

The Sky Above Us

Discussion Questions

Structure and Devices

1. *The Sky Above Us* switches between two timelines: the days shortly after the plane crash and the month before. What is the effect of using two different timelines? How does this structure create tension or build suspense?
2. The girls' chapters are told in present tense and through first person point of view and the boys' sections are told in past tense and through third person point of view. What is the impact of these choices on the novel?
3. What role did the interstitial sections (i.e. the transcripts, forum threads, essay drafts, etc.) play in the novel?

Character

1. Select one character and discuss how that individual developed or changed over the course of the text. Did this character's change advance the plot or reveal a theme? How so?
2. Conflict in *The Sky Above Us* centers on pairs of characters: Izzy and Israel; Nate and Janie; Shane and Cass; Cass and Janie; Izzy and Cass; Nate and Israel, etc. Select one of these pairs and discuss the conflict between them. How does each character perceive the other? How does that perception shift over time? Does the relationship change over the course of the novel?
3. What role do the teenagers' parents play in the novel? How does their presence (or absence) contribute to the plot or development of character or theme?

Theme

1. What is your understanding of the novel's final chapter (before the epilogue)? Are there other interpretations? What does this ambiguity tell us about a potential theme for the novel?
2. At the beginning of the novel, the girls are searching for answers in their grief. What questions do they still have by the end? What do the girls now understand about these questions?
3. Can you think of an example of a time when your understanding of "the truth" didn't match others' perceptions? What was the result of this misalignment? How does this idea play out in *The Sky Above Us*?

The Sky Above Us

Mental Health Resources

The Trevor Project

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org> 24/7/365 Hotline: 1-866-488-7386 or Text START to 678-678

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> 1-800-273-8255 / Español: 1-888-628-9454 / For Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889

The Jason Foundation

<http://jasonfoundation.com> 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text Jason to 741-741

The Jed Foundation

<https://www.jedfoundation.org> 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text START to 741-741

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<https://afsp.org/find-support>

American Association of Suicidology

<https://suicidology.org/resources>

Crisis Text Line

<https://www.crisistextline.org/selfharm> Text CONNECT to 741-741

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-Young-Adults> 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or Text NAMI to 741-741

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline> 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Families for Depression Awareness

<http://www.familyaware.org/help-someone>

National Safe Place

<https://www.nationalsafeplace.org/find-a-safe-place>

Text the word SAFE and your current location (address, city, state) to 698-66. Within seconds, you will receive a message with the closest Safe Place location.

ReachOut.com

<https://au.reachout.com>

The National Association for School Psychologists

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts>