

A Monster Calls: Notes for Teachers

This is a beautiful book. It is a poignant portrayal of love and loss, touching all of us with reminders of our own deepest fears. It is not afraid to handle a difficult issue head on, but the way the narrative unfolds avoids sentimentality, and the magical, mythical qualities of the monster allows for deeply emotional ideas to be explored safely.

This set of 6 lessons is designed to accompany teaching this novel, either as stand-alone lesson to be selected by choice, or as a coherent sequence of lessons. They are intended to follow the reading of the whole book, allowing readers to revisit the text whilst knowing it as a whole. This book first needs to be read, experienced, savoured and felt, before any deeper analysis is undertaken.

The activities in the lessons try to remain true to the spirit of the book, drawing out students' understanding of narrative structure and stories and their ability to infer meaning from the text. The activities build in both literary and linguistic analysis, drawing on our 'Grammar for Writing' pedagogy, and the analyses chosen focus on heightening student understanding of the inter-relationship between what the book means and how it is written. The lessons also invite children to write themselves – including a narrative description and poetry. These are all intended to support deeper engagement with the narrative. The final Found Poem is included as a way of giving students creative space to respond to the text in their own way and to make their own meanings.

I hope you enjoy using these materials as much as I have enjoyed preparing them!

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