

Teacher's Guide for Breaking Point by Alex Flinn

This page includes Multiple Intelligence Projects, comprehension questions, and a prediction guide for Breaking Point written by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, visit her website: www.tracievaughnzimmer.com.

Prediction guide

Pre-reading:

1. What is a breaking point? Have you ever experienced a time when you had a breaking point with someone or something? What was it?
2. The cover picture shows what? Is this a common prank among teens where you live?
3. Chris Crutcher says the story is, "gutsy, insightful, scary." What do you think it may be about. Have you read any of Chris Crutcher's books? If you have, what type of book is he famous for? Could they be similar?
4. What do you know after reading the prologue? What do you think this character did? Who is Charlie Good?

Chapter 1-4

1. Will Binky Lopez-Nande and Paul become friends? What about something more?
2. Does the registration incident foreshadow anything?
3. How will Paul's mom be at school? Would you want your mom working at your school?
4. Will the students' abuse of Paul continue to get worse? What makes you think so?
5. Will Paul's dad let him move and live with him?
6. How is David both brave and a little naïve? What could happen because of his dog stunt?

Chapters 5-8

7. Will Paul's mom let Binky and him stay friends? What is her problem?
8. What effect will moving the computer have on Paul?
9. What effect will the Trouble incident have on David? Paul?
10. Should Paul reach out to David for friendship? Why or why not.
11. Should Paul become friends with Charlie?

Chapter 9 -15

12. After the mailbox club, will the guys acknowledge Paul at school?
13. Will David Blanco leave the school?
14. Will the bagel theft be discovered?
15. At the end of chapter eleven, it says, "Charlie could get away with anything." Do you think this is true?
16. Should Paul blow off Binky for his new found friendship with Charlie? Why or why not.
17. How are Paul and Charlie alike?
18. What prank does Charlie describe in ch. 13. Who do you think will get it? why?
19. What does Charlie ask Paul to do to prove his friendship? Will he do it?
20. Why does he change his mind? Will he do everything Charlie asks?

Chapter 16-21

21. Will the computer grade switch work? Will they be caught?
22. Will the in-crowd keep Paul ? What makes you think this?
23. Will his mom find out about the grade tampering?
24. In chapter 20, how does Paul change?
25. Is Charlie using Paul? Will he ask him about the dog?
26. Who wrote the note?
27. Who do you think Charlie meant, the driver or the skater?

Chapters 22-29

28. What will St. John do when he sees Paul with Amanda?
29. Will Charlie be able to convince Paul of his plan to put a bomb in Zaller's class?
30. Who do you think sent the note?
31. Will he save David?
32. Will Paul help plan a way to, "Make their lives a little less perfect. Maybe make them less sure of themselves for once."
33. Will they just "scare the hell out of them like they deserve" or will something else happen?
34. Is this an excuse? "But it wasn't me who planted the bomb in the fluorescent light. Not really.And mostly Dad, because I wouldn't have been there if he cared enough"

Chapter 30-36

35. Will their plan work? Will anyone get hurt?
36. Charlie chides him that, "Think anyone will believe you didn't know that bomb could hurt people? Do you even really believe that?" Will he go get tell?
37. Will Binky tell?
38. Will Charlie throw Paul to the wolves?
39. Will Charlie get away with it?

Comprehension Guide/ Quiz Questions

Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge:

1. What is Paul Richmond's situation? Why won't he fit in at his school?
2. What happens in line at registration?
3. Why does Paul's mom cry all the time? What is her compulsive little habit?

Comprehension:

1. Describe how Paul is treated at Gate-Brickell Christain.
2. Explain how Charlie Good became interested in Paul.
3. Outline the events leading up to the breaking point.
4. Why do you think Charlie reveals such personal information to Paul about his family and birth? What purpose does it serve?

Application:

Find at least three places in the novel, where Paul made a critical decision that could have changed the outcome.

1. What could be done in schools to protect kids like David Blanco and Paul?

Analysis:

1. Compare and contrast David and Paul. How are they alike? Different?
2. Examine the steps that Charlie Good uses to get Paul under his control. How would you describe them? Are they effective techniques of manipulation? Would they work on you, or anybody you know?

Synthesis:

1. What would happen if you found yourself in Paul's situation?
2. How can you tell the difference between teenagers just blowing off steam and real threats to be taken seriously?

Evaluation:

1. Predict the future for Paul Richmond.
2. Who deserves more blame for Paul's situation: his mom or dad? Or, should Paul alone be blamed for his choices? Defend your position.

Multiple Intelligence Projects

Multiple Intelligence theory is based of the work of Howard Gardner at Harvard. The thrust of his research shows that people have a variety of intelligences, not just the two that schools focus on (math/language) and that many students can reach higher degrees of success when they are allowed to use the one where they excel.

Verbal/ Linguistic

Dialogue is an important literary element in this book. Trying to capture teen-speak is especially difficult. Write a scene between two or three friends, staying true to teen language and grammar. BUT, be sure to punctuate it correctly!

Logical/ Mathematical

If you were to divide this story into three acts where would each end? What is the turning point in the story? Where is there a major reversal for the main character? Graph the story in way that will help you remember the events in a chronological manner.

Visual/ Spatial

Using newspapers, magazines or any other print media, make a collage that represents the storyline of Breaking Point. Then, turn the artwork into a book poster. Be sure to include the title, author and other information.

Body/ Kinesthetic

In pairs or small groups, act out a scene from the book. You don't have to say things verbatim, but the flavor of the scene should still be there. But, DON'T give away the ending!

Musical/ Rhythmic

Write an essay on whether you think music lyrics, violent video games, and other media promote teen violence today. Use examples from these areas to defend or support your position.

Interpersonal (worksheet on separate page)

In careers, as well as just plain old life, it is important to be able to give constructive feedback, and even more, to receive it. So, after you've written a first draft of your essay about music, then trade essays with someone and give good feedback on their work using the peer edit sheet. Be sure that you are both positive and instructive. After you receive yours, write a brief and honest gut response to the peer edit. Then, wait at least a day, reread the suggestions, and write a new response to them on the back. You should notice that it is far less stinging, the second read. Learning to accept this kind of criticism as part of a process and NOT a personal attack is a valuable skill, especially as a writer.

Intrapersonal

Write a letter to a friend about Breaking Point. In it, make a pact, that if you ever reach your breaking point, that this will be the person you turn to before taking some drastic measure. Mail the letter, and even more important, keep the promise. Try to illicit one from your friend too.

Projects written by children's author and educator [Tracie Vaughn Zimmer](#) for classroom use only. Materials not to be distributed for commercial use without written consent of the author

Peer Edit

Writer_____

Reader_____

Type of Paper_____

1st Draft due__/__/__

Final Copy due__/__/__

Standard	Peer's Comments and Questions
<p><u>LEAD:</u></p> <p>Uses a specific fact, detail or anecdote to grab attention. A clear directive to writing.</p>	
<p><u>MIDDLE:</u></p> <p>Stays logical and organized. Uses transitions. Shows, doesn't tell.</p>	
<p><u>ENDING:</u></p> <p>Gives a sense of closure, doesn't just stop. Makes reader want to read it again.</p>	
<p><u>WORD CHOICE:</u></p> <p>Simple, clear and direct. Uses examples to support statements of fact or opinion.</p>	
<p><u>PURPOSE:</u> Circle One:</p> <p>Persuade Inform Entertain Describe Narrate</p>	
<p><u>MECHANICS:</u> Uses correct:</p> <p>spelling, mechanics, and grammar. Writing is blocked in meaningful paragraphs.</p>	
<p><u>VOICE:</u></p> <p>Sounds like the writer. A unique perspective, interesting slant that holds the reader's attention.</p>	

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