

# Torch – Classroom Lesson Plan

*Includes Virtual Author Interview*

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## Book Synopsis

Torch by Lynne Miller-Lachmann is a young adult novel told in multiple perspectives, following teens whose lives intersect with political extremism and radicalization in post-9/11 America. As characters grapple with identity, belonging, and manipulation, the novel explores how vulnerable youth can be drawn into harmful ideologies. Through nuanced storytelling, the book examines themes of propaganda, community influence, personal responsibility, and the search for meaning.

## Essential Questions

- Why are some individuals vulnerable to radicalization?
- How do propaganda and ideology shape identity?
- What role does community play in preventing extremism?

## Lesson Objective

Students will analyze how multiple perspectives develop theme and evaluate how the novel portrays radicalization, identity formation, and moral decision-making.

## Lesson Structure (60 Minutes)

- Warm-Up (5 minutes): What factors influence a person's beliefs?
- Direct Instruction (15–20 minutes): Examine narrative structure and themes of ideology. Define key terms: radicalization, propaganda, identity, influence.
- Guided Practice (15 minutes): In pairs, analyze a turning point where a character questions an ideology. Synthesis Question: How does perspective reveal manipulation?
- Independent Practice (15 minutes): Choice-based analytical or reflective response (see below).
- Exit Ticket (5 minutes): Identify one warning sign of manipulation presented in the novel.

## Independent Practice Options

- Option A: Analyze how setting influences ideological development.

- Option B: Reflect on the importance of critical thinking in media consumption.
- Option C: Write a short narrative depicting a character resisting harmful influence.

## **Creative Interpretation Option**

- Influence web mapping character connections
- Propaganda analysis poster
- Decision-making flowchart showing consequences

All creative responses must include an artist statement referencing specific textual evidence.

## **Reader Impact + Student Voice**

- How does the novel portray vulnerability and strength?
- What role does belonging play in shaping beliefs?
- How can education counter harmful ideologies?
- Why is multiple perspective important in understanding conflict?

## **Author Interview**

Author interview provided by UNBAN COOLIES.  
Visit: <http://www.youtube.com/@unbanCOOLIES>

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*Lesson materials developed in partnership with UNBAN COOLIES.*