

# HEALTH AND LIFE SKILLS

## GRADE 8

**I NEVER KNEW YOUR NAME**

**ALBERTA LEARNING**

**- PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT -**

*Developed by AAC... everyday assessment tools for teachers*

# I NEVER KNEW YOUR NAME

## OVERVIEW

Characters in literature face problems and make decisions as we all do. In this performance assessment, students have an opportunity, through the use of quality literature, to share and discuss a common experience as well as analyze and evaluate characters' options and decisions. Using the story *I Never Knew Your Name*, written by Sherry Garland and illustrated by Sheldon Greenberg, students will apply empathy skills to identify with a teenage boy who commits suicide and with the young boy who is telling the story. In the first of three assessment tasks, students will identify and describe the signs associated with suicidal behaviour, then identify possible intervention strategies or coping skills for the problems faced by both characters. In the second task, students will apply their choice of a coping or intervention strategy, suitable to the situation in the story, in a letter of advice to either boy. In the third task, students create a visual representation of the information about suicide intervention, along with local support services, which they will post in the school as a step toward prevention of suicide among their peers.

## RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL – 8

## TIME SUGGESTED

- **Assessment Task 1:** One 40-minute period
- **Assessment Task 2:** One 40-minute period
- **Assessment Task 3:** One to two 40-minute periods

## GENERAL OUTCOMES

## SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

No.	Description	No.	Description
Health and Life Skills – Grade 8			
<b>R–8</b>	<i>Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.</i>	<b>R–8.2</b>	<i>Students will describe signs associated with suicidal behaviour, and identify interventional strategies.</i>
		<b>R–8.5</b>	<i>Students will develop strategies for maintaining healthy relationships.</i>

English Language Arts – Grade 8			
<b>GO 2</b>	<i>Students will</i> listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.	<b>2.2.6</b>	<b>Respond to Texts</b> <b>Construct meaning from texts</b> <i>Students will</i> interpret the choices and motives of characters portrayed in oral, print and other media texts, and examine how they relate to self and others.
<b>GO 3</b>	<i>Students will</i> listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to manage ideas and information.	<b>3.3.1</b>	<b>Organize, Record and Evaluate</b> <b>Organize information</b> <i>Students will</i> organize ideas and information creatively, as well as logically, to develop a comparison or chronology, or to show a cause–effect relationship.
		<b>3.3.7</b>	<b>Organize, Record and Evaluate</b> <b>Evaluate information</b> <i>Students will</i> incorporate new information with prior knowledge and experiences to develop new understanding.

**CRITERIA for assessing student products/performances based on specific outcomes that will be evaluated**

**Task 1**

**Each student will:**

- complete a chart with options for coping or interventional strategies
- complete the chart with pros and cons for each option
- choose one option
- give reasons to support choice of option.

**Task 2**

**Each student will:**

- provide advice based on reasoning and selected facts pertaining to the chosen option
- write a letter that demonstrates empathy, is persuasive and supports the position
- use language appropriately for the sensitivity of the audience and issue
- employ correct letter format.

**Task 3**

**Each student will:**

- complete a visual representation of synthesized information
- identify issues associated with suicide
- identify suicide prevention and intervention strategies and community agencies
- organize information creatively and logically to show cause and effect and provide easily-accessible information for peers.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- 1 copy of *I Never Knew Your Name* by Sherry Garland, illustrated by Sheldon Greenberg (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1994. ISBN: 0395696860). This is a large picture book that has text on about 12 pages. It takes about 10 minutes to read through.
- handouts:
  - problem-solving chart (optional—students may create their own)
- poster paper or various other visual project supplies

## PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND INSTRUCTION

Before completing this performance assessment, students should be able to:

- analyze/recognize how thinking patterns can influence feelings (review of R–7.1)
- analyze/recognize the need for short-term and long-term support for emotional concerns (review of R–7.2)
- identify/recognize characteristics of resiliency (review of W–7.11) and apply them to a character’s situation
- discuss issues related to suicide, using vocabulary such as thinking patterns, resiliency, coping skills, interventional strategies
- identify issues associated with suicide, including motives, signs and symptoms; and be aware of suicide prevention and intervention strategies (R–8.2)
- write a personal letter of advice, employing an appropriate tone and format for the related issue
- identify with another’s feelings or situation through empathy
- access local support services for emotional concerns and suicide.

## STUDENT PRODUCTS/PERFORMANCES

### Task 1

- Problem-solving Chart

### Task 2

- Persuasive Letter

### Task 3

- Visual Representation/  
Poster

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

### TASK 1

**Title:** How Can I Help?

**Purpose:** To analyze and evaluate options available to deal with personal crises, such as contemplating, attempting or committing suicide, or dealing with the loss of someone from suicide.

**Teacher Note:**

- Read and discuss the story as a group prior to the activity, so that options are directly related to the situation faced by the characters.
- Use the problem-solving chart provided, or encourage students to create their own graphic organizer based on similar criteria, making sure they list coping or interventional strategies, pros and cons for each, the choice of one strategy and a justification for that choice.
- Explain the purpose of the chart clearly, and make sure students choose consciously whether they will respond to the narrator of the story or the boy who committed suicide.

**Assessment Activity:** In this first activity, based on *I Never Knew Your Name* by Sherry Garland, students are asked to use empathy to identify with the teenage boy's possible feelings prior to his suicide and to describe reasons for his feelings. They are also asked to consider the parallel situation of the young boy telling the story, to identify his difficulties and to empathize with his possible future and options. Based on this situation, students will independently generate possible options of coping skills or interventional strategies that either boy might have considered, and determine the pros and cons of each option. Based on the pros and cons, they must choose one option as being the best and provide written justification. This activity is done to organize for Task 2.

**Role and Audience:** Students assume the role of being a new friend to one or both boys in the story. The boy to whom they will write is the principal audience; classmates, and the teacher, become the secondary audience if and when letters are shared for revisions or assessments.

**Problem-solving Chart for Task 1: What are the Options?**

<b>Problem, sign or symptom from the story</b>	<b>Possible options for dealing with it: coping or interventional strategies</b>	<b>Pros for this option</b>	<b>Cons for this option</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			

The option I will choose as most likely to be helpful is:

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My reasons for this choice are:

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## TASK 2

### **Title: Showing How I Can Help**

**Purpose:** Students will describe the value of seeking assistance when dealing with problems and provide advice in the form of suggesting a coping or intervention strategy to a character facing a personal crisis.

**Assessment Activity:** After reviewing information gathered in Task 1, students will write a persuasive and empathetic letter giving advice to one particular character, along with specific reasons why the character should follow it and examples of how it might be accomplished.

**Role and Audience:** Students are again assuming the role of new friends of the boy to whom they are writing. The fictional character from the story becomes the primary audience. Letters could also be shared in small groups of peers, who act as consultants to evaluate the effectiveness of the suggested advice.

## TASK 3

### **Title: What Can We Do For Ourselves?**

**Purpose:** Students will identify and describe suicide prevention and intervention strategies and the community agencies available to provide emotional support. This information will be shared with the school and community via visual representations, such as informational posters.

#### **Teacher Note: Suggestions for Facilitating Task 3**

- Review the signs and symptoms of suicidal behaviour and the intervention strategies identified by students in Task 1.
- Spend some time discussing the importance of prevention and intervention, and the cause–effect relationship between using/knowing the strategies and the possible outcomes. Provide examples, using student interventions; e.g., If we follow Rani’s suggestion when a friend is in trouble, that friend may....
- Gather information as a class on locally available support services and agencies, including those within the school.

**Assessment Activity:** This last activity requires the student to create a visual representation, such as an informational poster or brochure, with a strong message on the value of seeking assistance when dealing with personal problems and indicating who, how and where to access support and assistance. The poster/brochure will be created with the purpose of displaying it in the school and/or the local community for student information.

**Role and Audience:** Students creating the posters/brochures act as themselves, for an audience of junior high school peers within their own school and the local community. Students will also need to consider the local support agencies as part of the audience, to ensure that information regarding those agencies is accurate.

# ASSESSMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

“Continual self-reflection throughout the performance assessment enables students to assess progress, identify areas of difficulty, define learning and reassess goals. Self-reflection is the key to continued, powerful learning.” *How to Develop and Use Performance Assessments in the Classroom*, p. 31.

Students should be invited to evaluate and support their own performance based on the criteria from the rubrics provided.

## **Teacher Note:**

- Provide each student with the rubric for each of the performance tasks, and then ask that each student evaluate his/her own performance. Spend adequate time discussing the criteria for each task, or create a simplified self-assessment rubric for student use.
- Student self-assessments could be discussed in an individual conference with the teacher, where student and teacher marks can be compared. Alternatively, students working in groups of two or three can be given an opportunity to review one another’s work and compare evaluations, as well as to discuss ways to improve the quality of the completed assignment tasks. This would be most appropriate for Tasks 2 and 3.

Student self- or peer-assessments and teacher assessments can be collected in a notebook or portfolio and saved to share in parent–teacher conferences.

## TASK 1 RUBRIC: PROBLEM-SOLVING CHART

Level	Description of chart
<b>4 Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies possible problems or signs/symptoms faced by one or both characters in the story</li> <li>• lists three required options with complete details for each of the problems identified</li> <li>• provides detailed reasons to support and/or negate each option (pros and cons)</li> <li>• indicates a clear choice of one best option, and provides detailed reasons for that choice</li> </ul>
<b>3 Proficient</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies a possible problem or signs/symptoms faced by one character in the story</li> <li>• lists fewer than the required number of options with details for the problem(s) identified</li> <li>• provides reasons to support and/or negate each option (pros and cons)</li> <li>• indicates a choice of one option, and provides reasons for that choice</li> </ul>
<b>2 Adequate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies a possible problem faced by one character in the story</li> <li>• lists fewer than the required number of options with incomplete details for the problem(s) identified</li> <li>• provides incomplete reasons to support and/or negate each option (pros and cons)</li> <li>• indicates a choice of one option, and provides a reason for that choice</li> </ul>
<b>1 Limited*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may or may not identify a possible problem faced by one character in the story</li> <li>• lists fewer than the required number of options with little or no details for the problem(s) identified.</li> <li>• may or may not provide pros and cons for each option</li> <li>• does not indicate a clear choice of one option or a justification</li> </ul>
<b>Insufficient/ Blank*</b>	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.

\* When work is judged as limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## TASK 2 RUBRIC: PERSUASIVE LETTER

Level	Description of letter
<b>4</b>  <b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presents excellent advice/arguments based on solid reasoning and carefully selected facts</li> <li>• strongly supports the position taken, and demonstrates empathy</li> <li>• employs use of accurate, effective and appropriate language</li> <li>• employs correct format</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>  <b>Proficient</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presents good advice/arguments based on logical reasoning and relevant facts</li> <li>• supports the position taken, and shows empathy</li> <li>• employs use of language that is clear and understandable, although there may be a few grammatical and spelling errors</li> <li>• employs correct format</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>  <b>Adequate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presents an identifiable position based on relevant facts</li> <li>• is somewhat persuasive in supporting the author's position</li> <li>• employs adequate language skills, although there may be some grammatical and spelling errors</li> <li>• employs a correct format, with few errors</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>  <b>Limited*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may state a position, but little or no attempt is made to defend it</li> <li>• is not persuasive or lacks a sense of purpose</li> <li>• employs language that is limited, and displays frequent grammatical and spelling errors</li> <li>• is incomplete or uses incorrect format</li> </ul>
<b>Insufficient/ Blank*</b>	<p>No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.</p>

- When work is judged as limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

## TASK 3 RUBRIC: VISUAL REPRESENTATION

Level	Description of poster/brochure
<b>4</b> <b>Excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies issues associated with suicide, and gives many details</li> <li>• identifies suicide prevention and intervention strategies and community agencies, giving specific details</li> <li>• communicates information effectively, through a visually and logically balanced design</li> <li>• presents information in a way that effectively encourages prevention</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> <b>Proficient</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies issues associated with suicide, and gives some details</li> <li>• identifies suicide prevention and intervention strategies and community agencies</li> <li>• communicates information clearly, through a visually pleasing design</li> <li>• presents information in a way that encourages prevention</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> <b>Adequate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifies some issues associated with suicide</li> <li>• identifies some suicide prevention and intervention strategies and community agencies</li> <li>• communicates information clearly</li> <li>• includes a message that is related to prevention</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> <b>Limited*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates limited knowledge of issues associated with suicide</li> <li>• demonstrates limited knowledge of suicide prevention and intervention strategies and community agencies</li> <li>• does not communicate all information clearly or encourage prevention</li> </ul>
<b>Insufficient/ Blank*</b>	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task.

\* When work is judged as limited or insufficient, the teacher makes decisions about appropriate intervention to help the student improve.

# LINK AND LEARN

## **Adaptations/extensions for use in other subjects or settings**

- Present visual representations orally in class—Health or Language Arts—or at a junior high school assembly.
- As an alternative to writing a persuasive letter, role-play a conversation between one of the boys from the story and a friend, using empathy skills and suggesting options for coping with the problem(s) identified.
- Coordinate the timing of this performance assessment with the Yellow Ribbon Campaign in your school.
- Ask the various support agencies identified in your area to display copies of students' posters in their offices.
- Use options generated in Task 1 to deal with problems students have identified either for themselves or for others.
- Set up a supervised peer support program in the school, providing further opportunities for students to apply their empathy skills and suggest interventional strategies to help their peers and to encourage prevention of suicidal behaviour in the school.
- Research a tragic occurrence, such as the 1999 Columbine/Taber shootings, and then analyze what happened and how it might have been avoided, using a similar procedure as that used with the story.

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