



COUNTERATTACK

TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION GUIDE & COMMON CORE LESSONS



The **Counterattack** series follows the in-game and after-game drama of the Copperheads, an elite varsity girls' soccer team in North Carolina. From player sabotage to “performance supplements,” **Counterattack** covers the controversies on and off the field.

The Common Core State Standards divide student reading achievement goals into four areas:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

The following sets of discussion questions and prompts for each title in the **Counterattack** series are intended to support these key areas in small group discussions and in written responses.

Writing About **Counterattack**

The Common Core State Standards for Writing focuses on three types of writing:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

The following prompts for the **Counterattack** series are intended to support these key areas in written responses.

Student discussion questions for *Out of Sync*

1. Key ideas and details: Madison and Dayton begin *Out of Sync* as close friends, but they drift apart later in the story. What differences of opinion affect their friendship?
2. Craft and structure: Madison says that her “whole life is a series of letters and numbers.” Find a moment in which Madison mentions letters or numbers. What do we learn about her state of mind at that moment?
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: What choices does Dayton make throughout the book that could be harmful to her or to others?
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: Compare Madison and Dayton to another pair of friends from literature, film or TV. In what ways are these friendships similar? In what ways are they different?

Writing prompt for *Out of Sync*

1. Imagine a scene in the story as told from Dayton’s perspective rather than Madison’s. What aspects of the story does Dayton view differently?

Student discussion questions for *Archenemy*

1. Key ideas and details: When Eva reveals her true feelings to Addie, Addie experiences mixed emotions. Why does Addie decide not to return Eva’s affection?
2. Craft and structure: Addie reveals her history with Eva as the story goes on, rather than explaining everything at the start. Identify an important detail that Addie withholds at the start of *Archenemy*.
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: Identify a conflict in *Archenemy* that reflects an issue or controversy in society at large.
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: After Eva attempts to have Addie kicked off the soccer team, Addie decides she will pressure Eva to confess. She even decides to steal from Eva. Do you believe that Addie’s decision is justified? Why or why not?

Writing prompt for *Archenemy*

1. Imagine an entry in Eva’s diary. How would she describe one of the story’s key events?

● **Student discussion questions for *Offside***

1. Key ideas and details: Caitlyn is hostile to Faith throughout *Offside*, but the girls have started to understand each another by the story's end. Identify a moment in the story when their relationship changes.
2. Craft and structure: Throughout *Offside*, characters' actions have unintended effects on other people. Identify an action by Coach Berg that accidentally leads Faith to think he may have romantic feelings her.
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: Faith desires more independence while at home, yet she also wishes she fit in better with her teammates. Identify another contradiction or moment of irony within *Offside*.
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: Compare Faith to another character from literature, film or TV who is the child of a single parent. In what ways are the experiences of these characters similar? In what ways are they different?

Writing prompt for *Offside*

1. Imagine a scene in the story as told from the perspective of Caitlyn or Coach Berg. Compared to Faith, how does the character you've chosen view the scene?

● **Student discussion questions for *The Beast***

1. Key ideas and details: Alyssa changes her opinion of many people throughout *The Beast*, sometimes more than once per person. Identify one moment in which Alyssa's point of view on another character changes and explain why this change takes place.
2. Craft and structure: Alyssa refers to herself as a beast throughout the book. She also refers to her rival, Becca, as a butterfly. How does Alyssa's use of these words affect the way readers view these characters?
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: Identify a conflict in *The Beast* that reflects an issue or controversy in society at large.
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: Alyssa makes some questionable decisions throughout *The Beast*, such as hiding news of her injury from her mother and hiding Becca's jersey. In your opinion, which of Alyssa's actions are justified, and which actions go too far?

Writing prompt for *The Beast*

1. Imagine a scene in the story as told from the perspective of Becca or Ruth. Compared to Alyssa, how does the character you've chosen view the scene?

● **Student discussion questions for *Under Pressure***

1. Key ideas and details: Elise decides to use a performance-enhancing drug to improve her performance at soccer practice. Identify one of the pressures in her life that leads to the decision.
2. Craft and structure: Readers of *Under Pressure* become aware that the performance-enhancing substance is harmful to Elise before Elise realizes the danger herself. Identify a moment in the story that illustrates the drug's negative effects.
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: Think of another story in which a character uses a harmful substance. What does Elise have in common with that character? How are the characters different?
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: In your opinion, should athletes be allowed to use performance-enhancing substances if they are aware of the risks? Why or why not?

Writing prompt for *Under Pressure*

1. Imagine a scene in the story as told from the perspective of Elise's friend Sophie. What changes does Sophie detect in Elise, and how does Sophie react?

● **Student discussion questions for *Blow Out***

1. Key ideas and details: Throughout *Blow Out*, Lacy has to make decisions about the type of person she will be in the future. What changes would Lacy's mother like to see Lacy make in her life?
2. Craft and structure: By the end of *Blow Out*, Lacy has decided that she is willing to risk another injury in order to pursue her passion. Identify a moment in the story that helps lead her to this conclusion.
3. Integration of knowledge and ideas: Although Lacy and Raven are very different people, both girls struggle with the pressure put on them by parents. Identify another story in which two characters involved in a conflict are also alike in important ways.
4. Range of reading and level of text complexity: Why does Lacy avoid going directly to Coach Berg with her concern that Raven wants to injure her? Do you support this decision? Why or why not?

Writing prompt for *Blow Out*

1. Imagine a scene in the story as told from the perspective of Lacy's rival, Raven. Why is Raven hostile to Lacy? Does Raven believe that her actions are wrong?



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