



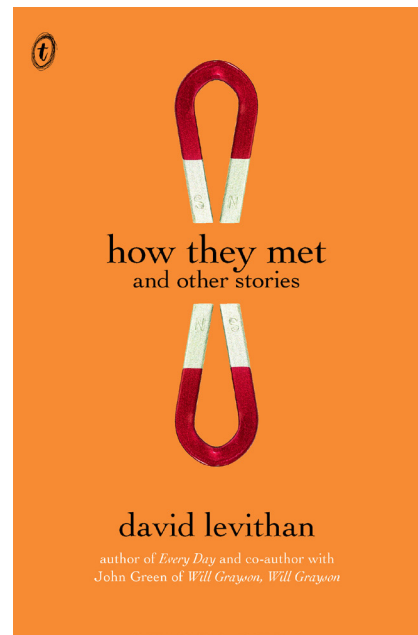
How They Met and Other Stories

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RECOMMENDED AGE:
YEARS 10–12

Text's Teaching Notes for the Australian Curriculum

- ▶ Text's teaching notes are designed for teachers to explore the novel in line with the *Australian Curriculum: English*.
- ▶ Questions are divided into stages: from pre-reading to post-reading and include suggested tasks for assessment.
- ▶ An ACARA coding system connects each task to the *Australian Curriculum: English*. It includes links to strands, modes, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- ▶ Refer to the legend below and the accompanying [Australian Curriculum: English Scope and Sequence reference chart](#) to decipher these codes.
- ▶ Students can record their responses in writing through reading journals, online discussions or verbally in classroom discussions.

Strands	LA – Language LT – Literature LY – Literacy
Modes	W – Writing L – Listening R – Reading
General capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Ethical behaviour Intercultural understanding Personal and social capability Critical and creative thinking Numeracy Information and communication technology
Cross-curriculum priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

SYNOPSIS

Love comes in many different forms, it is often unexpected, fleeting and sometimes life changing. Levithan's collection of short stories has evolved over many years, beginning as a series of Valentine 'gifts' to his friends. Romantic, confronting, sentimental and humorous, the stories draw together characters from different backgrounds to explore one common theme – love. From the first date (in some cases set up by parents, or young couples who fall together out of necessity or expectation) to the longer-term couple who know each other from years of love, but still remember their youth, many of the stories present an open, raw perspective of same-sex relationships.

While love may be the common thread through the collection, it becomes clear that it is human interaction that creates the most interesting aspect of these stories. Whether read from cover to cover, or dipping in and out, each story is compact and clever.

Not all of the stories have happy endings, but they expose the raw emotion of relationships, the uncertainty of love and the way that it can change who you are.







ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Levithan is an award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author of young adult books, including *Boy Meets Boy*, *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist* (with Rachel Cohn) and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (with John Green). He lives in New Jersey and spends his days in New York, editing and publishing other people's books.

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BEFORE READING






1. Relationships come in different forms. Despite this, there are some things that all relationships share. With a partner, make a list of the things that you think are common in most relationships. Take into account different types of relationships, different genders, generations and cultures. **W S LT** (ACELT1639) (ACELT1812)   
2. Read the Forward. What expectations does it establish? When you have read some of the stories, come back to this question and consider how accurate your thoughts were. **W LT** (ACELT1771) 
3. Is there something you do each year to mark an event that has become a 'tradition'? Write about it and explain how it has evolved over time. **W LT** (ACELT1644)  

WHILE READING










Starbucks Boy

1. What is the intention of the opening sentence? **R LA** (ACELA1553) 
2. Which of Arabella's characteristics are typical of a 6-year-old girl and which are not? **R LY** (ACELY1749)  
3. What indications are there that Arabella has a routine? **R LA** (ACELA1553)  
4. Consider the story from 6-year-old Arabella's point of view. What is she thinking as she sets up the meeting? Write a narrative from Arabella's point of view as they head to Starbucks the first time. **W R LT** (ACELT1644) 

Miss Lucy Had a Steamboat




1. Where is it evident that Lucy uses the rhyme as a distraction? Why do you think she does this? **R LT** (ACELT1642) 
2. What is the effect of repetition in the story? **R LA** (ACELA1553) 
3. Do you think Lucy is a victim in this relationship? **R LT** (ACELT1812)   

The Alumni Interview






1. In what way does Ian play along with Thom's inability to be honest with his father? **R LT** (ACELT1642)  
2. How does the revelation of audience and purpose unfold throughout the story? **R LT** (ACELT1641)  
3. Explore the use of euphemism in the story. **R LT** (ACELT1642)  
4. Do you think Ian should have been honest with Thom's father from the start of the interview or is it not that simple? What advice would you have given Ian? **W LT** (ACELT1812)   

5. How does Thom's presence at the keyhole alter Ian's interview? **R LY** (ACELY1744)




The Good Witch

1. While the narrator suggests that this event happened before he knew he was gay, in what way does the reader get a sense that there is an element of doubt about the idea of dating a girl in his mind? **R LY** (ACELY1754)  
2. Identify the phrases that suggest the writer's discomfort. **R LT** (ACELT1642) 
3. What does the narrator misjudge in the story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)





The Escalator, a Love Story

1. In what way is the escalator story similar to the narrator's love life? **R LT** (ACELT1774)  
2. What phrases are used to suggest that Daniel and Mandy are meant to be? **R LT** (ACELT1642)  
3. Consider something you have done or someone else has done that was completely out of character or unexpected. What made you/them do it? **W LT** (ACELT1644) 


The Number of People who Meet on Airplanes

1. To what extent is the relationship between Rory and the narrator fate or the interference of others? **R LT** (ACELT1639) 
2. Why do you think Al Schwartz plays matchmaker? **R LT** (ACELT1639)  
3. Why is it so important to Al that he not be seen as responsible for their relationship? **R LT** (ACELT1812)



Andrew Chang

1. Was the date a failure or a success? **R LT** (ACELT1635) 
2. What motivation do you think the protagonist's parents had for setting up the date? **R LT** (ACELT1812) 
3. The narrator suggests that, at one point, she was almost relieved to have been set up on a date. Why does she say this? **R LT** (ACELT1812)  

Flirting with Waiters

1. What creates the connection between the narrator and Seth? **R LT** (ACELT1642) 
2. The story doesn't have the ending that the 12-year-old narrator initially hoped for, yet there is a sense of contentment from her in the ending. Why is this so? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

Lost Sometimes

1. In what way are the characters in this story 'lost'? **R LT** (ACELT1812) 
2. Would you describe the end of this story as a 'happy ending'? Justify your answer. **R LT** (ACELT1812) 



3. The initial challenge of taking risks is what drives the two boys relationship in this story, but what is it that changes it? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

Princes

1. What expectations do the narrators' parents have to overcome in the story? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

2. Who are the princes that the title refers to? Explain your reasoning. **R LT** (ACELT1642)

3. The writer hints at the eventual outcome throughout the story. Find ways that he does this. **R LT** (ACELT1642)

Breaking and Entering

1. 'People never change the place they hide their keys.' What does change, though? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

2. In what way is the title a metaphor for the emotional journey that Peter takes? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

3. Consider the way that Cody's mother and Peter are similar. **R LT** (ACELT1642)

Skipping the Prom

1. In the opening lines of the story, the narrator suggests that 'the real story...was better'. In what way is the truth often better than our imagination? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. The story reflects one night in a relationship. Why do you think the narrator chooses not to reveal what happens later or the detail of the song that was played? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

3. What are the indications that the couple in this story are experiencing something far better than Prom night? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

A Romantic Inclination

1. Unlike many of the other stories in this collection, 'A Romantic Inclination' offers as two different perspectives. What is the impact of this on the reader? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. What is the effect of the use of words such as 'parameter' and 'symmetry' in the story? Find similar examples in the story and make a list. **R LA** (ACELA1571)

3. Mimic the style of the story and write your own romance that reflects the language of a specific subject at school. **W LY** (ACELT1644)

4. What suggestions are there that this relationship 'wouldn't be beneficial'? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

What a Song Can Do

1. Why do you think the writer has chosen verse to tell this story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. What do you think the writer says that his parents wanted to 'keep [him] as a sound, not a voice'? In what way is this reflected in this story? In what way is it linked to other stories in the collection? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

3. What is implied by the line 'doors do not slam, but they do not stay open as I sneak music into the house...'? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

4. What is it that gives the narrator doubts about his relationship with Caleb and his family? What changes that feeling? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

5. How is music used as a metaphor on the story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

Without Saying

1. How is the intensity of the relationship between Ramona and Milo conveyed? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. Explore the way that structure is used to engage the reader. **R LT** (ACELT1642)

3. What is the effect of the change in tense and voice? **R LT** (ACELT1643)

4. Consider the impact of the line 'Milo and Ramona can't seem to keep their words off each other.' **R LT** (ACELT1642)

5. The fragmentation of the story adds to the reader's confusion and reflects the uncertainty of the characters. What is the message in this story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

6. Explore the use of dual realities in the story. Why does Levithan use this on relation to love? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

7. Who do you believe is the 'I' in this story? **R LT** (ACELT1643)

How they Met

1. What is the effect of the spacing in the story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. Consider how this story sets the foundation for all the other stories for this writer. **R LT** (ACELT1774)

3. "I am here because of..." Write your own collection of family love stories. **W LT** (ACELT1644)

Memory Dance

1. What do the characters' routines tell you about their relationships? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

2. What does Mary's 'memory dance' tell us about the couple's relationship? **R LT** (ACELT1812)

3. To what effect is musical terminology used in the story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)

Intersection

1. Explore the use and effect of metaphor in this story. **R LT** (ACELT1642)

2. How is the initial analogy repeated throughout the story? **R LT** (ACELT1642)



AFTER READING

Character

1. Despite their differences, the characters in Levithan’s stories have much in common. Consider the different ways that they can be grouped. **R LT** (ACELT1639)
2. To an extent, the characters in the stories are innocent. What arguments can you find to justify or refute this? **R LT** (ACELT1642)
3. In what way is narrative voice used to different effects in the collection? **R LT** (ACELT1643)
4. Which characters do we empathise with most and which do we empathise with least? Make a list of the protagonists in all the stories and rank them. Be prepared to justify your ranking and support with evidence. You might choose to complete this as a group discussion. **R S LA** (ACELA1565)
5. What linguistic devices are used by the author to create individual voices in the collection of stories? **R LA** (ACELA1569)

Style and Structure

1. In what way does Levithan use voice in his stories? **R LT** (ACELT1643)
2. How is the intensity of love and relationships created in the stories? **R LT** (ACELT1812)
3. Table the features of Levithan’s stories. **R LT** (ACELT1774)

Story	Linguistic features	Structural	Word Bank

4. Use the information in the table from Question 3 as a model to create your own Valentine’s story. **W LT** (ACELT1644)

Themes

Use the following statements to explore the themes within the stories. Find evidence from the short stories to support your ideas. You could use the statements as a prompt to create your own story. You might choose to use them to argue a perspective in writing or as a debate. Think of the various mediums that might be used to represent these ideas.

Love and Loss

1. There is a sense of inevitable loss when we fall in love. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)
2. Love is not a consistent feeling but a moment in time that only we can understand. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)
3. Time does little to alter love. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)

The Search for Identity

1. In loving others, we learn about ourselves. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)
2. It is not necessary to sacrifice your own identity in order to be with others. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)
3. We are who we are because of those who fell in love before us. **R W LT** (ACELT1644)

The Role of Others in our Lives

1. The relationships we have and the events in our lives are influenced less by us and more by others. **R W LT** (ACELT1639)
2. Our lives are shaped through the stories of others. **R W LT** (ACELT1639)

RESPONDING

1. Playing it safe is not always the easiest option. Discuss in relation to at least two of the stories in ‘How They Met’. **R W LT** (ACELT1812)
2. ‘What do I know about love? Not much.’(p.78) Is this true of all the characters in the stories? **R W LT** (ACELT1639)
3. ‘Love weaves itself from hundreds of threads.’ (p.99) Explore this concept through the stories. **R W LT** (ACELT1639)
4. ‘...at once, both were illuminated.’ (p.178) Explore the ways that the characters are ‘illuminated’ in the stories. **R W LT** (ACELT1639)
5. ‘Love always goes against a certain gradient. Sometimes risk. Sometimes popular opinion. In this case, regret.’ (p.180) Consider the way that this statement is a reflection of the stories in ‘How They Met, and other stories’. **R W LT** (ACELT1639)
6. ‘Every two people cause an intersection.’ (p. 243) Where are the intersections in the stories? **R W LT** (ACELT1774)