

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO



MATCHED

ALLY CONDIE

The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards
and fit into the curriculum for grades 7-10

DEAR EDUCATOR:

Teachers and students alike will discover that *Matched* is a gripping story that draws the reader into a unique world with disturbingly close echoes of our own and one that asks penetrating questions about how we live together in a society.

Matched challenges readers to consider the following:

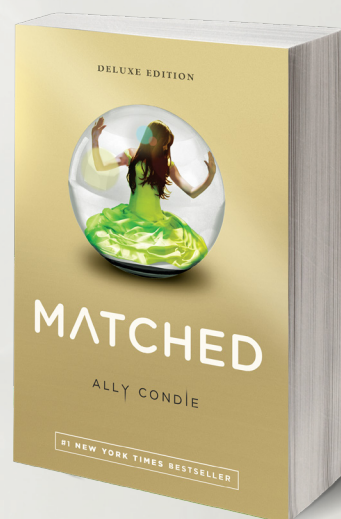
- What must we give up, for example, in order to live in peace?
- How much should the individual lose of themselves for the collective good?
- Can we ignore and minimize pain in our lives—both physical and emotional—to live happier existences?
- Are we destined to love one person or can our choices influence how and who we love?

These ideas and others are at the heart of *Matched*, and because of the novel's complexity, sharing it with your students will lead to a classroom experience that is both engaging and challenging, and where the lessons reflect life—with no simple solutions or answers. This guide will challenge your students to think about choice, loyalty, sacrifice, and societal expectations and obligations. Through a series of in-class discussions, research assignments, and writing prompts, we hope you'll encourage your students to think deeply about the novel's layered and complex themes.

—Penguin School & Library

ABOUT THE BOOK:

In the Society, officials decide everything. Who you love. Where you work. When you die. Cassia has always trusted their choices. It's hardly any price to pay for a long life, the perfect job, the ideal mate. So when her best friend appears on the Matching screen, Cassia knows with complete certainty that he is the one...until she sees another face flash for an instant before the screen fades to black. Now Cassia is faced with impossible choices: between Xander and Ky, between the only life she's known and a path no one else has ever dared follow, between perfection and passion.



★ “Condie peels back layer after dystopic layer at breakneck speed, Dylan Thomas reverberating throughout. If the Society’s at war, who’s the enemy? Of the three tablets carried by everyone, what does the red one do? ... A fierce, unforgettable page-turner.” —KIRKUS, *starred review*

★ “Condie’s enthralling and twisty dystopian plot is well served by her intriguing characters and fine writing. While the ending is unresolved (the book is first in a trilogy), Cassia’s metamorphosis is gripping and satisfying.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, *starred review*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

ALLY CONDIE is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *Matched* trilogy and co-author of the Darkdeep middle grade series. She is also the author of the novel *Summerlost*, an Edgar Award Finalist. A former English teacher, Ally lives with her family outside of Salt Lake City, Utah. Ally has an MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and is the founder and director of the nonprofit WriteOut Foundation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR MATCHED

1. As *Matched* opens, Condie paints Cassia's complex world for readers; though it's seemingly set in the future or in an alternate world, how might you compare her daily experiences to your own or the world around you? Did you find anything striking, noteworthy, or unsettling about her community and why does that stand out to you?
2. In Cassia's world, a foundational structure of their society is the idea that giving citizens less in the way of choices is better for them. What are some of the ways that having such a curated but limited selection of art (100 songs, 100 poems, 100 pieces of art, etc.) proves itself to be problematic? In your opinion, why are these historical erasures and lost pieces of culture significant? Considering the role of art in various forms in our contemporary society, what are some of the ramifications of such censorship policies on society and the historical memory?
3. Among other things, *Matched* is a story about family. How do the dynamics of the individual relationships with her parents and brother impact Cassia and help her better understand who each of them are? In what ways does her understanding of them change throughout the course of the novel, and how does the knowledge that her family doesn't easily fit into the narrow lens in which she previously saw them impact her? Considering *Matched* and your own personal experiences, how are families defined? Do you see them as foundational pillars of society or open to be continually redrawn?
4. Before his passing, Cassia's grandfather tells her in a whisper, *I am giving you something you won't understand, yet. But I think you will someday. You, more than the rest, And, remember. It's all right to wonder.* Do you find this significant? Consider the importance of a mind that "wonders"—in what ways does this serve Cassia well? Do you believe there are instances where it doesn't?
5. Cassia thinks, "Ever since the day of the mistake with my Match, I've never known which life is my true one...it was as though I saw for the first time life could branch into different paths, take different directions." In what ways does this apply to Cassia's understanding of her ability to choose for herself, especially in regard to love? Knowing that her interaction with Ky was still masterminded by her official, do you believe he's still her best match or do you believe she'd ultimately have a happier lifetime with Xander?
6. From the precious gift of Dylan Thomas' poem, "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night," Cassia tells readers that she learns to fight; how is this so? In what ways does this connection to her grandfather and the loss of him serve as a catalyst for personal growth and understanding of what she wants from her life and her role in achieving it?
7. In *Matched*, Cassia thinks, "Once you want something, everything changes. Now I want everything. More and more and more." Do you see wanting or desire to be an admirable quality? Why or why not? Consider your own life. Do you believe that desire is a game changer and if so, is it good or bad and in what ways?
8. Considering what is ultimately revealed about the three tablets required to be carried by all citizens in Cassia's society, do you see any ways in which these medications actually serve the population well? If so, what are they? In terms of trauma, can you see benefits for a reboot of memory and do you believe pain should be suppressed or uncaged? Using what you discovered from reading *Matched*, make a case for your position.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *MATCHED*, CONT.

9. Compare the ways in which Cassia rebels against her society in *Matched* with that of a current event; are there ways in which you see her behavior to be similar to that of those fighting for social justice today? What are the ramifications for doing so?
10. Compare the society in *Matched* to others you have encountered or studied, including fictional structures, as well as historical and contemporary societies. What does Cassia's world have in common with other examples, and how does it differ? What do you believe to be the benefits of reading about and studying other societies, and what can we learn about our own world by doing so?
11. The constructs of freedom and choice are integral to *Matched*. Do you believe there can be freedom without choice? Are there ways in which you believe giving up some personal freedoms is worthwhile if it benefits society as a whole? Conversely, what's the potential cost of doing so? Since the publication of *Matched* ten years ago, are there any ways in which our society has adapted practices similar to what Conde details in the novel? How can individuals take an active role in ensuring their world offers the freedoms they desire?



AWARDS AND HONORS FOR *MATCHED*

PENNSYLVANIA YOUNG READER'S CHOICE AWARD (YOUNG READERS)
WASHINGTON, D.C CAPITAL CHOICES AWARD (14 AND UP)
A TEXAS LONESTAR READING LIST SELECTION (HIGH SCHOOL)
NORTH CAROLINA YOUNG ADULT BOOK AWARD (YOUNG ADULT)
RHODE ISLAND TEEN BOOK AWARD (YOUNG ADULT)
ARKANSAS TEEN BOOK AWARD (TEEN)
TENNESSEE VOLUNTEER STATE BOOK AWARD (MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION: GRADES 6-8)
TENNESSEE VOLUNTEER STATE BOOK AWARD (HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION: GRADES 9-12)
CONNECTICUT NUTMEG BOOK AWARD (TEEN)
MISSOURI MASL READER AWARD (GATEWAY AWARDS: GRADES 9-12)
ELIOT ROSEWATER INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL BOOK AWARD (HIGH SCHOOL)
IOWA HIGH SCHOOL BOOK AWARD (GRADES 9-12)
OKLAHOMA SEQUOYA CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD (HIGH SCHOOL)
VIRGINIA READER'S CHOICE AWARD (TEEN)
MINNESOTA MAUD HART LOVELACE BOOK AWARD (DIVISION II: GRADES 6-8)

EXPLORING *MATCHED* THROUGH WRITING AND RESEARCH

The following questions can be used during a class reading of *Matched*, and each activity can be assigned to individual or groups of students.

1. Through the poetry given to her by her grandfather, Cassia begins to see her world for what it truly is, and she realizes she can no longer be a passive participant.

Teachers, ask students to:

Use information from library resources and the Internet and research either Dylan Thomas or Alfred Lord Tennyson and prepare a Glogster poster (www.glogster.com) detailing the following:

- Biographical information about the poet
- The poet's most famous piece of work
- Your favorite poem of theirs to share with the class
- Why you believe this poet's work has withstood the test of time
- In what ways the poet's work has particular appeal for a character in *Matched*.

2. In *Matched*, readers learn that the purposeful tampering of Cassia's Matching leads her to Ky.

Teachers, ask students to:

- a. Consider the motivation by the Officials to allow the two to come together as an experiment. Compare Cassia and Ky's relationship with that of another fated or destined couple from classic literature or a recent classroom read. Display the characters' similarities and differences, social and class situations, and familial relations in a presentation format of your choice (interactive whiteboard, tri-fold presentation board, or PowerPoint).
- b. Decide whether you believe Cassia and Ky were destined to connect or whether you believe the more fitting match for Cassia is Xander. Compose a short persuasive argument offering your position on the issue. While considering Cassia's experiences, use textual evidence to provide specific examples to support your case.

3. Part of Cassia's story focuses on her connection and relationship with the people who matter the most to her. Consider your most special relationships. What makes these individuals so important?

Teachers, ask students to:

- a. Compose a personal journal entry where you share your thoughts, and be sure to answer the following questions:
 - Who are the individuals who mean the most to you?
 - Why is that particular relationship so special?
 - What's the greatest sacrifice you've made for the people you love?
 - In what ways have the changes you've experienced in your life affected those to whom you are closest?

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The following prompts should be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. Thematic Connections

Teachers, ask students to:

Consider the following themes of *Matched*:

- Sacrifice
 - Loyalty
 - Courage
 - Perseverance
- a. Select one of the themes and find examples from the book that help support this theme.
 - b. Create a life lesson chart, highlighting the contextual evidence with page numbers and specific quotations from the primary source.
 - c. Explain what the theme means in today's society, and how the novel is making a statement about our own societal understanding of sacrifice, loyalty, courage, and perseverance

2. Making Meaning by Exploring Setting

Teachers, ask students to:

Consider the variety of settings for *Matched*.

- Why is each of these places important to the development of Cassia?
- Using the descriptions provided in the novel, illustrate the three places you believe to be most important to her story.
- In addition to the illustrations, include a short explanation of the significance of each and why you believe it is important.

3. Considering Character: Create a Bio-poem

Teachers, ask students to:

Demonstrate knowledge of a character from *Matched* by following the written prompts to complete a poem about an individual from *Matched*. Create an original slideshow of the poem using PowerPoint, Prezi, or Movie Maker.

- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Three traits that describe the character
- Line 3: Relative of (name or names)
- Line 4: Lover of (three things)
- Line 5: Who feels (three things)
- Line 6: Who needs (three things)
- Line 7: Who fears (three things)
- Line 8: Who gives (three things)
- Line 9: Who would like to see (three things)
- Line 10: Resident of (place)
- Line 11: Last name

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, CONT.

4. Essential Quotes Analysis:

Teachers, ask students to:

Select four quotes from *Matched* that seem to signify key ideas that the author hopes for readers to take from the text. These might be quotes spoken by characters or might be from the narration. Have students develop a chart with the following four columns:

ESSENTIAL QUOTES FROM MATCHED

Quote	Page #	Relevance to novel	“Message” to Readers (Universal Application)

Example quote: “And that’s how it’s always been with Ky, I realize now, looking back. We have always seen him swimming along the surface. Only that first day did we see him dive deep.”

The intended meaning should have relevance not only to the characters in the text, but to the lives of anyone who reads the book.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, CONT.

5. Create Original *Matched*-Inspired Art:

Teachers, ask students to:

Create one of the following art forms as an additional means of exploring *Matched*:

- Music is often used to connect people to one another and the world at large. Select a favorite character from *Matched* and create a CD with an original playlist that is representative of the experiences that character undergoes throughout the novel. Create original art for the jewel case and on the interior, and after including appropriate artist information, offer an explanation for the selection of each song.
- One of Condie's greatest strengths as a writer is her ability to offer richly descriptive scenes. In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from *Matched* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (like www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/ or infinitecomic.com for example), have students begin by using the strips to create storyboards for your scene. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. As part of the evaluation component, make sure to consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.
- Using a variety of mediums, create an original piece of art that is symbolic of one of the major themes of *Matched*. These may include but are not limited to the following: choice, love, friendship, loyalty, or sacrifice.
- Previews of coming attractions in the movie industry are known as trailers. Design an original book trailer for *Matched*. Begin by creating a storyboard, detailing which scenes you intend to incorporate in your trailer. Then use a movie-making program of your choice, such as www.animoto.com. Post your finished trailers to www.youtube.com.

THIS DELUXE GOLD EDITION INCLUDES:

- A never-before-seen map of the Matched trilogy world. The first official map ever created for the series
- A Decade of *Matched*: Ally Condie in conversation with bestselling author Soman Chainani
- Bonus story: "Green Girl in a Green Dress"
- Discussion Guide

