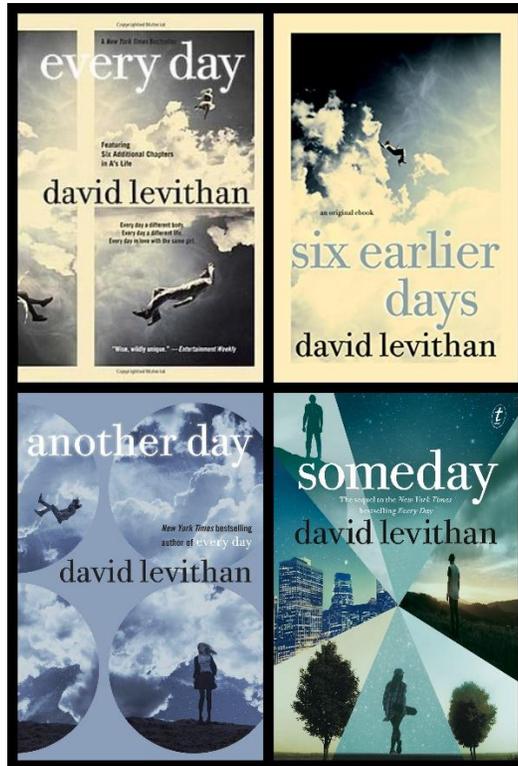


## David Levithan: Complexity in *Someday*

### Text Focus for Roundtable: *Someday*

Every Day series (2012, 2012, 2015, 2018)



***Every Day* (#1) Summary:** *Every day a different body. Every day a different life. Every day in love with the same girl. There's never any warning about where it will be or who it will be. A has made peace with that, even established guidelines by which to live: Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere.*

It's all fine until the morning that A wakes up in the body of Justin and meets Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon. From that moment, the rules by which A has been living no longer apply. Because finally A has found someone A wants to be with—day in, day out, day after day.

***Someday* (#3) Summary:** *Every day a new body. Every day a new life. Every day a new choice.*

For as long as A can remember, life has meant waking up in a different person's body every day, forced to live as that person until the day ended. A always thought there wasn't anyone else who had a life like this.

But A was wrong. There are others.

A has already been wrestling with powerful feelings of love and loneliness. Now comes an understanding of the extremes that love and loneliness can lead to — and what it's like to discover that you are not alone in the world.

In *Someday*, David Levithan takes readers further into the lives of A, Rhiannon, Nathan, and the person they may think they know as Reverend Poole, exploring more deeply the questions at the core of *Every Day* and *Another Day*: What is a soul? And what makes us human?

## David Levithan: Complexity in *Someday*

### Complexity in Young Adult Literature

In *Teaching Reading with YA Literature: Complex Text, Complex Lives* by Jennifer Buehler, Chapter 2 looks at Young Adult Literature and Text Complexity and gives 8 different elements to think about to help analyze the complexity of a text:

Complexity of Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Language</li> <li>● Structure</li> <li>● Other stylistic elements</li> </ul>
Complexity of Substance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Character</li> <li>● Setting</li> <li>● Literary devices</li> <li>● Topics and themes</li> <li>● How the book is put together</li> </ul>

### Examples of complexity in *Someday* by David Levithan

Complexity of Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Structure:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Change of point of view, all in first person                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adding points of view throughout the series</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Look at gender pronouns with A's and X's gender neutral status</li> <li>○ Time looked at by days/bodies</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Language:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "I kept thinking your name. Like when you wake up from a dream and there's only one part you can remember? That's what your name was." (3)</li> <li>○ "...a dragon with wings unfurled, the serpentine grace of Ric's tattoo with the added element of flight... it was meant to live and breathe on Manny's skin." (21)</li> <li>○ "It's like a reverse game of pinball, where the pinball stays on a straight course and it's the bumpers that move toward him." (70)</li> <li>○ "...the gods only left us this box because they wanted us to fragment ourselves, both as a society and individually, so now we're all slaves to the fragmentation and some of us take it better than others and it's not our fault that our bodies had all these circuits waiting to be blown..." (125)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Complexity of Substance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Character             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Four different points of view all who also interact with each other</li> <li>○ Look at struggles from within and outside of each character</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Setting             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Setting is a major force because A and X can only move within bodies in close proximity of each other.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Topics and themes             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Political undertones including equal rights</li> <li>○ What is death? What is life? When is killing okay? Is life always worth living?</li> <li>○ Love!</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Literary devices             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allusions to the Bible</li> <li>○ What does A's and X's journey symbolize in our lives?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● How the book is put together             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How does David Levithan entwine the four stories seamlessly?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **David Levithan: Complexity in *Someday***

### **Other questions that could be asked while reading to find complexity in YAL (Examples from *Teacher Reading with YA Literature*, Buehler 36-37)**

- *Language*: Are the sentences artfully constructed? Are the words carefully chosen? Does the author incorporate figurative language or poetic expression? Can we hear voice in the writing?
- *Structure*: How is it built in terms of form and structure? How do other elements such as titles and subtitles, vignettes and interludes, shifts between past and present, or multiple points of view work together to service the whole?
- *Other Stylistic Elements*: Are there other distinct elements in the text?
- *Character*: What is there to explore in terms of the character's thoughts and feelings; conflicts and contradictions; struggles, growth, and change?
- *Setting*: How does the author bring us into the world of the story? What details help us to see, hear, and imagine this place?
- *Literary Devices*: How does the author use literary or cultural allusions, intertextual references, dialogue, internal monologue, metaphor and symbolism, magical realism, or repetition to build meaning?
- *Topics and themes*: What questions does the book ask? What ideas does it explore? What is at stake for teen readers in this book?
- *How the book is put together*: How effective is the interplay between plot layers and thematic layers?

### **Discussion Questions/Writing Prompts for *Someday* by David Levithan**

Complexity can also be increased by the characteristics of the reader (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and task variables (such as purpose and the complexity generated by the task assigned and the questions posed). Here are some examples of discussion questions or writing prompts that could be used in classrooms or with independent readers who are reading *Someday*.

- A and X view the body, life, and identity in very different ways.
  - Do you believe X has the right to take over a body the way he does? Why or why not?
  - Is A their own person? Or does it take a body to achieve a life?
- How does David Levithan craft the different voices of his four characters in *Someday* to ensure that each character is easily identified in tone and phrasing?
- How is the idea of time dealt with in *Someday*?
- How does A and Rhiannon's relationship symbolize the idea of unattainable soul mates? What does their story teach the reader about love?
- How is Rhiannon's internal dialogue different than the external dialogue and Rhiannon that she shows the world?

Discussion guide for *Every Day* and *Another Day*:

[https://images.randomhouse.com/promo\\_image/9780385756204\\_3424.pdf](https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9780385756204_3424.pdf)

**Created by Kellee Moyer.** In addition to being a middle school reading teacher, reading coach, journalism/yearbook teacher, and Future Problem Solvers advisor, Kellee Moyer is the co-author of the blog *Unleashing Readers* ([www.unleashingreaders.com](http://www.unleashingreaders.com)), a 2015-2018 ALAN Executive board member, the chair of the 2014 Walden Book Award & the 2017 ALAN Award, and the author of a variety of teaching guides for ABRAMS Books, Chronicle Books, and Candlewick Press. Kellee also is honored to be the 2017 Teacher of the Year at her school, Hunter's Creek Middle School in Orlando, FL. Kellee can be reached at [Kellee.Moyer@gmail.com](mailto:Kellee.Moyer@gmail.com) at on Twitter [@kelleemoye](https://twitter.com/kelleemoye).