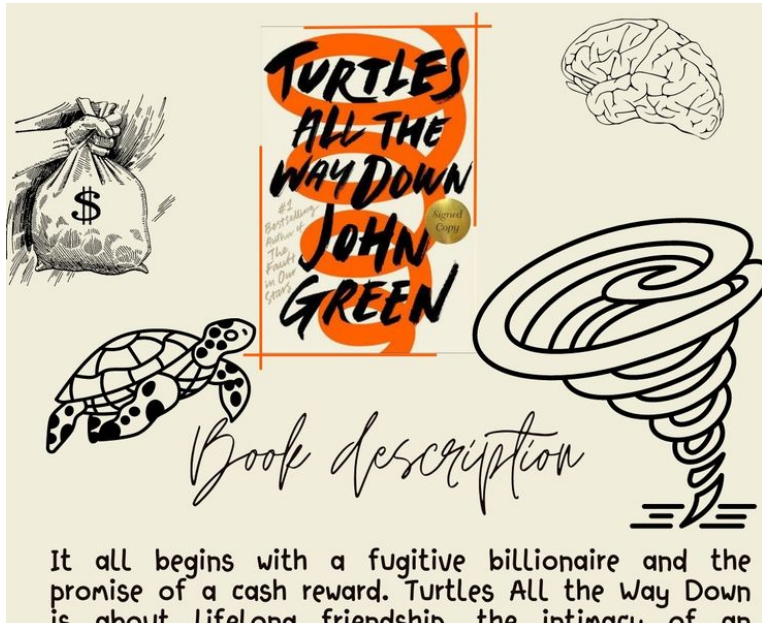
You can use your own real-life experiences, a movie, a television show, social media.



INTRODUCTION

TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

MAP MOVING FORWARD



The Book

Summary - Video Clip (Myself)



The Author

Writing a Book That Mirrors His Own Life
Video Clip (YouTube)



Themes

Emotions Are OK/We Will Be Embarrassing,
Awkward, Weird & It Is OK/Self-Acceptance Is
Vital (Audio Clip To Montage)