How To Be Remy Cameron

Instructional Resource Guide

Suggested Grade Levels: 9-12
Author: Julian Winters

User’s Guide
Designed for use with high school students, these writing prompts provide opportunities for students to develop a deeper understanding of the following topics/standards:

+ RL.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
+ RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development; provide an objective summary.
+ SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
+ W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.
+ W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Important Note: Many of the prompts investigate the experiences of marginalized identities; therefore, offering students a choice of prompts allows them to select one that resonates with them the most.

About the Author
Julian Winters is a self-proclaimed comic book geek, who currently lives outside of Atlanta, Georgia, where he can be found reading or watching the only two sports he can follow—volleyball and soccer.

About the Book
Everyone on campus knows Remy Cameron. He's the out-and-proud, super-likeable guy who friends, faculty and fellow students alike admire for his cheerful confidence. Under pressure to write an A+ essay defining who he is and who he wants to be, Remy embarks on an emotional journey toward reconciling the outward labels people attach to him with the real Remy Cameron within.

Discussion Questions

+ “We have no control over what labels others give us, but we can define who we are by the ones we choose to give ourselves.” (p. 289)
  - If you were assigned to write an essay describing yourself, what labels would you include in the essay? What labels might others give you that you would not include in your essay? Why? [Standard SL.1]
+ The characters in this book experience not only external and internal pressure but also joy and freedom. What character in the book do you most relate to? How are the pressures and joys this character experiences similar and different from your own? Be sure to cite specific examples from the text. [Standard RL.1 & SL.1]
+ “The thing is, you always have to come out. Every day. To new people, to people you’ve known forever, to people who keep trying to ignore it.” (p. 108)
  - What does ‘coming out’ mean? How does coming out impact the characters in the book differently? What circumstances might lead a person to decide to hide parts of their identity? How can this impact their
relationships with others? What can we do to support others in their coming out journey? [Standards RL.1 & SL.1]

Writing Prompts

+ “After the first six times, coming out became as basic as telling a stranger my name. It became a joke: ‘Hi, my name is Gay and my sexuality is Remy Cameron.’ Over and over, I’ve had to acknowledge my sexuality as if it’s a warning. The thing is, you always have to come out. Every day. To new people, to people you’ve known forever, to people who keep trying to ignore it.” (p. 108) Write a speech about the never-ending process of coming out. Consider the audience for your speech and tailor your speech to that audience. [Standard W.2]

+ “I nod along, watching him sing under his breath. He’s off-key but doesn’t care. Ian’s in his own world. I love how music does that—takes us to the middle of a packed arena with a spotlight and a microphone, even if we can’t sing the ABCs without our voices cracking. Music doesn’t just seep into our souls; it wraps careful fingers around our nerves and presses new life into them.” (p. 107) Write a short narrative in which you describe yourself or somebody you know immersed “in [their] own world.” Use sensory details and figurative language to describe the person and how the activity they are engaged in is impacting them. [Standard W.3]

+ Collect evidence from the book that conveys the importance of racial identity to Remy. Combine the evidence collected with images to create a collage that illustrates how racial identity has impacted Remy. Then, write a brief artist statement explaining the key choices you made in creating your collage. [Standard RL.1 & W.2]

+ Using evidence from the book, write a letter from Remy to his biological half-sister explaining why their connection is so important to him. [Standard RL.1 & W.3]

+ Write an essay that analyzes the theme of family and how the characters’ understanding of family develops over the course of the story. [Standard RL.2 & W.2]