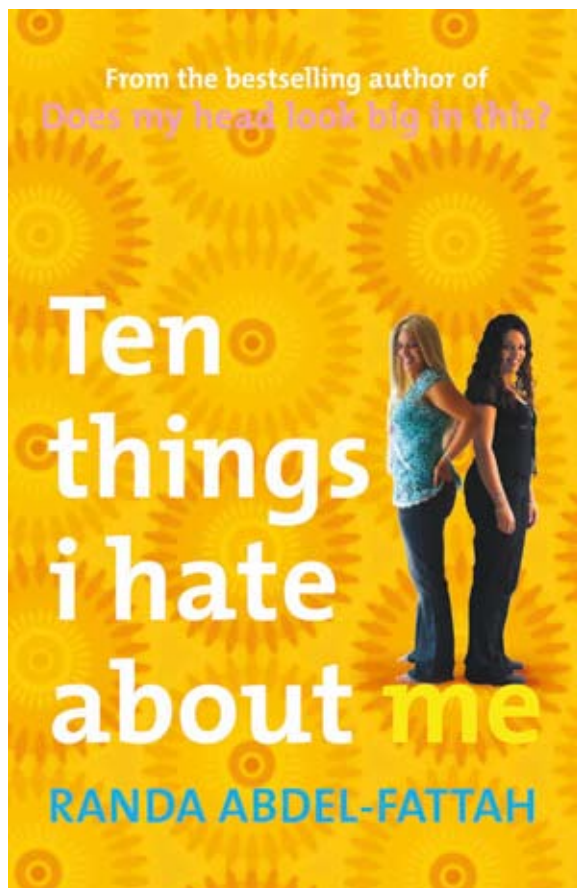


Ten Things I Hate About Me

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Teachers' Notes



These teachers' notes have been designed around the major themes of *Ten Things I Hate About Me*. The suggested activities are a guideline only and teachers should extend, abridge, adapt and modify the tasks depending on their students' and class' interests.

Many of the issues tackled in this novel can be perceived to be controversial and students should be encouraged to discuss opinions and not people.





WHOSE AUSTRALIA?

'Sometimes the Jamie in me aches to be a blue-eyed, blonde girl of Caucasian appearance. The yard stick against which all Australians are measured.' (p8)

RESEARCH:

1. Jamilah's family moved to Australia from Beirut, Lebanon.

- Ask students to research Lebanon and, in particular, the recent unrest there.
- Ask students to gather news articles.

2. *'If they were faithful to the Koran we wouldn't see such oppression.'* (p75)

- Re-read the conversation between Jamilah, her father and her aunt on page 75.
- Questions for students. What does this mean? How much do you know about being a Muslim? What is the Koran?
- Research this opinion by a Muslim about Muslims.
- Research Muslim religion and in particular Muslim women. Use this research to assess this opinion.

3. *'... sometimes I feel that people would take him more seriously if he were fluent. They hear his heavy accent and he's suddenly less Aussie.'* (p69)

- Research the Australian government's policy on immigration.
- Brainstorm a list of general beliefs, statements or 'myths' that the general public may have on this issue. For example: 'Australia has a larger immigration intake than . . .'
- Students should decide, through research and discussion, whether such statements are true or false.

EXTENDED WRITING:

1. *'All I want is to fit in and be accepted as an Aussie.'* (p175)

- Discuss this statement as a class. What is an Aussie? Has the concept changed? Do 'new' Australians have as much right to call Australia their home as people who are Australian-born?
- Enrol students into characters of both opinions. Ask them to develop a monologue in which the opinion is expressed.

2. Miss Sadja remembers that her ex-husband wanted to *'imitate not integrate'* (p152). Discuss the meaning of this quote.

3. Ask students to transform the information from one of the research tasks above into an editorial and/or letter to the editor based on the facts.



RACISM

GROUP ACTIVITIES:

1. The views of a sector of the Australian community are represented through the characters of Peter and (to a lesser extent) Sam.

In groups of four, students should find quotes to prove support this statement.

Ask students to write, on their own, a paragraph in response to the following questions with supporting statements: What are the views represented? Do you think Peter will ever change? How do you think Peter has formed those opinions?

EXTENDED WRITING:

1. In Chapter 12 Jamilah and her dad have a heated discussion about racism. Re-read this chapter.
 - Ask students to imagine they are Jamilah's dad after the conversation and then write his diary expressing his frustrations about this conversation from his point of view.
2. The novel is set after fictional beach riots in Sydney. On page 4, Peter talks about his dad's opinion of the riots.
 - Spend some time writing about both sides of the controversy. Enrol the class as different characters involved in the riots and ask them to prepare a monologue in which they make clear their character's opinions and side of the story. You may like to draw on historical events such as the Cronulla Riots.



MASKS and IDENTITY

'I'm not a walking headline or stereotype. I'm just me.' (p28)

EXTENDED WRITING:

1. *'Be proud of who you are! Remove the disguise. And step out of the world of anonymity.'* (p276)
 - To what extent does Jamilah achieve this by the end of the novel?

2. Jamilah often says that she can't open up to anyone, yet she does so constantly throughout the book without realising.
 - Discuss the ironies of her relationships with John and Peter.

3. When Jamilah first starts speaking to John via email, she introduces herself as 'Jamilah' and not 'Jamie'.
 - Why does she find this easy to do online when she cannot do it at school?
 - How does this relate to internet chat rooms and dangers involved in internet predators?
 - Ask students to design a pamphlet warning teenagers of the dangers of internet chat rooms.

GROUP ACTIVITIES:

1. Jamilah does not want anyone at school to realise that she is a Lebanese-Muslim.
 - In groups of 4–5, ask the students to divide their page into two columns. In one column, students should list all descriptions/characteristics of 'Jamilah' and in the other, all descriptions/characteristics of 'Jamie'. Encourage students to track them throughout the novel. What similarities and differences can be noted? Does the information change towards the end of the book?

2. At school, and in an attempt at being 'Jamie', Jamilah makes decisions based on what she believes people think of her. By the end of the novel she has realised that these were incorrect.
 - Students should form groups of four. One student should lie down on a large sheet of butcher's paper while the other students trace around their body with a marker pen. Students are to imagine that this shape is Jamilah. Inside the body, students should write quotes from the book (with corresponding page numbers) that reflect what Jamilah says about herself and what she thinks others think of her. Around the outside of the body, students should list quotes, or make predictions based on the text, as to what Jamilah's friends and family actually think of her.



CONFORMITY

EXTENDED WRITING:

1. *'You're just conforming to a nonconformist ideology.'* (p116)

- Ask students to explain this statement.

2. *'I might have said yes because sometimes wanting to be cool can come at any cost.'*
(p 62)

- Ask students to write a personal narrative about a time when being cool came at a cost. It could be factual or fictional.