Snap!

written and performed by Regi Carpenter

Classroom Connections Study Guide

**Snap!** chronicles the true story of a 16 year old girl’s experience with severe mental illness, attempted suicide, hospitalization and her road back to reality and freedom. This deeply impactful story is one of hope and recovery that will help teens open up about their own feelings and experiences with depression and identity. Snap! is designed to foster dialogue about mental illness while reinforcing the reality that there is help and hope for those affected by mental health issues and for the people who love and care for them.

**Standards:**

**Language Arts:** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/3/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/4/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/4/a/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/4/c/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.d](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/4/d/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5.a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/a/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.5.b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/b/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/6/), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.1), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.2)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4), [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.5)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/#CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.6)

**Snap!** is appropriate for students in grades 9-12. The performance is 60 minutes long.

**Tech needs:** Quiet, clean room/classroom. Microphone on a stand if necessary. Snap! works best in small group presentations (75 students or under.)

**Exploring and understanding** Snap! takes place in the early 1970’s in upstate New York this story could not be more relevant today. Below you will find vocabulary, discussion questions, pre and post writing activities and related literature and movies to enhance students understanding.

**Before the performance:**

Explain to students that they will see a performance about a teenager who talks about attempting to take her own life. Explain that suicide is difficult to talk about but important to discuss. More teenagers die each year from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, pneumonia and influenza *combined*. **In a reflective writing exercise** ask students what they think about suicide, if they discuss it with friends, have they ever considered it, do they have a friend they are concerned about?

**How to handle the discussion**

Actively listen and validate their thoughts and feelings

Stay Calm

Ask clarifying open ended questions

Offer unconditional caring

Have professional resources and personnel available for students

**Vocabulary Words:**

Whirling dervish spaghetti western inexplicably “Stay with me” The Garden of Gethsemane sullied unfurled diminished resolve

“to be or not to be” soliloquy

**Discussion Questions:**

1. The word “snap” recurs with different meanings and implications throughout the story. What are some of the different meanings of “snap?”
2. How does the author use “snap” in the beginning of the story to mark the passing of time?
3. The author uses descriptive language, gestures and sound effects to paint pictures of people and places. What are some of the images that stuck out to you? (the river is corpse blue, matchstick legs, the heater is blowing hot air in my face, Like the Fish, English Man, the trees are twirling like whirling Dervishes, the Carpenter wave)
4. What factors in her home life lead Regi to want to commit suicide? How would you respond to the pressures, loneliness and abandonment she feels? Have you ever felt this way?
5. In the section of the story “who knows why girls go crazy?” Regi says that her parents aren’t to blame and that it’s her own “inability to tell the difference between what’s invisible but real and what’s visible but not real.” How do you understand that?
6. Regi runs away during a snowstorm and almost freezes to death. What does she learn during the storm? How does she “snap” awake?
7. What kind of pressures and difficulties are her parents experiencing that contribute to this situation?
8. What does the phrase “there is nothing good nor bad but thinking makes it so?” mean to you?
9. During the prom scene Regi repeats “I wish, I wish.” What is she wishing for?
10. How is the prom scene similar and different to the classic fairy tales of Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella?
11. How do the teachers and attendants help Regi return to reality and want to live again?
12. How does Like the Fish’s listening help Regi? When have you been listened to?
13. What does Art teacher mean when she says “The sea is so great. My boat is so small.” How does that meaning change when she says “The sea is so great. *Our* boat is so small?”
14. How is this moment in the story a turning point for Regi? Why?

**After the performance**

1. Ask students “which images are staying with you right now?”
2. In a reflective writing exercise ask students to write about Regi’s repetition of “if I don’t go back, I’ll never get out.” What does she mean by that? Why does she need to go back? How does going back save her?
3. Regi receives a letter from a friend that helps her realize she wants to go home. When have you helped a friend?
4. Write about a time when someone truly listened to you.
5. Write about a time when you truly listened to someone else.

**Additional Relevant Literature:**

*Hamlet* Shakespeare

*Thirteen Reasons Why* Asher, J.

*The Astonishing Color of After* Pan, Emily X.R..

*The Last Time We Say Goodbye* Hand, Cynthia.

*Robin* Itshoff, Dave.

*Suicide Club, a Novel about Living* Heng, Rachel.

**Relevant Movies:**

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Suicide Room

It’s Kind of a Funny Story

Dead Poets Society

Girl, Interrupted

Cyberbully

Romeo and Juliet

Harold and Maude