

HARPERCOLLINS PRESENTS

# CLASS ACTS

\*\*\* FICTION IN THE CLASSROOM \*\*\*

## Connect the Stars

by Marisa de los Santos  
and David Teague



Audrey Alcott knows when someone is lying. Every time. Every lie. While she's learned to ignore most of the fakers around her, when her best friend lies to her, Audrey is ready to give up on people entirely.

Aaron Archer can remember everything he's ever read or heard. But while he can recite facts like he's a walking, talking encyclopedia, Aaron's not always sure how to put the pieces together.

When Audrey and Aaron meet at a wilderness camp in the desert, they think their quirks are enough to prevent them from ever having friends. As they trek the unforgiving landscape, though, they soon learn they have what it takes to make each other whole. But when the unthinkable happens, will it be enough to survive?

### MEET THE AUTHORS

Marisa de los Santos has published three *New York Times* bestselling novels for adults, including *Love Walked In* and *Belong to Me*, while David Teague is the author of the picture book *Franklin's Big Dreams*. Together, they are the authors of *Saving Lucas Biggs* and *Connect the Stars*. Married for over twenty years, Marisa and David live with their two children Charles and Annabel, and their Yorkies, Finn and Huxley, in Wilmington, Delaware.

#### Common Core Standards

In this activity, students work on Common Core reading standards related to setting and figurative language. They also practice Common Core writing skills related to opinion writing. Specific standards are listed in parentheses at the end of each part of the activity.

**SETTING THE STAGE:** In Chapter 5, wilderness guide Jare warns campers that the desert "...doesn't play. It bites. It stabs. It stings." To prepare students to visualize this treacherous setting, divide the class into pairs. Have each pair research two of the desert terms from the book (see the box). Then have the twosome create a mini poster that includes an Internet photo and short description of each term. After students share their posters, display the projects to use as a reference as they read. Periodically discuss how the desert setting acts almost as a main character that influences the plot's development. Write key points from the discussions on large index cards and add them to the display. (*RL.4.3; RL.5.3; RL.6.3; W.4.7; W.5.7; W.6.7; SL.4.1; SL.5.1; SL.6.1*)

**Terrain Terms:** arroyo, badlands, bluff, creek bed, gully, hoodoo, mesa, outcropping, slot canyon, streambed  
**Plants:** agave, barrel cactus, bunchgrass, candelilla, cholla, cottonwood, creosote bush, juniper, lechuguilla, madrone tree, mesquite, ocotillo, piñon pine, prickly pear, yucca  
**Animals:** javelina, millipede, roadrunner, tarantula, vermilion flycatcher

**ACTIVITY:** Before students begin reading, review these types of figurative language: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Have pairs or small groups of students read Chapters 1–3 together, highlighting and labeling examples of these figures of speech (see the box). Provide time for students to share their examples. Then give each student copies of the organizer to store in a folder. As students continue reading, have each student fill out the organizers and periodically discuss his findings with a partner. At the end of the book, have students share the figures of speech they felt were most effective and why. (*RL.4.4; RL.5.4; RL.6.4; RL.4.1; RL.5.1; RL.6.1*)

"...but if lies were rotten tomatoes splatting against me, I would have gone home stained every day." (metaphor; chapter 1)

"Then, like something melting, Lyza's face went sad..." (simile; chapter 1)

"I'd rather face a pack of wild hyenas than your stupid friends." (hyperbole; chapter 1)

"...as though even the sun had gotten word that it was our first day of summer vacation..." (personification; chapter 3)

**WRITING ABOUT THE TEXT:** Discuss with students how the authors' descriptions of the desert and their deft use of figurative language help to make *Connect the Stars* such a satisfying read. Then challenge each student to write a letter to the authors giving his opinion about which element—the desert descriptions or the use of figurative language—helped him enjoy the book more. Remind students to use evidence from the text to back up their opinions. (*W.4.1; W.5.1; W.6.1*)

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## Colored With Figurative Language

As you read, list sentences from the text that feature similes, metaphors, personification, or hyperbole. Check a box to show the type of figurative language that the authors used. Then tell what you think each figure of speech means.

Reading assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence from text:

Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Simile

Metaphor

Personification

Hyperbole

Meaning:

Sentence from text:

Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Simile

Metaphor

Personification

Hyperbole

Meaning:

Sentence from text:

Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Simile

Metaphor

Personification

Hyperbole

Meaning: