

September 7, 1991

Dear friend,

I do not like high school. The cafeteria is called the “Nutrition Center,” which is strange. There is this one girl in my advanced English class named Susan. In middle school, Susan was very fun to be around. She liked movies, and her brother Frank made her tapes of this great music that she shared with us. But over the summer she had her braces taken off, and she got a little taller and prettier and grew breasts. Now, she acts a lot dumber in the hallways, especially when boys are around. And I think it’s sad because Susan doesn’t look as happy. To tell you the truth, she doesn’t like to admit she’s in the advanced English class, and she doesn’t like to say “hi” to me in the hall anymore.

When Susan was at the guidance counselor meeting about Michael, she said that Michael once told her that she was the prettiest girl in the whole world, braces and all. Then, he asked her to “go with him,” which was a big deal at any school. They call it “going out” in high school. And they kissed and talked about movies, and she missed him terribly because he was her best friend.

It’s funny, too, because boys and girls normally weren’t best friends around my school. But Michael and Susan were. Kind of like my Aunt Helen and me. I’m sorry. “My Aunt Helen and I.” That’s one thing I learned this week. That and more consistent punctuation.

I keep quiet most of the time, and only one kid named Sean really seemed to notice me. He waited for me after gym class and said really immature things like how he was going to give me a “swirlie,” which is where someone sticks your head in the toilet and flushes to make your hair swirl around. He seemed pretty unhappy as well, and I told him so. Then, he got mad and started hitting me, and I just did the things my brother taught me to do. My brother is a very good fighter.

“Go for the knees, throat, and eyes.”

And I did. And I really hurt Sean. And then I started crying. And my sister had to leave her senior honors class and drive me home. I got called to Mr. Small’s office, but I didn’t get suspended or anything because a kid told Mr. Small the truth about the fight.

“Sean started it. It was self-defense.”

And it was. I just don’t understand why Sean wanted to hurt me. I didn’t do anything to him. I am very small. That’s true. But I guess Sean didn’t know I could fight. The truth is I could have hurt him a lot worse. And maybe I should have. I thought I might have to if he came after the kid who told Mr. Small the truth, but Sean never did go after him. So, everything was forgotten.

Some kids look at me strange in the hallways because I don’t decorate my locker, and I’m the one who beat up Sean and couldn’t stop crying after he did it. I guess I’m pretty

emotional.

It has been very lonely because my sister is busy being the oldest one in our family. My brother is busy being a football player at Penn State. After the training camp, his coach said that he was second string and that when he starts learning the system, he will be first string.

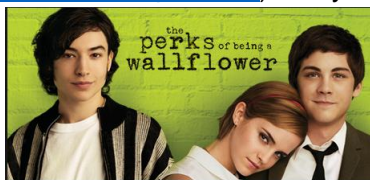
My dad really hopes he will make it to the pros and play for the Steelers. My mom is just glad he gets to go to college for free because my sister doesn't play football, and there wouldn't be enough money to send both of them. That's why she wants me to keep working hard, so I'll get an academic scholarship.

So, that's what I'm doing until I meet a friend here. I was hoping that the kid who told the truth could become a friend of mine, but I think he was just being a good guy by telling.

Love always,

Charlie

1. What type of text is it? Is it a popular format used nowadays?
2. Read the text quickly.
 - a. When was it written?
 - b. Who wrote it? And to whom?
 - c. Where do the events take place? Can we guess the writer's nationality? And age? Which clues can you find in the text?
3. Read the text again and discuss your ideas with your partner.
 - a. How would you describe Charlie's personality?
 - b. What happened to Susan? Why did she behave so differently all of the sudden?
 - c. Do you agree with Charlie when he admits that "boys and girls normally weren't best friends around my school"?
 - d. Do you think Charlie reacted appropriately to Sean's bullying?
 - e. Why is Charlie worried about getting a scholarship?
 - f. Is it a one-time letter or do you think it belongs to a series of letters?
4. How did you feel on your first day in 1st Bachillerato? Write a letter or an email to a friend describing what happened then and how you felt.
5. This letter is the second chapter of the novel "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky, a semi-autobiographical novel published in 1999 and adapted for the screen in a film released in 2012. This is the trailer of the film (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vb2qrcPEEs>). Do you recognize any of the actors?



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| 1. Description | This activity is based on the idea of using unabridged literary texts in the English class. This lesson plan is devised for students of <i>Bachillerato</i> and it should take one session (approximately 50 minutes) to complete. |
| 2. Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To develop their reading and writing skills.• To give students practice in analyzing a text.• To improve student's critical thinking. |
| 3. Set up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ First, students will analyze the format of the text, quite unusual these days, and they will make predictions about its content taking into account it was written almost three decades ago.❖ Then, they will read the letter and they will answer the questions in pairs.❖ After discussing the text, they will write a short letter describing how they felt their first day in <i>Bachillerato</i>.❖ Finally, they will watch the trailer of the film version of the book. |