

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



Better Nate Than Ever

Written by Tim Federle
275 pages / Grades 6-8

8th grader Nate has big dreams but is stuck in the small town of Jankburg. With the help of his best friend and alibi Libby, Nate makes an escape to New York City, to audition for 'E.T. the Musical'. Things don't go as planned, and an adventure in the city ensues which allows Nate to feel more at home and comfortable in his own skin than he ever has before. Readers will fall in love with Nate and become his biggest cheerleaders, despite a true cliffhanger ending!

C

Context

Characterization.

Nate is not only realistic, but embodies humor, solicits empathy, and finds readers in his corner.

Growing up and Identity

Bullying - being bullied, how to handle it and what the often unseen effects of it can be.

How to **hook readers** as a writer. The book is a mentor text for writing with humor and wit, plot twists and suspense.

A

Arts

Casting process of musical theatre. The book gives readers a nice inside view of what the "cattle call" audition and casting process can be like.

T

Themes

Being and feeling different

Independence

Decisions and Consequences

Friendship

Family

Determination

Confidence

Effects of bullying

Acceptance

C

Create

Ask students to choose a city and have them research it. (Even better if it's a city they know and have been to) Write an adventure of a kid escaping to that city...and making it! Another text to use with this as a mentor is *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E Frankweiler*.

Nate is asked what his special skills are. Ask students theirs, have them demonstrate, and discuss how these skills can and will help them in life.

Who is your co-star? Create a scenario for you and your co-star.

H

Heart Words

"There's nothing to be scared of....You're small and scrappy and can get out of any situation the world throws at you."

"All of this, all of this adventure and novelty, it would be nothing without someone to share it with."

"You just can't have a scene without a co-star"

