

**Dear Educator,**

Based on the novel by *New York Times* best-selling author Lauren Oliver, *Panic* is a compelling story about fear, friendship, courage, and hope, available May 28 on Amazon Prime Video.

*Panic* takes place in the small town of Carp during the summer after high school graduation, when graduates evaluate how far they have come and where they want to go next. But in Carp, where opportunities are scarce, graduation summers can be sinister. Each year there is a deadly competition among graduates desperate to win their way out of town. There's just one rule the young players need to survive: Don't panic.

Inspired by *Panic*, this free language arts teaching kit from Prime Video and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired invites high school students to explore the key components of storytelling and how decision-making leads to character development, not just in fiction but in life.

Through their own reflective and creative writing, students will gain a better understanding of the writing process as well as a new perspective on the role that societal pressures play in personal development.

Please feel free to share these resources with other educators in grades 10 to 12. The materials are protected by copyright, but you can make as many copies as needed for educational purposes. And let us know your thoughts about the program by visiting [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-panic](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-panic).

Sincerely,



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).

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AMAZON ORIGINAL

# PANIC



## TARGET AUDIENCE

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

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To examine why challenges and obstacles build character
- To explore the way intention leads to both conflict and growth
- To analyze universal themes in life and literature
- To understand how people's choices determine outcomes

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Available at [ymiclassroom.com/panic](http://ymiclassroom.com/panic):

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

## ABOUT PANIC

*Panic* began as so many things do in Carp, a dead-end town of 12,000 people in the middle of nowhere: because it was summer and there was nothing else to do. Heather never thought she would compete in *Panic*, a legendary game played by graduating seniors, where the stakes are high and the payoff is even higher. She'd never thought of herself as fearless. But when she finds someone, and something, to fight for, she discovers that she is braver than she ever thought. Dodge has never been afraid of *Panic*. His secret fuels him and will get him all the way through the game, he's sure of it. But what he doesn't know is that he's not the only one with a secret. Everyone has something to play for. For Heather and Dodge, the game brings new alliances, unexpected revelations, and the possibility of first love for each of them—and the knowledge that sometimes the very things we fear are those we need the most. This show is rated TV-14.\*

\**Panic* 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).



## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Download and make copies of the three activity sheets to share with students. Students do not have to view *Panic* to complete the activities, but viewing makes for a more significant learning experience. The show is available exclusively to Amazon Prime customers on Prime Video. For students who might not have a subscription, Amazon Prime offers a free 30 day trial.

### ACTIVITY 1 WHO WRITES YOUR STORY?

This activity takes student to Carp, the small-town setting for *Panic*, where a deadly competition for graduating seniors was started years ago—because it was summer and there was nothing else to do. Students analyze the show's setting and consider the role of environment in character development, both in fiction and in life.

Distribute the activity sheet and have students partner to complete Part 1, in which they highlight or underline telling details in a synopsis of *Panic* and discuss what they reveal about the culture of Carp. In Part 2, to ground students' understanding of the role of

place in storytelling, the partners will sketch a character, describe a setting, and imagine a way to introduce the character and setting to an audience. The goal is to create a character and a place, and to set a story in motion. For Part 3, students will switch to a reflective mode. Using a prompt about character development, students will reflect in writing on the extent that environment may define a person's challenges but never the person.

### ACTIVITY 2 LIFE STORIES

As *Panic* ensues, the characters are tested and major themes of the story emerge. Use this activity to invite students to analyze some key aspects of characterization and theme development.

Have students partner to complete Part 1, in which they consider popular themes in young adult fiction. Which themes appeal to them? In Part 2, partners consider the way a story builds as a character's desires are either thwarted or fulfilled. Students then use this understanding to bring some dimension to a character they sketch together. To conclude, have students

work independently to either develop the sketched character more fully or to create a new one. Encourage them to think about their character's intentions and possible obstacles. Using this line of self-inquiry, students will imagine an appealing storyline and then share their ideas in the form of a written pitch.

### ACTIVITY 3 WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

As the story in *Panic* develops, so does the viewer's understanding of the characters' motivations. Questions are answered: *What are the characters' hidden demons? What are their strengths?*

Use this activity to help students investigate the ways that characters' traits and desires drive their stories. In Part 1, have students work in small groups to invent characters and place them in a scenario. Then, in Part 2, have students work independently to bring the character's story to life in a creative writing assignment.

### RESOURCES

[Amazon.com/Panic](https://www.amazon.com/Panic)  
[Ymclassroom.com/panic](https://www.ymclassroom.com/panic)

**THERE'S JUST ONE RULE HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS NEED TO FOLLOW TO SURVIVE THE ANNUAL GAME: DON'T PANIC. CAN THEY DO IT? FIND OUT IN *PANIC*, AVAILABLE MAY 28 ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO.**



NEW SERIES | **prime video**  
MAY 28



# WHO WRITES YOUR STORY?

*Panic*, available May 28 on Amazon Prime Video, depicts a dead-end town where each summer graduating seniors play a legendary game called Panic. The stakes are high, and the payoff is even higher. In the opening episode, viewers meet the narrator, Heather, who never thought she would compete in Panic. But then she finds something, and someone, she wants to fight for.

As the show begins, Heather's mom gives her a snow globe for graduation and then bums a twenty dollar bill, which does not seem to be like the first time this has occurred. Viewers then get their first look at Carp, a small town with dilapidated buildings and cracked roads, surrounded by thin woods and dried brush. We meet a bully named Ray, as well as Heather's closest friends, Natalie and Bishop. Natalie expects to win Panic, claim the \$50,000 prize, and depart for Hollywood. Heather and Bishop are not going to compete because they have plans for college. But their outlook changes when the games begin with a nighttime challenge to jump from a cliff where students gather with torches around a swimming hole. At the last minute, Heather joins in, having just learned that her mother has taken her hard-earned college savings. Natalie is angered because this means she will have to compete against Heather. Bishop is shocked.



HEATHER



RAY



BISHOP



NATALIE

**PART 1.** Partner with a classmate and highlight or underline details that reveal information about Heather and Carp's culture. Discuss these details and the picture they paint.

**PART 2.** Now, invent a high school character, setting, and something that could happen to launch a story about them. Describe your ideas in writing on separate paper. To brainstorm details, ask yourself questions like these:

- What is the character like?
- Where does the character live? What is the place like?
- Name one or more ways the character could be challenged.

**PART 3.** In addition to outside forces, *Panic* depicts inner forces that people face—like the characters' flaws and strengths. Through characters, storytellers help us recognize truths about ourselves. Read the following passage about character development and then react with details from your own life. Answer this question in a written reflective response: *Who writes your story?*

*Characters encounter outside forces, but those forces do not determine everything that happens next. Just as in real life, people have agency—that is, they can make choices. People create their own stories. And everyone is somewhere along the arc of their story, neither at the beginning nor at the end.*

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# LIFE STORIES

*Panic* is about a game of mythic proportions. Available May 28 on Amazon Prime Video, the story started long before its premiere—with gripping ideas and a writer who planned them out.

**PART 1.** *Panic*'s main character, Heather, finds herself in a love triangle with Bishop and Ray, who couldn't be more different. Love is a popular theme for stories about young people, but there are many other themes. With a partner, discuss stories you know that focus on the themes below. Then identify two themes that appeal most to you and reflect on why you find those themes meaningful.



HEATHER



RAY



BISHOP

love	good and evil	deception
redemption	courage	perseverance
circle of life	revenge	corruption
coming of age	survival	suffering
	heroism	

**PART 2.** In any story, the main character is the *protagonist*, whose goals tend to be revealed early. There's at least one *antagonist*, who works against those goals. Then there are characters you learn only a little about—because the story is not about them.

With your partner, draw a stick figure on the back of this sheet. List four random facts about the figure. Then give the figure two hopes or intentions. What starts to happen? After bringing this figure to life together, develop a protagonist. Either work with ideas that came from the stick figure or begin a new character. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are my protagonist's goals?
- How could an antagonist test those goals?
- What could the setting be?
- Which themes could be depicted?

Now on separate paper, write a creative pitch for a possible show featuring your character. Include:

- Who the show is about
- What the show is about
- What the main themes are
- What drives the main characters (the protagonist and antagonist)
- Where the protagonist will be at the end of the first season



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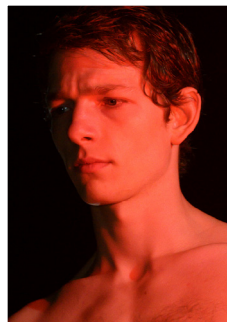
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# WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

*Panic*, an Amazon Original series available May 28 on Prime Video, introduces a cast of graduating high school seniors competing to win a pot of money and freedom from the limited opportunities in their small town. It's a dangerous game played for keeps. Based on what you know about people, what kind of character would you bet on winning?



BISHOP



DODGE



HEATHER



NATALIE



RAY

**PART 1.** In *Panic*, Heather, Bishop, and Natalie are optimistic as they graduate from high school. Heather and Bishop are heading for college. Natalie is determined to win the Panic competition and use the money to find fame in Hollywood.

Select one of the following scenarios featured in *Panic*:

- Losing a job when a business fails
- Conflict with a parent or guardian
- Being picked on by someone

Think about how peoples' traits affect what happens to them, both in fiction and in life. Work in small groups to invent characters who interact in one of these scenarios. Use the list of common traits below for inspiration. What are the characters like? How does self-worth influence them? Discuss what is believable about their mix of traits and how they react in your scenario, based on real people and real life.

adventurous	friendly	patient	shy
ambition	greedy	persistent	sincere
confident	jealous	persuasive	stubborn
cooperative	kind	pessimistic	tolerant
disrespectful	loyal	playful	unforgiving
dominating	mean	self-centered	vengeful

**PART 2.** Working independently, expand upon your characters and the scenario, using this list of questions:

1. What matters most to each character?
2. What does each character value in others?
3. What is their biggest fear?
4. What do they like least about themselves?
5. What is their greatest strength?
6. What do they like most about themselves?
7. What does each character want most of all in life?
8. What obstacles exist for them?

Now develop a narrative. Start with a telling detail. What happens first? Then narrate a choice your main character makes and indicate where the choice might lead. Include dialogue in your narrative.

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