



Email: bridget@paperdragonreads.com Phone: (407) 212-7759

"Dungeons and Drama" Lesson Plan Guide

by Kristy Boyce

Unit Overview

Duration: 1 week

Grade Level: 9-12

Program: Florida Teens Read (FTR)

Subject Integration: ELA, Social-Emotional Learning, Creative Writing

Essential Question: *What can we learn about ourselves when we're forced out of our comfort zone and into something completely unfamiliar?*

Content Advisory: This is a lighthearted romantic comedy appropriate for most high school readers, with mild themes around sneaking out, grounding, and a fake-dating scenario.

Learning Objectives — Students will be able to:

- Analyze Riley's motivations and how her passion for theater drives the plot
- Examine the fake-dating trope and how it develops Riley and Nathan's relationship
- Compare the world of tabletop gaming with the world of theater as presented in the novel
- Evaluate how Riley's plan tests her honesty and integrity
- Express understanding through analytical and creative writing

ONE-WEEK LESSON PLAN

Day 1: Grounded and Banned From Theater

Objective: Establish Riley's passion for theater and the consequences of her choices

Materials: Book, character motivation chart

Opening (10 min):

- Quick-write: "Describe something you love so much you'd risk getting in trouble for it."
- Partner share

Main Activity (30 min):

- Introduce Riley, her love of theater, and the consequences of sneaking out
- Discuss: Why do you think Riley was willing to risk so much for the musical?
- Chart Riley's goals at the start of the story

Closing (5 min):

- Exit ticket: "What would you have done in Riley's situation?"

Assessment: Character motivation analysis, personal connection

Day 2: Welcome to the Game Store

Objective: Analyze Riley's fish-out-of-water experience at her dad's game store



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Materials: Book, compare/contrast chart (theater vs. tabletop gaming)

Opening (10 min):

- Discussion: "What's it like to be forced into a hobby or activity you know nothing about?"

Main Activity (30 min):

- Read and discuss Riley's introduction to the game store and Dungeons & Dragons
- Chart similarities between theater and tabletop role-playing as Riley starts to notice them
- Discuss: Why might Riley be surprised by what she has in common with the game store regulars?

Closing (5 min):

- Exit ticket: "What's one similarity between theater and D&D that surprised you?"

Assessment: Comparative analysis, comprehension

Day 3: The Fake-Dating Scheme

Objective: Examine the fake-dating trope and its role in Riley and Nathan's relationship

Materials: Book, relationship tracking chart

Opening (10 min):

- Think-pair-share: "Why do you think characters in stories often pretend to date for practical reasons?"

Main Activity (30 min):

- Read and discuss Riley's scheme to get Nathan to cover her shifts
- Track how Riley and Nathan's relationship evolves from convenience to something real
- Discuss: What risks does Riley take on by mixing a scheme with real feelings?

Closing (5 min):

- Exit ticket: "Do you think Riley's plan is fair to Nathan? Why or why not?"

Assessment: Relationship analysis, ethical reasoning

Day 4: Saving the Spring Musical

Objective: Analyze how Riley balances her scheme with her original goal

Materials: Book, plot tracking chart

Opening (10 min):

- Discussion: "What does it take to keep working toward a goal even when your plans get complicated?"

Main Activity (30 min):

- Read and discuss Riley's efforts to save the Spring Musical
- Chart the obstacles Riley faces and how she adapts
- Big question: "Is Riley's plan more about saving the musical, or about avoiding her real feelings for Nathan?"

Closing (5 min):

- Exit ticket: "What's the biggest obstacle standing in Riley's way right now?"

Assessment: Plot analysis, character insight



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Day 5: Rolling the Dice on Honesty

Objective: Synthesize the novel's themes about honesty, passion, and unexpected connection

Materials: Writing supplies, project choice cards

Opening (10 min):

- Preview project options; students select and begin

Main Activity (30 min):

- Option A: Write a scene from Nathan's point of view during one of his and Riley's fake dates
- Option B: Analytical paragraph — "How does Boyce use the fake-dating trope to explore honesty and vulnerability?"
- Option C: Design a poster advertising Riley's Spring Musical, blending theater and D&D themes
- Share work in pairs or small groups

Closing (5 min):

- Class closing: "One thing this book made me think about honesty in relationships is..."

Assessment: Creative and analytical writing quality

Differentiation

- **Advanced learners:** Research the history and appeal of tabletop role-playing games and connect it to the novel's themes of storytelling and community
- **Students needing support:** Provide sentence starters and graphic organizers for the compare/contrast and relationship charts
- **English Language Learners:** Pre-teach key vocabulary (grounded, scheme, tabletop role-playing) with context clues from the text
- **Reluctant readers:** Highlight the fast pace and humor of the rom-com genre to build engagement

Materials List

- Class set of "Dungeons and Drama"
- Character motivation chart
- Compare/contrast chart (theater vs. tabletop gaming)
- Relationship and plot tracking charts
- Writing supplies and project choice cards for Day 5