

### Book title

The shock of the fall

### Author

Nathan Filer



### Bibliographic information

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers  
ISBN: 978-0007491452

### Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

- <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16120760-the-shock-of-the-fall>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/18/shock-fall-nathan-filer-review>

### Theme

The theme of loss, grief and mental illness

### Short summary

The Shock of the Fall by Nathan Filer, tells the story of Matthew and Simon, two brothers who are separated yet united by a tragic accident. While they are on vacation with their parents, Matthew Homes and his older brother snuck out in the middle of the night. Only Matthew came home safely. Ten years later, Matthew tells us, he has found a way to bring his brother back. The book is full of grief, loss and Matthew suffers from a mental disease. It's a very unusual narrative, but also both funny and inventive. The book describes the close bonds between the main character and his grandmother.

### Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

1. it reflects readers' interests
2. the recommendation and the report emerged from the survey results

### What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

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### Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

The story deals with suffering and grief and how close family bonds can help overcome all the problems. The story reveals the problems of a boy who suffers from Schizophrenia.

### Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

No.

### Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promote understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

It emphasizes the importance of family bonds and the bonds between siblings.

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## METHODOLOGY

### Title of Activity

Character comparison

### Description of educational activity

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Pupils' age:** 15-19

**Organization of the class of pupils:** group work

**The aim of the lesson:** The aim of this activity is to develop reading literacy of students, encourage their reading skills, use of their competences at the analysis and interpretation of the initial texts, to strengthen their language skills at verbalisation of their findings and to expand the vocabulary of students. It is important to be able to present the findings, express student's opinion and to be able to accept the opinions of other members of a group or class.

The aim of the activity is to create student's own text – comparative characteristic of the main characters of the selected stories, based on the analysis and his reading experience. The next aim is to develop analytical mind of the students.

### Support materials:

Teacher – a coordinator of the activity, chooses some short excerpts from two books (equal number of the excerpts from each book), which somehow characterize the main character of a story. Each excerpt is printed on a separate piece of paper without indicating the author and the title of a book. The examples of suitable excerpts are shown in this activity and we chose them from the books *The shock of the fall* (N. Filer) and *The perks of being a wallflower* (S. Chbosky), because the heroes of both of the stories are similar in their age, attitudes and their life situation.



### **Activities:**

1. Divide students into groups as follows: Put numbered pieces of papers into a hat and each student chooses one of them. There are more pieces of paper with the same number so we can make groups of student randomly. Students with number 1 will form a group, with number 2 another one etc.
2. Each group is given excerpts from both of the books. Their first task is to read them and divide them into two groups/ two stories. The students can choose the form of reading so they can read individually or reading our loud with listening actively.
3. Based on the excerpts, the students fill in the worksheet (appendix 2), so they match the main characters with the adjectives and phraseological expressions which characterize them. They choose their own form of work within a group. A thorough analysis of the excerpts is important, so the students do not only analyse the content but have to focus on intertextual links and author's stylistics.
4. After the adequate analysis of the characters, the groups work out a comparative characteristic of the main characters. They try to find the differences and similarities of the main characters.
5. Subsequently the groups present their characteristics and discuss obtained information, compare their findings. Within the discussion they might change their opinion on a character.
6. A teacher should now introduce the authors of the books to the students e.g. using a PowerPoint presentation. If there is no time to carry out this part of the activity, it can be left out as it is not the focus of the activity. The teacher is, in all the phases of the activity, a coordinator and facilitator of the activity.
7. In the end the students watch a short part of the film versions of the books and discuss the differences.

### **Connection to curriculum**

**Grade:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of bilingual studies

**Bilingual curriculum:** The study of literature is focused during the second and third year on reading comprehension of literary texts which are based on the interests of the students which involves books with teenage protagonists, too. The aim of the curriculum is to teach students to work with the text, to analyse the texts. Comparing different characters and being able to talk about their features and analysing their qualities and vices. Understanding texts, weighing their merits, and utilizing the information they offer are skills that teenagers draw on throughout the curriculum.

### **Knowledge:**

- Students understand a text being read.
- Students find the main character in a text.
- They differentiate supporting characters from the main character.
- After reading the excerpts they can identify the main characteristics of the characters.
- They identify the topic of the excerpts



- They select information.

### Skills:

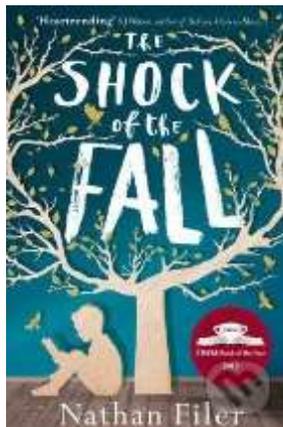
- Students analyse texts.
- They work with dictionaries.
- They search for and classify information.
- They can identify and interpret correctly the feelings of the characters in the books
- They can put the particular excerpts in the correct order according to some links.
- They are able to work in groups.
- They can create a characteristic of a character based on the excerpts.

### Competences:

- Students are able to work individually or in a team
- They accept others in the group
- They can express their opinion

### Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Filer Nathan: The shock of the fall  
Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers  
ISBN: 9780007491452  
Page count: 320  
Year of issue: 2014



### Digital sources

#### Reviews:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/18/shock-fall-nathan-filer-review>
- <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-shock-of-the-fall-by-nathan-filer-book-review-moved-by-the-dark-humour-in-a-poignant-debut-9073069.html>



## **Results**

The expected outcomes of the lesson are:

- The students will be able to understand through character comparison, develop demonstrations.
- To connect ideas and themes across texts.
- To find hints to help to find the qualities of characters
- To offer observations, make connections, speculate, interpret, and raise questions in response to the excerpts.

## **Recommendations**

Both the teaching method and the text can help in increasing students' interest in reading. These excerpts promote male characters with whom boys can identify. But the text is about teenage characters so girls can be interested in the reading as well as they are sentimental or even a little bit romantic. But on the other hand these books have deeper messages.

The teacher monitors the students so as to make sure they cooperate effectively.

The volume of given fragments of books can be adapted to the potential of a group - fragments can be shorter - by cutting less important paragraphs, or be expanded to additional fragments of the same novel.