

Teaching Notes & Activities for

HEARTSTOPPER



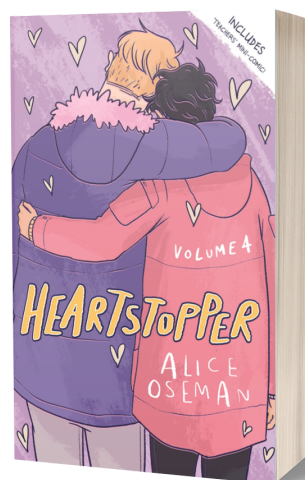
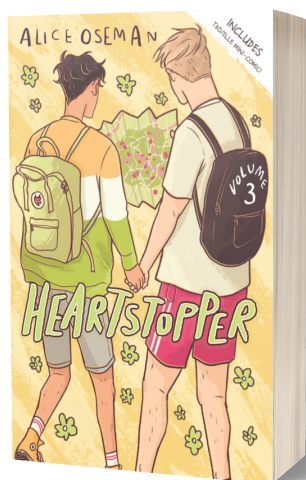
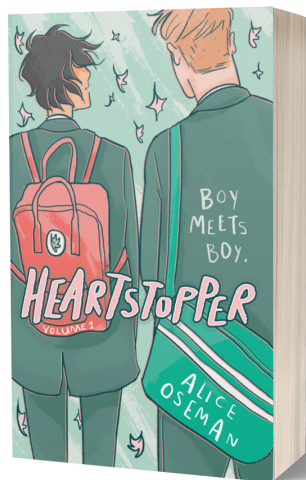
with additional activities from the

The Nick and Charlie Collection

ALICE OSEMAN.

HEARTSTOPPER

Teaching Notes & Activities



Heartstopper KS4 Teaching Pack

Suitable for: Ages 14+

Includes: Illustrated extracts from the books, discussion questions and suggested activities

Themes: LGBTQ+ History Month; Pride; Equality and Diversity; Different relationships and how they're represented, Relationships; Eating disorders; Mental Health and Wellbeing

CONTENTS

Heartstopper Pre-reading:

- **Objectives:** Explore the aims of LGBTQ+ History Month, Pride, and Stonewall; have a discussion about key issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Outcomes:** A number of discussions in response to group questions; a question that you still have about the LGBTQ+ community and its history.

EXTRACT PACK 1: Heartstopper – Volume 1

- **Objectives:** Consider the perspectives of characters who are attracted to the same sex; reflect on the effects a negative relationship can have.
- **Outcomes:** A role play of different characters; a 'Messenger App worksheet' on the theme of discussing difficult feelings.

EXTRACT PACK 2: Heartstopper – Volume 2

- **Objectives:** Identify the difficulties associated with 'coming out'; explore how we can show support and solidarity for those in the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Outcomes:** A discussion about your experiences of receiving support or showing it to the LGBTQ+ community; a double-spread of your own graphic novel.

EXTRACT PACK 3: Heartstopper – Volume 3

- **Objectives:** Reflect on the positive representations of same-sex relationships over the series; consider the key messages in the series so far
- **Outcomes:** A display for LGBTQ+ History Month or Pride; a summary of the key messages and themes in the series so far

EXTRACT PACK 4: Heartstopper – Volume 4

- **Objectives:** Reflect on Charlie's eating disorder in the story; define different eating disorders and create a list of action points or advice for how to sensitively approach the subject
- **Outcomes:** A completed research sheet for eating disorders; a pamphlet or piece of advice for how to support someone with an eating disorder.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

Heartstopper is a teen LGBTQ+ graphic novel series by Alice Oseman, covering life, love and everything in between. Sweet and funny, it also sensitively deals with topics like bullying and coming out.

Heartstopper - Volume 1

Charlie and Nick are at the same school, but they've never met ... until one day when they're made to sit together. They quickly become friends, and soon Charlie is falling hard for Nick, even though he doesn't think he has a chance.

But love works in surprising ways, and Nick is more interested in Charlie than either of them realised.

Heartstopper - Volume 2

Nick and Charlie are best friends. Nick knows Charlie's gay, and Charlie is sure that Nick isn't. But love works in surprising ways, and Nick is discovering all kinds of things about his friends, his family ... and himself.

Heartstopper - Volume 3

Charlie didn't think Nick could ever like him back, but now they're officially boyfriends. Nick's even found the courage to come out to his mum.

But coming out isn't just something that happens once - there's Nick's older brother, and a school trip to Paris, not to mention all the other friends and family - and life can be hard, even with someone who loves you by your side. As their feelings get more serious, Charlie and Nick will need each other more than ever before.

Heartstopper - Volume 4

Charlie didn't think Nick could ever like him back, but now they're officially boyfriends. Charlie's beginning to feel ready to say those three little words: I love you.

Nick's been feeling the same, but he's got a lot on his mind - not least coming out to his dad, and the fact that Charlie might have an eating disorder.

As summer turns to autumn and a new school year begins, Charlie and Nick are about to learn a lot about what love means.

HEARTSTOPPER PRE-READING

Discussion questions:

- How many books, films, or television series can you name with a same-sex relationship at its heart? Give examples.
- Are you surprised at how many or how few you can name? Explain your ideas.
- Why is it important that same-sex relationships are represented in books and on the stage and screen?
- Can you think of any other people or groups in society who may feel underrepresented? What is the impact of this?
- What do the letters 'LGBTQ+' stand for? Discuss these terms together.
- What do you know already about LGBTQ+ History Month? What is its aim?
- Have you ever heard of or attended Pride? What is it and how does it link to LGBTQ+ History Month?
- What were the Stonewall riots? Is this something you have discussed already at school or elsewhere?

Task 1:

In small groups, you will have five minutes to discuss and come up with ideas for each of the questions that appear on the board. After five minutes, one person from your table will summarise one or two of the key points you have come up with. Try to avoid repeating each other and change your scribe and spokesperson after each round.

At the end of today's lesson, note down a question you have about the LGBTQ+ community or its history that you would like to find the answer to over the course of your other *Heartstopper* lessons.

Extension: Can you link today's discussions to any real-life examples you have witnessed or someone you know has experienced? Note: Make sure you are sensitive to the feelings of people who may be affected by what you are talking about. No need to use names or details that identify specific people!

How can books like *Heartstopper* help to raise awareness about the LGBTQ+ community?

Think about:

- representation and visibility
- everyday language and terminology used
- education and understanding

EXTRACT PACK 1 HEARTSTOPPER – VOLUME 1





Well it started last September

Everyone at school had found out I was gay by then, the bullying had mostly stopped I guess and people had started to be nice to me (there was a group of Sixth Formers who stopped the bullies) but everyone in the school knew I was gay.

So I was practising my drums one morning before form in a practise room and I look up and see Ben looking in through the door window. He walks in and starts telling me how good I am at playing the drums, and I'm just sitting there like 'what the fuck' because I've never spoken to him before in my life... but also kind of freaking out because I thought he was really attractive...



Eventually he comes in and sits next to me and starts talking to me about me coming out at school, and like, how 'brave' I am and stuff... even though it's not like I came out myself or anything, it just got out because I told a couple of people...


And then next thing I know he's just kissing me


And yeah, we just continued to meet up sometimes at school before form. And like... I was so excited about it. I thought I had a boyfriend, or, like, I was having some big romance... But I slowly started to realise he was just using me for someone to make out with... because I was the only gay boy he knew...

and then in January I found out he had a girlfriend as well. Some girl from Higgs school. I don't know if he's bisexual or gay or whatever but it doesn't really change anything. He was just using me.



I tried to end it but he just kept pestering me. I thought I'd just meet up with him one last time to tell him to leave me alone but... yeah. That didn't go well I guess haha



Discussion questions:

- Why might school have been difficult for Charlie when people 'found out' he was gay? Give examples.
- What is your impression of Ben in this extract? Why is his relationship with Charlie a negative one?
- How might Ben benefit from having someone to talk to? What difficult feelings might he be going through?
- Why might Charlie have been confused by Ben's behaviour towards him? Give examples.
- How might this scenario be different if it was a heterosexual relationship? What changes?
- What does it tell us about Nick, that Charlie can open up to him in this way?
- Why is Nick's and Charlie's relationship a positive example of a same-sex relationship? Explain your ideas.
- How do the illustrations of the graphic novel form help to show the feelings and emotions of the characters?

Activity 1

In groups of 3, you are going to consider the behaviour and perspectives of Charlie, Nick, and Ben. In your groups, spend a few minutes taking it in turns to hotseat each of the characters, asking them questions surrounding the following themes:

FEELINGS

EMOTIONS

BEHAVIOUR

MOTIVATIONS

REGRETS

WORRIES

SEXUALITY

RELATIONSHIPS

TRUST

Then, with the idea of discussing difficult feelings in mind, use the 'Messenger App' worksheet below to fill in the bubbles of messages that between 2 and 3 of the characters might send to each other after Charlie's long message to Nick. You can use your role play and the key words above to help you. Here are some other ideas to give you inspiration:

- Nick is supportive towards Charlie
- Nick or Charlie sending Ben a message challenging his behaviour
- Ben sends Charlie an apology for his behaviour explaining his actions
- Charlie goes into more detail about how he is feeling and how best to move forward

Extension: Think about the role of social media in *Heartstopper Volume 1*. How is it used both positively and negatively by the characters? Can you pick out examples to back up your points? Think about the wider implications of how social media is used and the impact of this on LGBTQ+ communities.

Messenger Chat Worksheet

HEARTSTOPPER



EXTRACT PACK 2 HEARTSTOPPER – VOLUME 2



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Discussion questions:

- What is happening in the extract from *Heartstopper Volume 2*? What emotions do you think Nick is experiencing here?
- Why does it take great courage to have conversations like this? Explain your ideas.
- How does Nick's mum respond to the news she is given? How is humour used effectively here and throughout the novel?
- How could Nick's mum react differently to this news? How could a negative reaction from her affect him?
- What is the problem with the notion of 'coming out'? Do heterosexual individuals also declare their sexuality like this?
- Why is it important to confide in people you trust when you are ready? How does this idea relate to Charlie's experiences?
- How can you be supportive to those in the LGBTQ+ community who discuss their sexuality with you privately?
- How can you show solidarity with someone in the LGBTQ+ community who comes out publicly? Give examples.

Activity 2

With a partner, discuss; how has Charlie supported Nick through the confusion he is feeling and the mixed signals he is giving? Have you or anyone you know been in the position that Nick finds himself in in the extract? Or have you been in Nick's mum's position where someone is trusting and confiding in you?

Again, being sensitive not to reveal information that you or someone else wouldn't want sharing, talk about these issues in greater detail. How did you or someone else handle this tricky situation? Is there anything you or that person would like to do differently if you could go back in time?

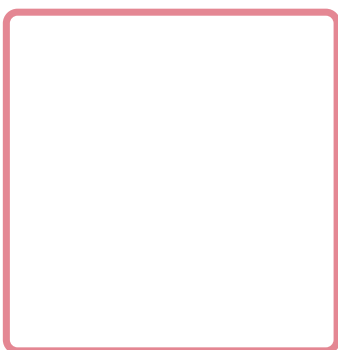
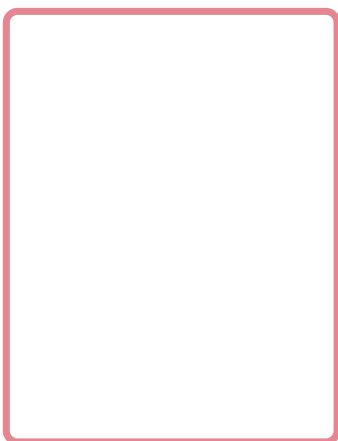
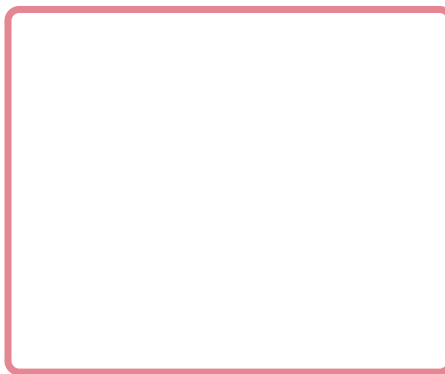
You will now use these ideas as well as your imagination for your own double-spread of a graphic novel. The focus of your spread will be a supportive conversation between someone in the LGBTQ+ community and a friend or relative.

See example template for this exercise on the next page.

Here are some other ideas to give you inspiration:

- someone confides in a friend, relative, or someone else they trust about confusion surrounding their sexuality
- someone declares their feelings for someone else of the same sex
- someone shows a person from the LGBTQ+ community support or solidarity

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EXTRACT PACK 3 HEARTSTOPPER – VOLUME 3



Discussion questions:

- How has Charlie's and Nick's relationship evolved over the course of their trip to Paris? Explain your ideas.
- Which other characters have faced challenges in their love lives? Give examples.
- Which characters have changed their views or behaviour towards the LGBTQ+ community in the novel? Give examples.
- Do you think Charlie and Nick make a good couple? What other examples are there of positive same-sex relationships?
- Who do you think has learned the most about themselves over the *Heartstopper* books? Explain your ideas.
- What do you think are the key messages behind the *Heartstopper* series?
- Do you think that we need more books, films, and tv series that explore similar themes to *Heartstopper*?
- What have you learned over the course of these lessons? What questions do you still have? Discuss them.

Activity 3

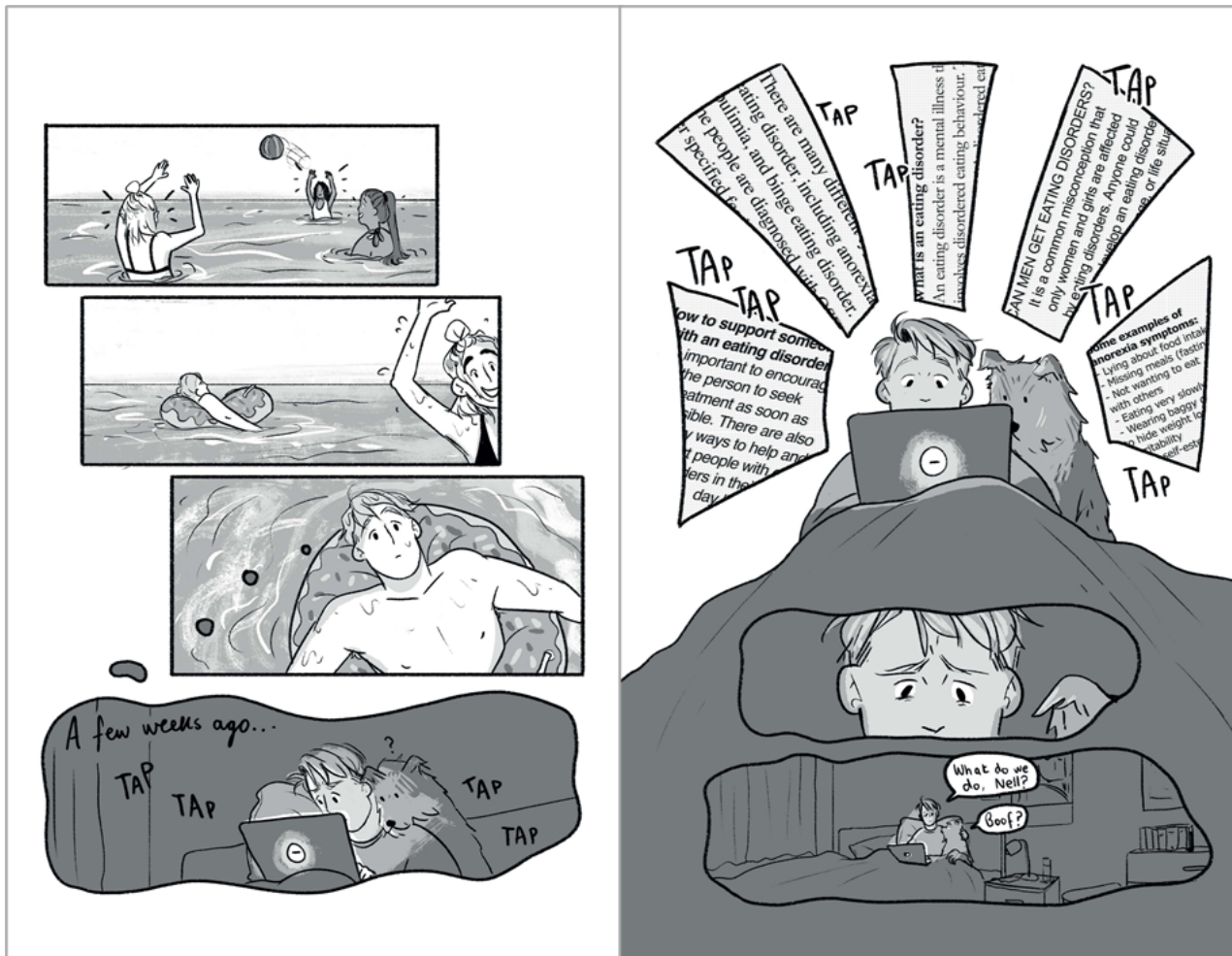
Use all the work that you have done over your four *Heartstopper* lessons to create a display for LGBTQ+ History Month or Pride. You could design a poster, collage, or any visual display that is both eye-catching and informative. Think carefully about the message and wording of your display as well as who your audience is. Ensure that your display is positive and celebratory, and feel free to use illustrations if you want to!

At the end of this lesson, summarise in a few words what you have taken away from the *Heartstopper* series so far.



Extension: Invite other classes from your school to visit your classroom and look at your displays. If your teacher is happy to, share your work on social media to promote equality and diversity for the LGBTQ+ community.

EXTRACT PACK 4 HEARTSTOPPER – VOLUME 4



Discussion questions:

- What are the different worries for Charlie and Nick? How are these worries linked?
- Read pages 46–51. What does Charlie want to tell Nick? Why is it so hard for him to say what he wants to say?
- Why do you think 'love' is sometimes the hardest thing to show or express?
- Even though Nick and Charlie are in a relationship, how do both of them sometimes feel isolated? How does Alice Oseman show these feelings of isolation in her illustrations?
- What does it mean to have an eating disorder? What is Charlie's eating disorder? How does it impact his daily life?
- Read pages 46–51. How does Nick feel about Charlie's eating disorder?
- Looking at these pages, how does Alice Oseman show Nick's concern for Charlie?
- How much of this story is about communication and being able to communicate sensitively and with empathy?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Which volume of *Heartstopper* did you enjoy the most and why?
- Who was your favourite character and why?
- Which was your favourite illustration and why?
- Which was your favourite discussion or activity? What did you learn from it?

Look out for further volumes of *Heartstopper*!

FURTHER READING

Fiction:

Only Mostly Devastated by Sophie Gonzales

The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta

Paper & Hearts Society: Read With Pride by Lucy Powrie

Wonderland by Juno Dawson

Only on the Weekends by Dean Atta

Afterlove by Tanya Byrne

Non-fiction:

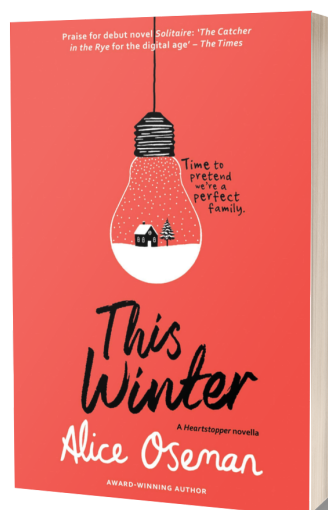
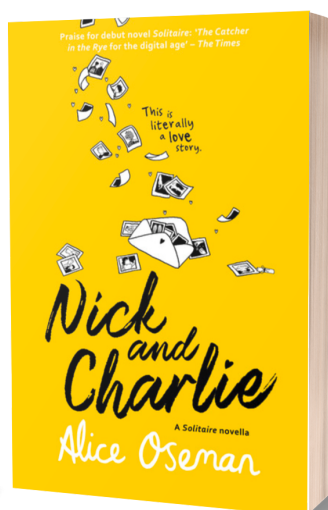
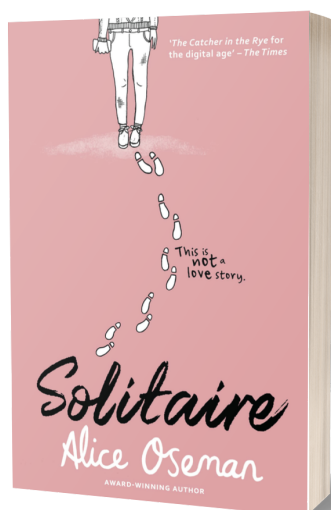
From Prejudice to Pride: A History of the LGBTQ+ Movement by Amy Lamé

Rainbow Revolutions by Jamie Lawson

What's the T? by Juno Dawson

The Nick and Charlie Collection

Activities



The Nick and Charlie Collection

Alice Oseman tells her stories through writing and artwork.

Tell a story below using words and illustrations.





The Nick and Charlie Collection

Tell a story with photographs. Scroll through your photos and pick out memories that when put together tell a story of a significant period of time in your life. Print the photos and place them on the blank page below to tell your story.



The Nick and Charlie Collection

Find the words at the bottom of the page in the wordsearch.

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TRUHAM

KISS

GAY

LEEDS

NICK

ROMANCE

SCHOOL

CHARLIE

DISTANCE

EXAMS

PHOTOGRAPH

RELATIONSHIP

FEELINGS

BOYFRIEND

UNIVERSITY

