

## Dear Educator,

How would your students fare on a deserted island?

In *The Wilds*, eight high-school students from radically different backgrounds must learn to survive when stranded on an island. Premiering December 11 on Amazon Prime Video, *The Wilds* explores the teenagers' lives before, during, and after they are thrown together in a test of survival that becomes a transformative test of character. The first episode is streaming FREE December 11-25 on [Amazon.com/TheWilds](https://www.amazon.com/TheWilds).

Good storytelling starts with an understanding of how people think, feel, and respond when challenged. With this free teaching kit from Amazon Prime Video and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired, students will analyze the first steps of character development.

Writing prompts and speaking and listening activities invite critical thinking about societal pressures, personal development, and the need to make good choices. By analyzing characters in *The Wilds*, students will address character development in real life as well, with activities that promote self-understanding and examine the roles that fear, friendship, courage, and hope play in lives, real and imagined.

Please feel free to share these resources with other teachers of grades 10-12 at your school. The materials are protected by copyright, but you can make as many copies as needed for educational purposes. And please let us know your thoughts about the program by visiting [ymiclassroom.com/thewilds](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/thewilds).

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired



Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at [feedback@ymiclassroom.com](mailto:feedback@ymiclassroom.com).

AMAZON ORIGINAL

# The Wilds



## Target Audience

Grade 10-12 students in English Language Arts, Literature, and Drama

## Program Objectives

- To explore how first impressions form and change in literature and life
- To analyze the ways that writers develop relatable characters
- To consider the struggles people have when leaving known support systems
- To examine how struggles in everyday life translate into universal aspects of drama

## Program Components

Available at [ymiclassroom.com/thewilds](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/thewilds):

- This one-page teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activity sheets
- A feedback form
- Alignment with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

## About The Wilds

Part survival drama, part dystopic slumber party, *The Wilds* follows a group of teenage girls from radically different backgrounds after an airplane

crash leaves them stranded on a deserted island. The show explores the emotional highs and lows of being a teenage girl, juxtaposing the pressure of everyday high school life against surviving on a deserted island. Every girl has a different story, personality, strengths and weaknesses as they navigate how to not only survive day to day immediately after the crash, but also how to live together when help is not coming. The series takes place across three timelines for each of the main characters — life before the island showcasing their high school lives back home, life on the island all together, and life after the island. There's just one twist — these girls are not here by accident. This show is rated TV-14.\*

## How to Use This Program

Download and make copies of the three activity sheets for students. Students do not have to view the show, but the communal experience makes for a more significant learning experience. The first episode of *The Wilds* is streaming for FREE December 11-25 on [Amazon.com/TheWilds](https://www.amazon.com/TheWilds). As students progress through the activities, they will collaborate to collect story elements to develop their own narratives.

\* This program contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age. Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program may contain one or more of the following: intensely suggestive dialogue (D), strong coarse language (L), intense sexual situations (S), or intense violence (V).

## ACTIVITY 1

### First Impressions

Use this activity to discuss character development and invite students into *The Wilds*. Most of the show's characters meet on the plane and quickly form some opinions about each other, without really knowing one another. Like your students when they begin to watch *The Wilds*, the characters start with first impressions.

If appropriate in your class, have students experiment with how first impressions work. Ask them to identify one key fact about themselves — a goal, a challenge, a talent, a strong opinion, etc. Then pair students with classmates they don't know well to try and guess each other's character-defining fact. Are students surprised to learn what their classmates perceive as key facts about them?

Distribute the activity sheet and have students stay in pairs to complete Part 1, which features photos of characters in *The Wilds*. Students use prompts on the activity sheet to record their first impression of each character. Then they will go online to compare their first impressions with the character profiles on the show's website. Ask students to share how they developed their impressions from

the character photos. Then broaden your discussion to consider how preconceptions and stereotypes may have influenced their first impressions.

Conclude the activity by having students complete Part 2 individually. Using an online photo of an anonymous teen, students draw on their imaginations to fill in a first impression profile and begin to create a character for a story of their own.

## ACTIVITY 2

### Feeling Connected

As the story of *The Wilds* unfolds, so will the girls' personal challenges. Use this activity to have students consider universal issues characters and teens face. Distribute the activity sheet and have students read the notes about the characters and reflect on whether one character draws them in more than others and why. How does this feeling of engagement with a character apply to their experience with characters in other television shows, films, and books? Are they usually attracted by a certain type of character? Through class discussion, help students translate that sense of attraction — for leaders, underdogs, comical sidekicks, etc. — into a better understanding of how we connect to characters in a narrative.

For Part 2 of the activity, have students work in groups to identify some typical challenges faced by high-school students, then have them work individually to use the challenges they identify to further develop their own imagined characters.

## ACTIVITY 3

### The Decision Driver

On the island, the characters in *The Wilds* assess who they are and decide who they want to be, summoning strengths some were not sure they had. Use this activity to have students analyze how key decisions alter the trajectory of lives. For Part 1, students work in pairs to examine possible decisions for one of the characters in the show and use a graphic organizer to map out what could happen to the character for each decision. Then, in Part 2, students create a similar graphic organizer to explore possible decisions for their character. Next have students write a first person narrative in which their character faces a challenge, makes a decision, and develops through its outcome.

### Resources

[Amazon.com/TheWilds](https://www.amazon.com/TheWilds)  
[ymiclassroom.com/thewilds](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/thewilds)



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Part survival drama, part dystopic slumber party, *The Wilds*, premiering December 11 on Amazon Prime Video, follows a group of teenage girls from radically different backgrounds after an airplane crash leaves them stranded on a deserted island. The characters need to get a grip on who they really are — and who their island-mates really are — in order to survive together. Just as in real life, that process begins with first impressions and testing first impressions against personal experience.

**PART 1** How do you form first impressions? For example, take a look at these characters from *The Wilds*.

Partner with a classmate and try to size up each character based only on what you see. On a separate sheet of paper, complete the following sentences to show how you perceive each character.

- She looks like someone I would ...
- She probably acts like she ...
- If she has a secret, I bet it's...

After you have recorded your first impressions, go to [Amazon.com/TheWilds](https://www.amazon.com/TheWilds) to read profiles of these characters. What surprises you? In class, talk about the role stereotypes and other kinds of preconceptions that you've probably picked up in stories and in life may have influenced your first impression of each character. Talk also about how writers, like those behind *The Wilds*, use our preconceptions to build and develop narrative characters.



LEAH



SHELBY



MARTHA



RACHEL



DOT



NORA



TONI



FATIN

**PART 2** Now experiment with using first impressions to create a character for a story of your own. First, go online and find an interesting but anonymous teenage model in an ad or on a post. Celebrities, news figures, and relatives, not allowed! Use this graphic organizer to write a profile for your character based on what you see and what that prompts you to imagine.

First Impressions Character Profile	
Name	
Best school subject	
Extracurricular activities	
Hobbies/Pastimes	
Best friend	
Family life	
Goal/Hope for the future	

**Which is harder — surviving your teenage years or surviving on a deserted island?**  
**Find out on *The Wilds*, beginning December 11 on Amazon Prime Video.**  
**Episode 1 streams FREE December 11-25 on Amazon.com/TheWilds**



# FEELING CONNECTED

Who are you rooting for in *The Wilds*? There are eight girls, mostly total strangers, stranded on a deserted island. Discover these characters and the life-and-death decisions they need to make beginning December 11 on Amazon Prime Video.

**PART 1** Empathy is the ability to share and understand how someone else feels. Read the details below. Which of the eight girls do you connect with most and why?



**LEAH**  
Brooding.  
Intense.  
Creative.  
Loner. Hiding a relationship with a man 20 years older.



**SHELBY**  
Confident.  
Outdoorsy.  
A regular at church and beauty pageants. But she has secrets.



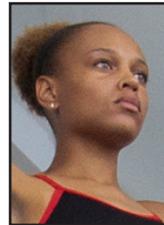
**MARTHA**  
Warm.  
Friendly.  
Unafraid to get to know people. But struggling with self-esteem.



**TONI**  
Tomboy tendencies.  
Aggressive.  
Thinks everyone is out to get her! But loyal.



**NORA**  
Intelligent.  
Outsider.  
Does not care.  
Hiding grief for lost bond with her twin. Seems emotionless.



**RACHEL**  
Super athletic.  
Training for Olympics.  
Seems strong.  
Covers her self-consciousness well. Nora's twin.



**DOT**  
Blunt.  
No-nonsense.  
Natural caregiver.  
Knows more about responsibility than most people her age.



**FATIN**  
Gifted musician and singer.  
Projects confidence.  
Not used to having to connect with other young women.

With a partner, discuss each character's traits and consider what her main challenges may be on the island. Identify the character you connect with the most and describe how your connection relates to your character's likely challenges.

I connect with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2** What challenges could you use to create empathy for the character you are imagining and started developing in Activity 1? Work with a group of classmates to brainstorm some typical challenges that high school students face. Which ones might spark empathy for your character? On your own, use this graphic organizer to explore how your character might respond to different types of challenges. Think about which type of challenge will make readers or viewers feel connected to your character and care about the choices she/he makes.

Type of Challenge	Character's Response
1.	
2.	
3.	

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# THE DECISION DRIVER

In *The Wilds*, premiering December 11 on Amazon Prime Video, the characters must figure out who they are — strengths and weaknesses — and what they want to become. In any story, a flat character is one a reader or viewer learns little about. As we learn why characters think as they do, they take on added dimensions.

**PART 1** With a partner, choose one character from *The Wilds*. Use this graphic organizer to identify a decision she might make based on what you know about the situation on the deserted island. Think about how that decision might drive what happens to her next. Some possible character decisions are provided below or you can come up with ideas of your own.

Decision #1	<b>CHARACTER</b>	Decision #2
_____	_____	_____
Outcome	<b>POSSIBLE DECISIONS</b>	Outcome
_____	Pushes someone away.	_____
_____	Does something helpful or mean.	_____
_____	Practices or shares a skill.	_____
_____	Makes friends with someone.	_____
_____	Gives into a fear.	_____
_____	Takes the lead.	_____
_____	Shares and faces a fear.	_____
_____	Isolates somewhere.	_____
_____	Makes a plan.	_____

**PART 2** Now use the organizer below to explore the decisions your character might make — and their possible outcomes — when she/he faces the type of challenge you have imagined for your story. Use your ideas to write a first person narrative for your character on a separate sheet of paper. Describe a scenario in which your character faces a challenge, makes a decision, and lives with it. Write through the eyes of your character and try to include their experience of the situation (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch) and the emotions your character feels.

Decision #1	Decision #2
_____	_____
Outcome	Outcome
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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