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**Making Curriculum Connections!**



**An Educator's Guide to**

**MATCHED**

ALLY CONDIE



**INSPIRE • ENGAGE • EDUCATE**

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

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# Dear Educator:

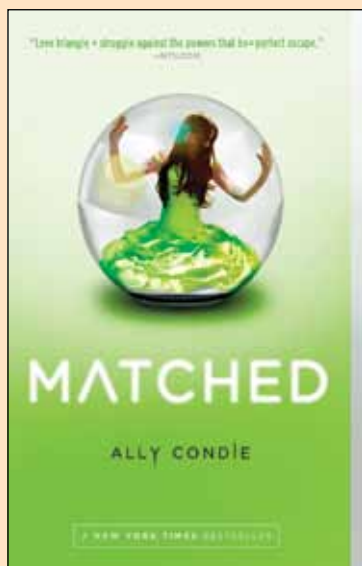
Teachers and students alike will discover that *Matched* is a gripping story that draws the reader into a unique world with disturbingly close echoes of our own and one that asks penetrating questions about how we live together in a society.

*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 himself or herself 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 in its own right." —*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." —*Publisher's Weekly*, Starred Review



## About the Author:

**ALLY CONDIE** is the author of the bestselling Matched trilogy (*Matched*, *Crossed*, and *Reached*). *Matched* was chosen as one of YALSA's 2011 Teens' Top Ten, named as one of *Publishers Weekly's* Best Children's Books of 2010, selected as the #1 Pick on the Winter Kid's Indie Next List, and received starred reviews from *Kirkus* and *Publishers Weekly*. In a starred review for the sequel, *Crossed*, *Kirkus* called the Matched books an "addictive, layered dystopic trilogy." A former English teacher (who still keeps her license current), Ally lives with her husband and four children outside of Salt Lake City, Utah. She loves reading, writing, running, and listening to her husband play guitar.

This guide was created by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matched*

The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. In Cassia's world, individuals are only allowed a single artifact, a treasure from the past. What can readers learn about Cassia's world from the understanding that the Society only allows citizens one object from the past? If you were asked to select a single item to pass down to another generation, what would it be and why?

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- a. Bring one piece of literature, art, or music to "pass down" to a new generation, or even a new society. Explain the reasoning behind each contribution with the class. Ideas: what is the time period? Will this artifact stand the test of time? Will people read it, listen to it, and/or appreciate it in a new & different society with new & different sets of rules?
- b. Collectively, create a visual of the combined artifacts, and connect them to one another (either using an interactive whiteboard to display images of each artifact, or on a time line of when each artifact was created, written, or released)
- c. Finally, explain how and why each artifact is representative of their personalities and their community.

2. Consider the three emergency tablets each member of the Society is required to carry with them at all times. What purpose do they serve? Why is Cassia encouraged to never take the green tablet? Consider the lack of effectiveness the tablets have on both Xander and Ky. In your opinion, does this put them at an advantage?

**Teachers, Ask students to:**

- a. Research the phenomenon of the placebo effect. Look at a few consequences of using placebos in controlled studies. Present findings from the various studies in relation to the placebo users.
- b. Determine the way in which Condie (the author) is layering in the placebo effect into the story. What are the complex ethical questions that one can raise?

3. In *Matched*, each member of the Society is assigned a job. Cassia is a data sorter, her mother works at the Arboretum, and her father sorts relics of the past. Consider your personal strengths. What role might you play in such a community? What problems might arise from being given a job based only on your strengths? In your opinion, are there other personal attributes that are equally important?

**Teachers, Ask students to:**

- a. Compare a few different education systems around the world: what are the ways in which each system prepares their students for the workplace? At what age are students organized into career tracks in the China? Great Britain? France? India? The United States? If there are any other interesting school systems, include them.
- b. Present the information on a whiteboard with the background of the world map (use a Google Maps to highlight key cities with high literacy rates and/or high household incomes as measures of success.
- c. After holding a discussion about global trends in careers, think about choice, freedom, and opportunity in the mainstream culture of our society: how much are we given? Is it enough or too much? What are some indicators for either argument?

4. What is Cassia's initial impression of the official supervising her Matching? How does her opinion of her change through the course of the novel? In what ways is the shift in her opinion indicative of her overall understanding of the workings of the Society?

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- a. Identify the point of view of this novel in comparison to a few other recent classroom reads, especially with female protagonists.
- b. Explain how a first person narrative changes the way the reader experiences the book in relation to perspective.
- c. Think about whether Cassia's gender might also add to the overall experience for the reader. Might it be more/less revealing if someone other than Cassia were telling it?
- d. Present the information with a character analysis of Cassia.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L.9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.

# Classroom Lesson Plans for *Matched*

The following questions may be utilized throughout the novel study as reflective writing prompts. Alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

5. Consider the variety of settings for *Matched*.

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- Name the three places you believe to be the most important to the story
- What is the significance of each place to the overall story structure
- Use textual evidence from the book to craft an argument
- Present your argument to the class, visually representing the three settings as you imagine them to appear, with bulleted points below each setting and important quotes pasted throughout the presentation

6. Throughout the course of the novel, Cassia, Xander, and Ky learn that the world as they know it might never be the same. In what ways will it be better or worse for them? Have you had an experience that reshaped your life? In what ways have you changed due to this incident?

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- Prepare an essay for a college admissions counselor:
  - Choose an event that changed you; it can be either subtle or more obvious (sometimes the smallest events make the best stories)
- Craft an essay in which you prove personal growth from the experience or event
- Exchange essays with classmates, helping them to strengthen their arguments and in turn, strengthening yours
- Submit final essays for class publication

7. On Cassia's grandfather's eightieth birthday, he and his family participate in his Final Banquet. What is your opinion of how death is treated by the Society? How does Cassia's attitude toward this prescribed death sentence change throughout the course of the novel?

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- Research articles and journals about end-of-life care in our society, keeping in mind any perceived agendas or opinions in the articles
- Talk in small groups about the general perception of death and loss in our society
- Compare Cassia's society to our own: are there benefits to each, or is one treatment more humane?
- With your discussion group, prepare arguments for the class to hear and debate

8. Describe Cassia. What makes her a dynamic character? Is she the type of person you would want to befriend?

**Teachers, ask students to:**

- Read multiple op-eds and opinionated profiles from local and national newspapers
- In an op-ed format, write an argument, trying to convince your peers to either befriend or de-friend Cassia
- Refer to the book for textual evidence supporting your main argument
- Judging each other's argument, keep a tally of Cassia's likeability
- Make sure to consider the context of the story—why does Cassia act the way she does? Out of the need for friendship, or for survival?

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration S.L. 7.1., S.L. 8.1., S.L. 9-10.1., S.L. 7.2., S.L. 8.2., S.L. 9-10.2., S.L. 7.3., S.L. 8.3., S.L.9-10.3. Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.

# 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 Lord Alfred Tennyson and prepare a Glogster poster ([www.glogster.com](http://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 these poets' work has withstood the test of time
- In what ways the poets' work have particular appeal for a character in *Matched*.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W. 7.4., W. 8.4., W.9-10.4.

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.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1 and Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2. W. 8.2., W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3, W. 8.3, W. 9-10.3.

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?

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1. , R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1 and Writing: Text Types and Purposes W. 7.1., W. 8.1., W. 9-10.1., W. 7.2., W. 8.2.,W. 9-10.2., W. 7.3., W. 8.3., W. 9-.10.3. Writing: Production and Distribution W. 7.4., W. 8.4., W 9-10.4.

# 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

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.2., R.L. 8.2, R.L. 9-10.2

## 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.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1, R.L. 8.1, R.L. 9-10.1

## 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

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1, R.L.8,1., R.L. 9-10.1 and Craft and Structure R. L. 7.5., R.L. 8.5, R.L. 9-10.5, R.L.7.6., R.L. 8.6, R.L. 9-10.6

# Enrichment Activities

## 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:

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.

\*\*Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details R.L. 7.1., R.L. 8.1., R.L. 9-10.1.

## 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/](http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/) or [infinitecomic.com](http://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](http://www.animoto.com). Post your finished trailers to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

Correlates to Common Core Standards: Info tk

### Awards and Honors for *Matched*

- A 2011-2012 Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award (Young Readers)
- A 2011-2012 Washington, D.C Capital Choices Award (14 and up)
- A 2011-2012 Texas Lonestar Reading List selection (High School)
- A 2011-2010 North Carolina Young Adult Book Award (Young Adult)
- A 2012 Rhode Island's Teen Book Award (Young Adult)
- A 2012-2013 Arkansas Teen Book Award (Teen)
- A 2012-2013 Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award (Middle School Division: Grades 6-8)
- A 2012-2013 Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award (High School Division: Grades 9-12)
- A 2012-2013 Connecticut Nutmeg Book Award (Teen)
- A 2012-2013 Missouri MASL Reader Awards (Gateway Awards: Grades 9-12)
- A 2012-2013 Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award (High School)
- A 2012-2013 Iowa High School Book Award (Grades 9-12)
- A 2012-2013 Oklahoma Sequoyia Children's Book Award (High School)
- A 2012-2013 Virginia Reader's Choice Award (Teen)
- A 2012-2013 Minnesota Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award (Division II: Grades 6-8)

# A Q&A with *Matched* author ALLY CONDIE



**Q: What inspired you to write *Matched*?**

A: *Matched* was inspired by several experiences—specific ones, like a conversation with my husband and chaperoning a high school prom—and general ones, like falling in love and becoming a parent.

**Q: How do you think *Matched* differs from other dystopian novels?**

A: I think it's different in that it's perhaps less action-oriented and more introspective. This is really the story of one girl, Cassia, learning to choose.

**Q: Dylan Thomas's classic poem, "Do Not Go Gentle," is part of a theme that you've woven throughout *Matched*. Do you remember when you first came across this poem? What made you decide to use it in your novel?**

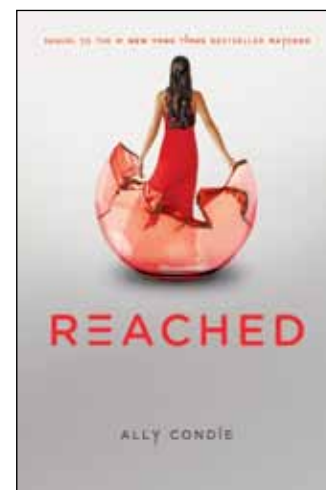
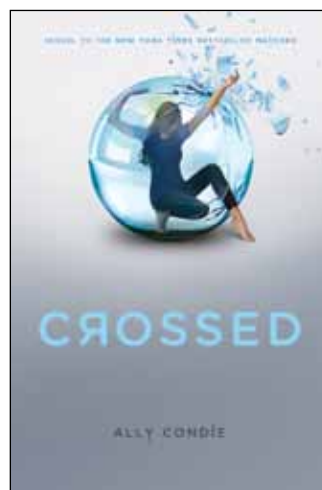
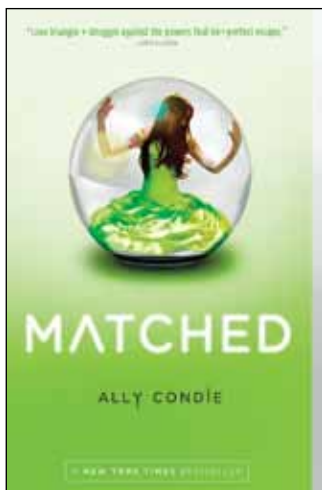
A: I do remember the first time I heard a recording of the author reading it. I remember feeling almost reverent and paying close attention to how he said the words and went through the lines. This poem came to mind almost immediately when I started writing the book. It's probably the most universal poem I've ever encountered. The first line alone resonates immediately with almost everyone.

**Q: What were some of the books you loved as a teen? Did any of these books influence *Matched* at all?**

A: I loved (and still do) Anne Tyler and Wallace Stegner. I remember being introduced to those authors in ninth grade and being floored by the beauty of their writing. I also loved anything by Agatha Christie. I think these books did influence me—not in any concrete, specific way, but in that I wanted to write a story about a character worth caring about even though/because of the fact that she is flawed and human.

**Q: What would you like your readers to take away from the experience of reading *Matched*?**

A: I hope they can take away whatever they need from the story. I hope there is something there for a reader—whether it's relating to a character or reading a scene that feels true or anything else.



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