

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio author Colleen Clayton and learn about her debut novel.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading *What Happens Next*.

Discover informational websites, texts, and documentaries to explore topics and themes in depth.

What Happens Next

By Colleen Clayton

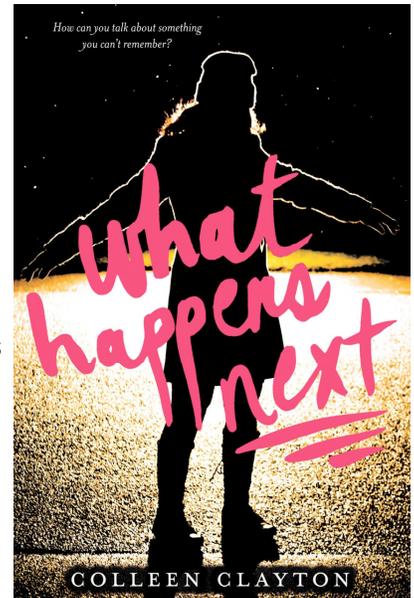


About the Book

Sixteen-year-old cheerleader Cassidy "Sid" Murphy ends up on a ski lift next to a handsome college boy. She's thrilled—but he isn't all that he seems. What happens—and what follows that—is a surprising, devastating, but ultimately triumphant journey for an indelible and sharp young woman who loses almost everything after a night she can't remember.

Debut author Colleen Clayton's *What Happens Next* is filled with sharp and incisive moments, recalling the best of Sarah Dessen and Laurie Halse Anderson. With brutal honesty and a compassion-filled light touch, *What Happens Next* deftly navigates issues including date rape, eating disorders, financial difficulties, and living in a single-parent household. Sid makes new friends, falls in love, and discovers that becoming whole again will depend on her willingness to take ownership of not only what happened already, but also what will happen to her next.

What Happens Next will speak to the experiences of young women everywhere as they discover the challenges associated with being female in a modern world where their bodies and self-images are under both emotional and physical assault from without and within.



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<http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/colleen-clayton/what-happens-next/9780316198691/>

Talk About It

Topics to share when discussing *What Happens Next* with teens.

What is Sid's primary desire? What does she want more than anything? Identify the conflict of the story (meaning the main obstacle that is keeping Sid from getting what she wants.) Identify Sid's secondary desires and the minor obstacles she must face.

What five words would you use to characterize Sid? How about her mother, Katherine? Her boyfriend, Corey?

When Sid went to meet Dax, what was your reaction?

More discussion questions on next page!



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About the Author

Colleen Clayton grew up in a small suburban town just outside of Cleveland. After graduating from Kent State University, she worked as a social worker in residential treatment centers for troubled teens and as Program Supervisor for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mahoning Valley. She lives in Ohio with her family, and recently received her MFA in fiction writing from the Northeast Ohio Consortium (NEOMFA). She teaches fiction writing and composition at Youngstown State University. ***What Happens Next*** is her first novel.

Author Resources

Colleen Clayton's Official Website

<http://colleenclayton.com/>

Interview with Colleen Clayton from *Jenny Magazine* (Youngstown State University)

<http://www.jennymag.org/fall-12-issue/colleen-clayton>

Colleen Clayton's Dear Teen Me Letter

<http://dearteenme.com/?p=4042>

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

To set up an author visit with Colleen Clayton, please complete the online form on the Little, Brown Books for Young Readers website:

<http://littlebrownlibrary.com/set-up-an-author-visit/>

You may also contact Colleen Clayton through her fan mail page:

<http://colleenclayton.com/contact/>

Talk About It (continued)

"I need more time. You'd think seven months and four days would be enough time, right? Enough time to work up the nerve to just open my mouth and tell them. But it's not."

How might Sid have dealt differently with her physical and emotional trauma? How do the relationships that Sid has with other characters such as her mother, Corey, Kirsten and Paige, and Ronan help or hurt her during her healing process?

How would you describe the setting of ***What Happens Next***? The seasons turn throughout the story; how does that affect the narrative?

Sid alludes to the idea that her life is different from the typical American family. Is Sid's family situation (lives with half-brother, single mother, no father present) actually more typical than she thinks? How does Sid's family situation impact her throughout the book?

Did you find the ending to be realistic? Discuss how the ambiguity of what happens next for Sid made you feel as a reader. Was there a sense of resolution?

What do you think happens next for Sid and Corey? What do you think becomes of Dax/Tom? Is he caught, or does he get away?

Can the way that Kirsten and Paige acted towards Sid after the ski trip be justified? What should they have done differently, or was their behavior understandable?

Who would you cast in a movie adaptation of ***What Happens Next***?

Some discussion questions courtesy Colleen Clayton; used with permission.

Go Further

Ideas for extending the experience of reading **What Happens Next**.

*Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's New Learning Standards (Common Core) English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Examples are listed below; other standards also apply. **What Happens Next** may also support standards in Social Studies (American Government: Civic Involvement; American Government: Public Policy; Contemporary World Issues: Civil and Human Rights).*

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. They are included for teachers who want to use this book in school. For more information, see the Ohio Dept. of Education website, <http://education.ohio.gov>. Click on "Ohio's New Learning Standards" in the Teacher Resources section.

What Happens Next is written as a first person narrative. Discuss reasons why you believe Clayton chose to write from this perspective. Is this perspective effective and fitting for the story? Select and rewrite scenes from **What Happens Next** using other perspectives or points of view such as objective point of view, third person point of view, first person point of view, omniscient or limited omniscient points of view.

For more information on types of points of view visit:

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/literature/read/pov2.html>.

(RL.9-12.3; RL.9-12.5; W.9-12.3)

The issue of legalization of medical marijuana, in Ohio specifically, is discussed in the book. Research the current issue of legalization of medical marijuana. What process needs to be followed in order to pass a law to legalize medical marijuana? What other states have gone through the process, and has it been successful? Divide into teams to engage in an organized debate about the positive and negative aspects of legalization of medical marijuana. What implications would legalizing marijuana have on all aspects of society?

(SL.9-12.1; Social Studies: High School – American Government: Role of the People, Public Policy)

Throughout the book, Sid has trouble telling anyone about what actually happened to her during the class ski trip. Are you aware of any resources that are available to people who have been victimized by date rape? Research your community or region to identify supportive organizations, and create a flyer or handout that could be used as a resource for people who have been victimized by date rape or other sexual violence, and who are unaware of where they can turn to for help recovering.

(W.9-12.4; W.9-12.7)

Although Sid and Corey attend the same high school, they belong to different social circles. When they first began working together in the AV room at their high school they believed they knew each other already based on stereotypes. However, throughout the book they were able to get to know each other, learn more about each other and themselves, and develop a close relationship. Discuss what Sid and Corey were able to learn from each other as well as about themselves while overcoming stereotypes.

Host a **Mix it Up at Lunch Day**, at which students are encouraged to sit with students that they normally do not sit with for one day at lunch, in order to learn tolerance.

For more information about Mix it Up at Lunch Day visit <http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/what-is-mix>.

(RL.9-12.1; RL.9-10.3)

Check It Out

Companion texts and documentaries for *What Happens Next*.

“Why Kids Bully: Because They’re Popular” By Belinda Luscombe

<http://healthland.time.com/2011/02/08/do-popular-kids-bully-more/>

This article on a *Time Magazine* blog provides insight into reasons why kids bully.

Bully (2011), a documentary film, is an unflinching look at how bullying has touched five kids and their families, revealing a problem that transcends geographic, racial, and ethnic borders.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1682181/>

Teen novels with similar themes to *What Happens Next* include:

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Don't Breathe a Word by Holly Cupala

Just Listen by Sarah Dessen

Panic by Sharon Draper

Faking Normal by Courtney S. Stevens

Explore More

Additional ideas and resources to use with *What Happens Next*.

What Happens Next: A Guide

<http://colleenclayton.com/what-happens-next-a-guide/>

Colleen Clayton's readers' guide to *What Happens Next* features an author interview, literary analysis, discussion questions, and article citations and web links for further exploration of the issues raised in the book.

For more information about bullying:

Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

The National Bullying Prevention Center provides resources, activities and educators' toolkits that can be used to engage students in ways to understand and prevent bullying.

For more information about victim blaming:

Victim Blaming

http://www.crcvc.ca/docs/victim_blaming.pdf

Published by the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, this report defines victim blaming and discusses ways that victim blaming can be overcome.

For more information about eating disorders:

National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)

<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

The National Eating Disorders Association website offers a wide variety of information and helpful resources about eating disorders.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:

<http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>.

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