



The Realm of Possibility

DAVID LEVITHAN

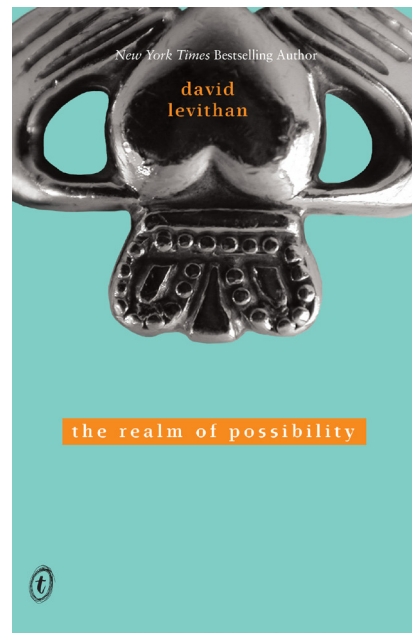
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RECOMMENDED SCHOOL YEAR

LEVEL: 9-10



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

In David Levithan's verse novel, *The Realm of Possibility*, the lives of the characters intertwine, exploring the possibility of love, loss, hate and hope. The verse offers an insight into the different lives of young people struggling to cope with rejection, exploring the first moments of love and the uncertainty of self. It opens up emotions that add to the readers' connection to them. The different forms of verse reflect the diverse personalities and struggles and in each voice we learn about the way that ordinary experiences and emotions can alter their lives.

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. Choose a recent or significant moment in your life and write about it in verse. Remember that it doesn't have to rhyme, but think carefully about rhythm. Then, write a short (100 word) reflection on the challenges or advantages of using verse as a form of story telling. (ACELT1644) LT W
2. Is this a novel or poem? Why do you think Levithan has chosen verse to tell his story? Justify your answer (ACELT1634) LT W

WHILE READING

1. As you read, create a profile of each character to help keep their stories in line (you could do this electronically). Add key events in their lives and select phrases from the novel that depict their feelings. (ACELT1620) LT R
2. In 'Smoking', how does the writer imply intimacy in the opening stanza? (ACELY1721) LY R
3. Consider the impact of the following line: 'he is much stronger than i think i am' (Page 4). What do we understand about the view Daniel has of himself? (ACELA1557) LA R
4. A great deal of the meaning in the novel is not stated directly. Why do you think the writer choses to do this? (ACELY1721) LY R
5. What indications are there that Daniel and Jed would rather be somewhere else? Find 3 phrases that suggest this. (ACELA1557) LA R
6. Imagine you are Jed reading this poem by Daniel. In the page border, write your response to what Daniel thinks and feels. (ACELT1814) LT R
- 7.

Event	Selected the line that best reflects the moment	What is the tone or mood at this point?

(ACELT1642) LT R

8. In 'Tinder Heart', how does the crushed paper crane become a symbol of their relationship? (ACELT1637) LT R
9. How does the writer use the double meaning of words (For example: 'stronger' Page 26) to reflect the views of the characters? (ACELT1637) LT R
10. As in 'Love Songs for Elizabeth', what tracks would be recorded to reflect your life at the moment? Explain your response. You might choose to record the songs and lyrics as part of a Photo Story or Powerpoint. (ACELT1773, ACELY1776) LT R W

11. On Page 46, how is the dark used as a metaphor? (ACELT1637) LT R
12. Consider the impact of the lines on Page 48, from 'We drive for miles to in the dark.' Write an explanation. (ACELA1557) LA R
13. How does the enjambment at the end of each stanza in 'Urban Myth' add to our understanding in this chapter? (ACELT1805) LT R
14. 'I often feel I am living in fragments, skipping/over words, leaving the rest of the sentence/blank in order to move on to the next page.' (Page 105) what fragments are skipped over in the novel? Why? (ACELA1557) LA R
15. On Page 107, which lines suggest that things are out of place? Explain your choice. (ACELT1805) LT R
16. 'The words that matter always stay.' (Page 143) What do you think matters to the characters in the novel? (ACELA1557) LA R
17. What effect does the format of the poem on Page 190 have to our understanding? (ACELT1805) LT R
18. What is the purpose of the text in bold type in 'escapade'? (ACELT1805) LT R
19. Re-read the first stanza of 'Possibility' (Page 198). Explain the 'realm of possibility' in reference to the novel. Use evidence from previous chapters to explain your thoughts. (ACELA1557) LA R
20. 'Years into days.
Days into hours
Hours into minutes.
Minutes into moments
Moments into possibility.' (Page 204)

How does this verse connect to other moments in the novel? (ACELA1557) LA R



AFTER READING

Character

Part One: Daniel, Mary, Diana and Megan

1. What do we learn about each character? Select a line from Part One that best depicts each character and explain why. (ACELY1745) LY R
2. What does Mary mean when she says she has 'a tinder heart'? Why would she think this? (ACELT1774) LT R
3. What do Mary's friends see that she does not? Is she alone in her obsession about looks? (ACELT1774) LT R
4. Why do the two characters in 'Tinder Heart' catch each other off guard (Page 34) (ACELT1774) LT R

Part Two: Tyler, Anton, Gail, Jill

1. What does the line 'There are flowers underneath the ground' tell us about Anton? (ACELT1774) LT R
2. Explain the point of view being conveyed in 'The bell rings, ending class/and nothing else.' (ACELT1774) LT R
3. Consider the shift in tone in 'Urban Myth.' How do the serious undertones of the later myths overshadow the humour of the first one? (ACELT1774) LT R
4. What influences the way that different characters see their world? (ACELT1774) LT R

Part Three: Anne, Jamie, Pete, Clara

1. In 'The Patron Saint of Stoners', in what way is Clara's character contradictory? (ACELT1642) LT R
2. What do the different forms of poetry tell us about the characters? (ACELT1812) LT W L
3. How does Clara's reflection on apparently normal aspects of her life help her to cope with the reality? (ACELT1635) LT R

Part Four: Charlotte, Elizabeth, Cara, Lia

1. How is Charlotte's self-doubt reflected in the style of her writing? (ACELT1635) LT R
2. Why does Cara think the messages around the school are about her? What does it tell us about her self-esteem? (ACELT1635) LT R
3. Make a list of the phrases that are written around the school by Charlotte. Match the phrases up with specific characters. (ACELT1642) LT R
4. 'Being a bitch is easy. It's finding the alternative that's hard.' (Page 163) How are the characters challenged by their own behaviour? (ACELT1635) LT R

Part Five: Zack, Karen, Lily, Jed

1. What does Zack mean when he says 'Preparing for our Naked lives'? In what way are they 'naked'? (ACELT1774) LT R
2. Karen's 'Unlonely' is made up of a series of very short verses. What do they tell us about her? Why do you think the writer chose to use such short verses? (ACELT1805) LT R
3. 'I have wanted to jump/out of my life/out of my skin.' (Page 194) What do these words reveal about Lily? (ACELT1774) LT R

Style and Structure

1. Why do you think Levithan chooses to tell the story from multiple perspectives? Why are they grouped in fours? (ACELT1641) LT R
2. What purpose does repetition serve in the novel? (For example: Page 7) (ACELT1641) LT R
3. How is punctuation and italic type used by the writer to add further meaning? (For example: Page 2, 12, (ACELA1567) LA R
4. How does the rhythm of 'each poem reflect the mood and content? (ACELT1805) LT R
5. Create a web diagram that illustrates the connections between characters. (ACELY1745) (ACELY1754) LY R
6. How does the changing rhythm reflect voice on Page 51? (ACELT1805) LT R

Themes

Love

1. 'It's open heart night at the Claire d'Lune' (Page 43). What are the consequences of leaving your heart open? (ACELT1639) LT R
2. Love is expressed in a range of ways in the novel. Consider how characters express their love without saying 'I love you'. (ACELT1642) LT R
3. In the novel, what sacrifices are made for love? What would you be willing to sacrifice for love? (ACELT1812) LT R

Self-belief

1. Explore the way that each character carries elements of self-doubt and insecurity. What fuels that belief? Is it justified? (ACELA1565) LA R
2. How does the way we feel about ourselves affect our relationships with others? (ACELT1642) LT R
3. What does 'Strong' tell us about self-worth? (ACELT1774) LT R
4. 'That is what my voice sounds like/ I don't need to be talking to someone else/to hear it.' (Page 188) What has changed for Karen? (ACELT1774) LT R



Loss and Regret

1. What are the different forms of loss experienced in the novel? (ACELT1774) LT R
2. There is a sense of regret in many of the poems. What regrets do you think each character has? How do they manage their feelings about it? (ACELT1642) LT R
3. Reread 'What I learned' in 'Unlonely'. What does it imply about accepting things as they are? (ACELT1642) LT R

RESPONDING

1. We are all linked in some way. Explore the idea of being connected. Draw from the novel to support your ideas. (ACELT1812) (ACELY1757) LT LY R W
2. We cannot always trust our feelings. In what way is this evident in the novel? (ACELT1812) (ACELT1774) LT R W
3. 'We acted blind, and we moved on.' (Page 71) What are the characters blind or acting blind to in the novel? (ACELT1642) (ACELT1774) R W LT
4. Use the words from the end of each stanza in 'Urban Myth' to create your own verse or prose. (ACELT1642) (ACELT1644) R W LT
5. Based on Part Three's 'Fragments', create a class 'Fragments'. Everyone write their own two stanza verse about something others may not know about them. Put them together as a class. Come up with titles for each as a group. You might like to use these as a game to match the verse with its owner. (ACELT1644) R W LT
6. Based on Part Three's 'the day', write your own list to form a poem using moments in your own day. (ACELT1644) W LT
7. 'Because even I know that a high isn't something you can keep day to day.' Explore how different characters cope with the ups and downs of life. (ACELT1774) (ACELY1756) W LT LY
8. 'Things are not always what they seem.' How is this evident in *The Realm of Possibility*? (ACELT1640) (ACELY1813) (ACELY1757) LT LY R W L S
9. Relationships can end suddenly or slowly. The outcome is still the same. Do you agree? (ACELT1774) LT R
10. *The Realm of Possibility* shows us that finding love is both confronting and rewarding. Do you agree? (ACELT1774) LT R