



another day

New York Times bestselling
author of *every day*

david levithan

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

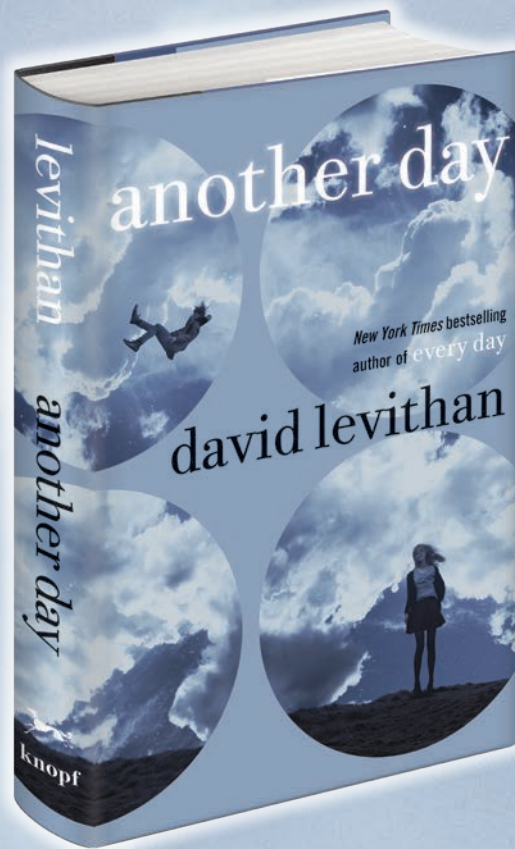
INCLUDES **COMMON CORE** STATE STANDARD CORRELATIONS

ABOUT *another day*

In this enthralling companion to his *New York Times* bestseller *Every Day*, David Levithan tells Rhiannon's side of the story as she seeks to discover the truth about love and how it can change you.

Every day is the same for Rhiannon. She has accepted her life, convinced herself that she deserves her distant, temperamental boyfriend, Justin, even established guidelines by which to live: Don't be too needy. Avoid upsetting him. Never get your hopes up.

Until the morning everything changes. Justin seems to *see* her, to want to be with her for the first time, and they share a perfect day—a perfect day Justin doesn't remember the next morning. Confused, depressed, and desperate for another day as great as that one, Rhiannon starts questioning everything. Then, one day, a stranger tells her that the Justin she spent that day with, the one who made her feel like a real person . . . wasn't Justin at all.



Grades 7 and up • HC: 978-0-385-75620-4
GLB: 978-0-385-75621-1 • EL: 978-0-385-75622-8

ABOUT THE Author

DAVID LEVITHAN is a children's book editor in New York City and the author of several books for young adults, including Lambda Literary Award winner *Two Boys Kissing*; *Every Day* and its companion, *Another Day*; *Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist*, *Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List*, and *Dash & Lily's Book of Dares* (coauthored with Rachel Cohn); *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (coauthored with John Green); and *Every You, Every Me* (with photographs by Jonathan Farmer). He lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Photo © Jake Hamilton

PRE-READING Activities

- During a tense scene, a character in the novel says, "Sorry. He's sorry. I'm sorry. We're all so sorry" (p. 167), implying that sometimes saying sorry just isn't enough to make a situation right. Have students reflect with a partner on how we use apologies in our society.
 - When are they issued?
 - What purposes do they serve?
 - Are there different levels of apology?
 - Are apologies always honest reflections of remorse?
- One of the characters in the novel attempts to live by the mantra "Do no damage" (p. 299). As a class, discuss whether or not this creed provides a reasonable guide to life.
 - What are the affordances of such a philosophy? What are the limitations?
 - Have students work independently to find or create a creed to govern their own lives. Perhaps have them record these words inside the front cover of a writing journal for inspiration.
- A central theme of *Another Day* revolves around relationships and how individuals can be strengthened or weakened by the bonds they have with those around them. One friend offers a character this advice: "It's just nice to see you out from his shadow. Because things don't grow in shadows, you know? . . . I don't know who this new guy is, but make sure when you're with him, you're not standing in his shadow. Stand where everyone can see you" (p. 293). Ask students to work in small groups to consider the implications of this image.
 - What does it mean to stand in someone's shadow?
 - Is this an inherently negative or positive place to reside?
 - What other images might be used to capture the relationship between two people?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1

INTERDISCIPLINARY Connections

This novel raises questions and inspires thinking across various content areas. Consider some of these topical connections by exploring the resources provided.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

Perceptions and Stereotypes

Rhiannon realizes quickly that she responds differently to A depending upon the body A inhabits, making judgments based upon what she sees on the outside. She explains this as common practice among humans: "When my friends see this body, they assume they know a lot about the person inside of it. And when people I don't know see it, they also make assumptions. . . . It's like an instant form of reading, the way we define each other" (pp. 192–193).

Ask students to keep these words in mind as they listen to and reflect upon the radio broadcasts below.

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. (2009). The danger of a single story. TEDGlobal. Accessed online at http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.
- (2014). Playing with perceptions. *TED Radio Hour*. National Public Radio. Accessed online at <http://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/358360814/playing-with-perceptions>.



INTERDISCIPLINARY Connections (continued)

Relationships—Healthy and Not

Readers will likely question Rhiannon's decision to remain with Justin given his consistently negative treatment of her. Ask them to read more about healthy teen relationships and consider those with whom they are connected in their own lives.

- (2005). Community action kit: Helping preteens and teens build healthy relationships. *Choose Respect*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PDF accessed online at http://www.unajauladeoro.com/cd/manuales/choose_respect_action_kit.pdf.
- Healthy relationships. *Loveisrespect*. National Domestic Violence Hotline. Accessed online at <http://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/>.

Constructions of Gender

Rhiannon struggles to be more accepting of A when A appears to her as a female rather than a male. She attributes her difficulties as resulting in part from language, arguing, "Part of the problem is words. The fact that there are separate words for *he* and *she*, *him* and *her*. . . . Maybe if there was just one pronoun for all of us, we wouldn't get so caught on that difference" (p. 233).

Ask students to research the movement to use one pronoun for all. What are the benefits of such usage? Challenges?

- Nunn, Gary. (30 January 2015). Is it time we agreed on a gender-neutral singular pronoun? *The Guardian*. Accessed online at <http://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2015/jan/30/is-it-time-we-agreed-on-a-gender-neutral-singular-pronoun>.

DISCUSSION Questions

- At several points in the novel, Rhiannon struggles to communicate effectively with her mother. She is often critical of her mom, claiming, "She talks and talks and talks. But we don't talk at all" (p. 60).
 - What different kinds of talk exist?
 - What purposes do they serve?
 - How can we talk without communicating?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1**

- In a conversation with A, Rhiannon speaks the words she believes but would never say to her mother: "There's no one who can make you angrier, but you also can't love anyone more. . . . She disappoints me every day she just sits there. But I know she would do anything for me, if she had to" (p. 147).
 - What would you say to whom if you had the chance (and the courage)?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1**

- Issues of self-worth are central to the novel, especially in the way Rhiannon sees herself in relation to Justin. She tries to justify her decision to date him, saying, "That has to be what love is—seeing what a mess he is and loving him anyway, because you know you're a mess, too, maybe even worse" (p. 4). This perspective seems validated when Rhiannon's friend Preston explains that "[Justin] needs you, and that's not a bad thing. . . . We all need somewhere to put our love" (p. 101).
 - Where do you think Rhiannon should put her love?


 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8**

- When Rhiannon and A (in the body of Justin) skip school to enjoy their day at the beach, Rhiannon attempts to rationalize the decision by telling herself, "I can make up my homework, but I can't make up my life" (p. 12).
 - Do you think Rhiannon is justified in her decision?
 - Should she be responsible, or should she live life to the fullest?
 - How do you see this tension between making the most of existence and doing what needs to be done in your own life?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8**


- As Rhiannon stands with her feet in the ocean, she reflects on the power she possesses: "The water feels so good, and standing still feels so good, because there's a whole ocean pulling at me and I have the strength to stay where I am" (p. 14).
 - How effective is this image in conveying her state of mind?

- As the novel unfolds, we learn that Rhiannon harbored thoughts of suicide before she met Justin. Although she says she knew she would not take her life, she "treasured" the thought that "she could." As she reflects further, she states, "Most of the time when we think we're looking for death, we're really looking for love" (p. 112).
 - How does this experience/understanding shape her participation in mediating Kelsea's situation (pp. 113–119)?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3**

DISCUSSION Questions (continued)


- After the messy breakup of Justin and Rhiannon, gossip about Rhiannon's identity runs rampant throughout school. "Apparently," Rhiannon explains to A, "I'm now a Metalhead slut. . . . According to some sources, I've even slept with members of Metallica. It's kind of funny, but also kind of not" (p. 265).
 - How can gossip be both funny—and not?
 - What power does gossip hold over us?
 - How can it hold this power when we know gossip is rarely true?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5**

- To help make sense of A's experience and better handle her own judgmental reactions to A's differing external forms, Rhiannon imagines the body as a car and the real self as the driver (pp. 215–216).
 - What other metaphors for this distinction between body and inner self can you generate?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4**

- Rhiannon tells A, "I would rather be hurt than be mean. Because I can live with myself if I'm hurt. I don't think I could live with myself if I were mean" (p. 223).
 - Does this kind of thinking resonate with you, or do you disagree with this perspective? Why?


 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8**

- The novel ends with the line "I want to find A" (p. 327).
 - Do these words leave you feeling surprised? Relieved? Frustrated? Confused? Hopeful?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5**

Activities

- After meeting Amy, a girl she believes is moving to town, Rhiannon wonders "what it must be like, to look into the future and see yourself living in a new place" (p. 41). She is both intrigued and terrified by the idea of leaving what she knows.
 - Give students space and permission to explore living options beyond their town/city borders by having them research, create, and present a travel brochure, magazine article, website, or other artifact for a place about which they'd like to know more.

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2**

- As she thinks about her complicated relationship with A, Rhiannon concludes, "It's the shapeless things—like love, like attraction—that are the hardest to map" (p. 177).
 - To play with this idea—and draw upon interdisciplinary thinking—have students create a map or formula for an abstract concept of their choosing. For example, a simple formula for love might look something like this: $A + C - D = \text{Love}$, where A=attraction, C=commitment, and D=distrust.

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7**

- Have students replicate the grocery-store task shared by Rhiannon and A (as Alexander) on page 311 and tell their life story in cereals (or some other category of interest—candy bars, rock bands, etc.).

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1**

- The walls of Alexander's room are covered with sticky notes containing inspirational quotations gathered and posted by himself and his friends (p. 315).
 - Provide students space in the classroom to create their own wise-words wall.

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7**



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *every day* AND *another day*

1. Both novels explore continuity and the role of tomorrow in our conception of life. Rhiannon is saddened that A has never experienced the ups and downs that come from relationships built over time, while A finds solace in the vast variety of experiences A has been able to enjoy. Consider the concept of tomorrow.

- Would you live differently if you had no continuity from day to day, if tomorrow wasn't connected to today?
- What would be gained?
- What would be lost?
- How is this idea represented in the titles of the novels?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5**

2. Both novels examine the mystery of identity—why we're born as we are in the place and time we exist. A explains to Rhiannon that, in A's view, all lives are filled with elements of the unexplained. A asks her, "Do you really know why you are the way you are? Or why you do the things you do? . . . We're all in the dark" (*Another Day*, p. 280).

- How would you respond to A's questions?
- How might your answer address the issues of inequity and privilege described during A's experiences on Day 6011 (*Every Day*, p. 180)?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2**

3. The point of view of the narrator influences significantly the impressions and details we receive as readers of the two novels. This distinction is particularly salient in the portrayal of Justin as seen through the eyes of A and the eyes of Rhiannon. For example, in *Another Day*, we learn more about Justin's penchant for Girl Scout cookies (pp. 88–92) and his emotional response to the illness of his grandmother (p. 106).

- Are moments like these enough to justify Rhiannon's decision to stay with him?
- What might a version of events as seen through Justin's eyes reveal?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6**

4. As A and Rhiannon work to know one another better, they turn to books as windows into their individual identities (*Every Day*, pp. 226ff; *Another Day*, pp. 221ff).

- If you had to select three books that say something about who you are, which would you pick and why?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7**

5. As you contemplate the endings of both novels, consider the motivations that drive the final decisions of A and Rhiannon.

- What are they both hoping to achieve?
- Whose plan do you admire more?
- Whose is more realistic or likely to come to fruition?

 **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3**

