

"THE MUSICAL OF ITS GENERATION,  
FOR ALL GENERATIONS"

BBC Radio 2

YOU WILL  
BE FOUND

WAVING  
THROUGH  
A WINDOW

SINCERELY,  
ME

FOR  
FOREVER

THE OLIVIER, TONY & GRAMMY  
AWARD-WINNING BEST MUSICAL

# DEAR EVAN HANSEN

BOOK BY  
**STEVEN  
LEVENSON**

MUSIC & LYRICS BY  
**BENJ PASEK  
& JUSTIN PAUL**

## EDUCATION PACK



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# The Story



Dear Evan Hansen tells the story of a teenager with a social anxiety disorder, which inhibits his ability to connect with his peers. After the death of fellow student Connor Murphy, a series of events lead to Evan entangling himself in an unwieldy lie - that he was Connor's secret best friend.

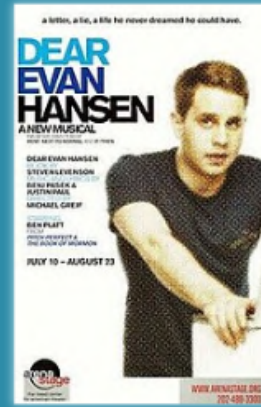
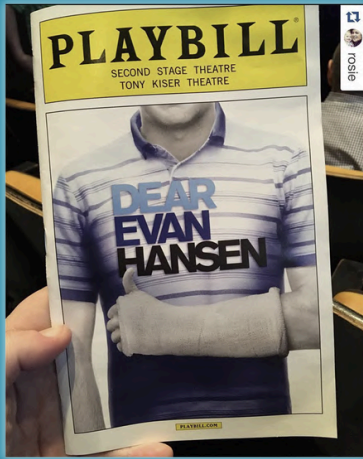
As his social currency skyrockets and Evan is thrust deeper into a web of lies, he gains everything he's ever wanted — a chance to belong. He becomes a beacon of hope for Connor's grieving family, only to witness everything unravel around him. Eventually, Evan must face a harsh truth – will he give himself over to the fantasy he's created, or will he bite the bullet and risk losing everything he's ever wanted?

*Dear Evan Hansen: Today is going to be an amazing day, and here's why. Because today, all you have to do is just be yourself. But also confident. That's important. And interesting. Easy to talk to. Approachable. But mostly be yourself. That's the big—that's number one. Be yourself. Be true to yourself.*

## INTRODUCTION

# Production history

The musical premiered in 2015, at Arena Stage Washington D.C starring Ben Platt



The show opened Off-Broadway in 2016 to Second Stage Theater, before swiftly moving over to Music Box Theatre (BROADWAY) and ran until 2022, winning **6 Tony Awards**

The West End production opened at the Noel Coward Theatre in November 2019 (winning the **Olivier Award for Best New Musical**), with Sam Tutty as Evan (he won the **Olivier Award for Best Actor in a musical**)



The musical was adapted into a feature movie for Amazon Prime in 2021, with Ben Platt reprising his role as Evan

With previous productions in Toronto (2019), Buenos Aires (2023-2024), Finland (2023), Israel (2023), the show is now set to tour the UK for the first time with a brand new production



# INTRODUCTION

# Evan Hansen

17 years old, smart, sincere and cripplingly self-conscious, Evan prefers to hover in the background. A supporting player in his own life, too afraid to step forward into the spotlight and risk ridicule or, what might be worse, no one noticing him at all.



Ryan Kopel



Sonny Monaghan

Played by **Ryan Kopel** (Newsies, Wembley Troubadour; Book of Mormon, Prince of Wales) and **Sonny Monaghan** (alternate Evan Hansen) making his professional debut.

# CHARACTERS

# Heidi Hansen

Evan's mother. Overworked and stretched too thin, Heidi loves her son fiercely, but fears they have begun to grow apart. She is prepared to do anything to repair the damage.



Played by **Alice Fearn** (Wicked, Apollo Theatre; Come From Away, Phoenix Theatre; Shrek The Musical, Theatre Royal Drury Lane).

## CHARACTERS

# Zoe Murphy

16 years old, sensitive and sophisticated, Zoe couldn't care less about the status games and popularity rites of high school. Funny and bright, she feels a terrible ambivalence about her brother's death, finding it difficult to forgive him for all he did, and forgive the part of herself that finds relief in the fact that he's gone.



Played by **Lauren Conroy** (Babies, Lyric/The Other Palace; The Sound of Music, Chichester Festival).

## CHARACTERS

# Connor Murphy

17 years old, an angry, disaffected loner, Connor has been a troubled kid for as long as anyone can remember. An enigma and a source of endless concern to his long-suffering parents and sister.



Played by **Killian Thomas Lefevre** (Bat Out of Hell, UK & International Tour; The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man, Nottingham Playhouse).

## CHARACTERS

# Cynthia Murphy

Connor and Zoe's mother. To Evan, she seems to be the perfect mother, nurturing, available and willing to talk about anything. To her own children, it's a bit more complicated.



Played by **Helen Anker** (Mamma Mia! UK & International Tour; Promises Promises, Broadway; Cats, Kilworth House).

## CHARACTERS

# Larry Murphy

Connor and Zoe's father. Though often tense and distant, Larry shows a different face to the world, representing for Evan the dad he always wished for: strong, confident and more than anything, reliable. He is someone to count on.



Played by **Richard Hurst** (The Lion King, UK & International Tour; Sunny Afternoon, UK Tour).

# CHARACTERS

# Jared Kleinman

17 years old, droll and sarcastic, Jared claims to be forced by his parents to hang out with family friend Evan, for whom he seemingly has nothing but disdain. Jared covers his own obvious insecurities with well-practiced bragging and a know-it-all arrogance.



Played by **Tom Dickerson** (Heathers, UK & Ireland Tour; The Book of Mormon, International Tour).

# CHARACTERS

# Alana Beck

Alana is 17 years old and an incredibly genuine person. Everything she does comes from a place of deep honesty and tremendous feeling. All of the characters in this musical put up masks of sorts. For Alana, it's a façade of cheerfulness. She is always ready with a smile, a note of encouragement. This hides the loneliness underneath.



Played by **Vivian Panka** (Heathers, The Other Palace; 9 to 5 The Musical, UK Tour).

# CHARACTERS

# Ensemble

The UK Tour is the first ever production of Dear Evan Hansen to include an ensemble!



Visit [evanontour.com](https://evanontour.com) to find out more about our ensemble

# CHARACTERS

## ACT I

Anybody Have a Map?  
Waving Through a Window  
For Forever  
Sincerely, Me  
Requiem  
If I Could Tell Her  
Disappear  
You Will Be Found

## ACT II

Sincerely, Me  
To Break in a Glove  
Only Us  
Good for You  
You Will Be Found  
Words Fail  
So Big/So Small  
Finale



Scan here to listen

# MUSICAL NUMBERS



**BENJ PASEK & JUSTIN PAUL**

The American song writing duo's work include **A Christmas Story, Dogfight, Edges, Dear Evan Hansen,** and **James and the Giant Peach.** Their original songs have been featured on NBC's *Smash* and in the films **La La Land,** for which they won both the **Golden Globe** and **Academy Award** for Best Original Song for the song "City of Stars", and **The Greatest Showman.** Their work on the original musical *Dear Evan Hansen* has received widespread critical acclaim and earned them the 2017 Tony Award for Best Musical and Best Original Score. In 2022, they won the **Tony Award** for Best Musical for serving as producers for the Broadway production of Michael R. Jackson's Pulitzer Prize-winning musical **A Strange Loop.**

Steven Levenson is a Tony Award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and television writer and producer. His plays include *If I Forget, Core Values, Seven Minutes In Heaven,* and *The Language of Trees.* He wrote the book for *Dear Evan Hansen.* He co-created and executive produced the FX series "*Fosse/Verdon*", which was nominated for seventeen Emmy Awards, including Best Limited Series and Best Writing for a Limited Series, as well as nominations for the Critics' Choice Association and Producers Guild Awards. This series won the Writers Guild Award and an AFI Award for Outstanding Series. He also adapted Jonathan Larson's *tick, tick...boom!*, directed by Lin-Manuel Miranda, for Netflix.

**STEVEN LEVENSON**



**ADAM PENFORD**

Artistic Director of Nottingham Playhouse, Adam Penford is the director of the first ever UK & Ireland tour of *Dear Evan Hansen.* His directorial credits for Nottingham Playhouse include: *Holes* (UK Tour), *An Enemy of the People,* *Coram Boy,* *The Madness of George III* and *Wonderland.* For the National Theatre: *A Small Family Business* (Olivier), *Dorfman Opening Gala* (Dorfman) and *Island* (Cottesloe). Revival Director on *One Man Two Guvnors* (West End, Broadway, UK and International Tour). Associate Director on *NT 50 Years on Stage.*

# CREATIVES

Steven Levenson



Steven Levenson is a celebrated playwright, and a 2017 Tony Award winner for writing the book for

*Dear Evan Hansen*.

#### ON THE ROLE OF A BOOK WRITER

In the case of the musical, as a book writer, your job in a lot of cases is to support the score and to make sure the most important moments emotionally are happening in

song. So, it's a lot of figuring out when to step out of the way, and to make sure that you've laid the ground enough — and not too much — so that those characters can make the leap into song.

#### ON CREATING A NEW MUSICAL

In a way, there's a great freedom about [creating an original work]. We are not beholden to any preexisting vision, but with that freedom comes a lot of anxiety — because we can do anything we want. That can be both freeing and terrifying. [As told to *The Washington Times*]

#### ON COLLABORATING WITH BENJ PASEK AND JUSTIN PAUL

I think the role of the book writer can be very different things. In this case, since there was no source material, it was really the three of us coming up with this idea together. We started with this idea of “connection” — people's desire and thirst and need for connection. My instinct was to create a story about someone who could not connect in a world that is all about connection and interconnectedness. What does it mean to have a protagonist who is somehow unable to connect? So slowly, *Evan* began to take shape.

It seemed like the best idea was for me to just write the story like it was a play, because we didn't have anything else to go on. So I started writing the first act. Where we had talked about possibly placing songs, I would leave space in the script. I would either have nothing or I would have a long monologue — a soliloquy, really — with a character diving into his thoughts to suggest what was happening emotionally. That's how it all started, with this first draft.

From there, Benj and Justin started writing songs, but there was a lot of back and forth and rewriting. It was an endless dialogue — two steps forward and one step back — because you are building this thing together. It's a little bit chicken and the egg. You have to be constantly making it and remaking it to accommodate one another — always in service to the story.

**ON WRITING PLAYS VERSUS MUSICALS** It's so different in so many ways. The big obvious difference is that it's collaborative from the start — and that your vision is not the only vision. It's about finding a shared vision with your collaborators. You

want to be a little bit hidden in the background at times — you want the music to be the star and the music to do the heavy lifting. So it's a lot of cutting the things you love the most, and allowing the ideas that you have or the dialogue that you've written to become a song. It's actually really amazing, though, because it feels like something that you just had in your head becomes three dimensional in a way that you could never imagine.

#### ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A CHARACTER IN THE SHOW

We knew we wanted to tell a contemporary story that's set today, and we knew that we had to somehow talk about social media. I compare it to *Bye Bye Birdie*, when they're using the telephones in “The Telephone Hour.” It's like they're not using the telephones to talk about telephones, they're using them because that's how their world functions. And if we tried to tell our story today without cell phones and social media, there would be a real inauthenticity about the show. And at the same time we wanted to be sure we're using social media as a storytelling device and we were never interested in exploring social media as a theme or as an idea. We always wanted to make sure it was grounded in the story and part of the grammar of the show. [As told to Broadway Direct]

#### ON CREATING TWO VERY DIFFERENT FAMILIES FOR DEAR EVAN HANSEN

Both families really came into focus as the story itself took shape. Larry and Cynthia Murphy, we knew, had to represent everything that Evan's own splintered family wasn't, his fantasy of what two stable and emotionally available parents might look like. As with all fantasies, Evan's rose-colored vision of the Murphys turns out to have a tenuous relationship to the reality underneath, but that discovery will only come later for him. In contrast to this ostensibly perfect family, Evan's mother, Heidi Hansen, strives to be what her son needs her to be, but everything she does seems only to push him further away. The most important thing for us, in creating these characters, was to present them honestly and without judgment: three parents striving in their own flawed and imperfect way to do what's best for their children.

#### Original Source Material:

DiLella, Frank. “*Dear Evan Hansen: A Contemporary Musical for All Ages.*” BroadwayDirect.com, November 1, 2016.

Leslie, Emily. “*Levenson's Dear Evan Hansen Opens at Arena Stage.*” *The Washington Times*, July 7, 2015.

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**STEVEN LEVENSON** (*Book*) Author of *The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin* (Roundabout Theatre Company, Outer Critics Circle Award), *Core Values* (Ars Nova, Drama Desk nomination), *Seven Minutes in Heaven* (Colt Coeur), *The Language of Trees* (Roundabout), and the book for *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage; Obie, Outer Critics Circle Awards for Best Musical and Best Book of a Musical; Arena Stage, Helen Hayes Award). His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service and Playscripts. A graduate of Brown University and former artist in residence at Ars Nova, he is a founding member of Colt Coeur and an alumnus of MCC's Playwrights Coalition.

# IN CONVERSATION WITH STEVEN LEVENSON

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul



This Tony Award-winning pair have worked together as a dynamic musical duo since their college days — a partnership that has taken them to Broadway, Hollywood, and beyond. At the same time that they were developing *Dear Evan Hansen*, Pasek and Paul were also writing lyrics for the award-winning film *La La Land*, which earned them a Golden Globe® and Academy Award® for Best Original Song.

**BP:** My mom created a bunch of kids' albums where she would document whatever we were doing growing up and she would turn those moments into songs. She had a children's music group in our local area of Philadelphia. So I grew up just witnessing my mom, who's a psychologist — not a professional musician — turning life moments into song. That's essentially what we do every day, when we try to create theater. Watching her interpret things that were happening in the world, or in my world as a kid, and setting them to music — I think that really sparked an interest in writing and creating and interpreting life moments into song lyrics. [As told to Metro Weekly]

Here, the two talk about how their collaboration began and how they brought their original musical to life.

### How did you become a composing team?

**BP:** We both went to the University of Michigan for musical theater. We went there to be actors. For a lot of people who love the theater, when you're young, acting is your way in. But halfway through school we realized maybe we're not cut out to be performers.... After many failed attempts to get good roles in our school shows, we saw the writing on the wall and thought, "Why don't we write our own show, and see what we can make of that?" [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

**JP:** We just started doing it for fun. We were freshmen in college when we began tinkering. It was fun to develop songs thinking from characters' perspectives. We decided to string some of these songs together and make a song cycle our sophomore year.

People were receptive. I think before we even knew what was happening we had begun a collaboration. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

### What role did music play in your childhood?

**JP:** I grew up in a pretty musical household. Neither of my parents are professional musicians, but they're very, very musical. My dad and my mom would sit down and play the piano. I grew up playing a lot of music in church, and singing with my parents. I started taking piano lessons when I was 7. So they were always very encouraging and they knew that I had a love for it and a knack for it. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

In addition to being a performer, I always wanted to be in the pit orchestra, playing piano or percussion. I always saw myself being involved on the musical side of things in musical theater. I just figured it would be interpreting and teaching and working out other people's music. I hadn't really planned on it being my own music. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen with Rachel Bay Jones as Heidi Hansen, his mother (Original Broadway Cast).

### Facebook and YouTube were instrumental in circulating your early music. Can you elaborate on the role the Internet played in launching your career?

**JP:** For us, in terms of songwriting, having our stuff out online was a huge way to be able to connect with people, and musical theater fans all over the country and all over the world, in a way that couldn't have happened 20 years ago. People knew our songs and knew our music before we ever had a show in New York City.

**BP:** In terms of our careers, I think we were in the right place at the right time, and started writing songs at the right time. We were in college in 2005 and that was a year after Facebook began. And the year that YouTube began. And I think that really changed the way that people had access to new material.

**BP:** Before that, shows needed to exist in New York — you needed at least an Off-Off-Broadway production to spread the word. What was so revolutionary about Facebook and YouTube was this democratization of who could have access to putting stuff online, and being able to see it right away. So, you could be in Iowa or Singapore and you could see your content immediately without having to go to New York. And as

# COMPOSING WITH PASEK & PAUL

writers, we didn't have to go through any traditional means of getting it out there [through agents or producers] — we just put it online. [As told to TCG]

### **Tell us a bit about how the idea for Dear Evan Hansen originated. I understand that it was born out of your own high school experience.**

BP: There was a student who was sort of anonymous. He died of a drug overdose, and it was sort of unclear whether it was intentional or not. After he passed away the student body became very, very close to him. Everybody sort of claimed him as their best friend after he died, and began to write their college essays about him, and began to talk about how amazing he was and how important he was in their lives. [As told to Metro Weekly]

When Justin and I met in college, and we began to write musicals, this moment from my high school days continued to be fascinating. We talked about exploring it in a musical. Since then, we've brought up a lot of other themes that we wanted to talk about — there's sort of a need to connect, the need to be part of a community, the need to be a part of something larger than yourself, especially in the digital, isolated age that we now find ourselves in. We began to explore how we could take those themes and turn them into a musical. And that's when the amazing Steven Levenson came into the picture and helped us to churn our ideas into an actual plot. [As told to Metro Weekly]

JP: We noticed certain things about our culture ... some things that were fascinating about the modern response to tragedy and loss. We became very interested in the world's response to loss. And how people grieve and also communicate in the era of social media.

JP: It made us think about our desire to connect, and our desire to be a part of something larger than ourselves. Despite our great connectedness through Facebook and Twitter and all of these social media platforms, despite being as connected as we've ever been as a society ...

BP: We're more isolated than ever. All of us, teenagers and adults alike.

JP: And so we wanted to use that as the backdrop of our story, but we're telling it through the specific story of a family. This family is looking for that kind of connection, and in losing someone they love, they try to fill that void.

### **Can you talk a bit about the character of Evan Hansen? He is a risky, unusual protagonist.**

JP: It's definitely an unusual one in that he's riddled with issues and anxieties, and with lots of self-esteem issues and a lot of other things. But I think that's what makes him very accessible and identifiable and relatable. Hopefully everyone can go and see the show and see a little bit of Evan in themselves, and feel like they can connect with him, or at least connect with the situations that he finds himself in — he doesn't know the right thing to say to people, or how to fit into a conversation, or how to be himself and not try to create or embellish a story about himself that is better than what he thinks his real life is. It's a different sort of character and maybe not your typical musical theater leading man, but that's definitely what we were hoping to write — a contemporary and relevant and accessible character. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

**BP:** Traditionally, in Musical Theater 101, you learn to try to write a protagonist who people like and root for on their journey. In *Dear Evan Hansen*, we have a protagonist who does things that are really morally questionable. It's our jobs as writers to try to get the audience to identify with him and to support why he does what he does. We wanted to try to create a character who was more complex — and more nuanced — than maybe more traditional musical theater characters. We'll let critics and audiences be the judge of whether or not we have succeeded or failed. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

**Original Source Material:** Rule, Doug. **“Perfectly Composed: Pasek and Paul are the future of the American musical.”** MetroWeekly.com, August 13, 2015.

# ACTIVITY

## WRITE TO INSPIRE

### THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

At the beginning of the show, Evan has an assignment: to write an inspirational letter to himself.

“Dear Evan Hansen, Today is going to be a great day and here’s why ...” Much has been written about the power of positive thinking, the benefits of an optimistic outlook, and the value of self pep talks. Together these techniques can:

- Relieve stress and anxiety
- Reshape attitudes
- Increase self-esteem
- Influence behavior
- Impact goal achievement
- Improve overall health

#### WRITE:

Write an inspirational letter to yourself.

Dear me,

“This is going to be a great [day/week/year] and here’s why ...”  
What are you most looking forward to? What, if anything, do you hope to achieve? What are the challenges you might face? How will you work to overcome those hurdles?



### LITERARY COMPARISONS

#### OUTSIDERS

Literature, both classic and contemporary, is filled with “outsiders” — characters who, like Evan, feel isolated and struggle to connect. Although each character has his/ her own unique backstory and challenges, one can find commonalities between them.

#### WRITE:

Choose an “outsider” from another book you have read or are currently reading. Write a comparative essay showing the similarities and differences between that character and Evan. How do their emotions/choices/journeys parallel one another and where do they diverge? What impact does each have on other characters in their respective stories?

Some suggested character comparisons.

- Laura from *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams
- Holden Caulfield from *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- Charlie from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- Christopher from *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- Oscar from *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz
- Eleanor from *Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell
- Aza Holmes in *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green
- Greg Gaines from *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews

#### FLAWED HERO/DECEPTION

Evan is a flawed hero. As a class, discuss the characteristics of a flawed hero. How does the presence of a flawed hero serve the overall storytelling of a fictional work? Why is it important for protagonists to have character flaws? How do authors go about creating protagonists who are likable despite their flaws? Many times, flawed heroes — like Evan — lie to gain status with others and/or a sense of belonging. Sometimes these lies stem from uncorrected misconceptions or omissions of the truth and grow into greater deceptions. This convention appears not only in literature but also many modern-day films.

#### WRITE:

Choose a book/movie you have recently read/seen in which lying/deception is a central theme. Compare it to *Dear Evan Hansen*. How does the lie begin? What are the character’s motives and what are results?

Some suggested character comparisons.

- Gatsby from *The Great Gatsby*
- Tom from *The Talented Mr. Ripley*
- Huck from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- Olive from *Easy A*

# ACTIVITY

## ANALYZE CHOICES

### MAKING CHOICES

Every protagonist makes choices that inform his or her journey — and sometimes the journey of others. Some are proactive choices, others reactive. Some are carefully considered, others impulsive. Some are clear cut, but more often than not, debatable.

#### DISCUSS:

Discuss Evan’s choices throughout the musical and in particular his decision to lie to the Murphy family about having known Connor. How does the lie begin? How does it change? What is Evan’s motivation? How does his choice impact the Murphys? Evan’s mom? His fellow students? What are the outcomes — both positive and negative? What do you think of Evan’s choice?

#### WRITE:

##### Persuasive Essay:

Is it ever OK to tell a lie?

From a young age, children are taught the negative implications of lying, but as we grow, sometimes our

perspectives shift. We learn that the morality of lying is not always black and white and that perhaps there might be times when it is acceptable — maybe even appropriate — to lie.

Drawing from scenarios in your own life, historical events, or Evan’s experience, take a position and make your case. Consider every angle. What might be the benefits and the ramifications? Consider short- and long-term implications.

**Perspective:** Look at it from the other side.

How does it feel to be on the receiving end of a lie? How might each member of the Murphy family feel about what Evan has done? And how about Evan’s mom and the added lies he has told her?

Choose a supporting character from the musical. Write a journal entry (or song, if you are feeling ambitious!) in his/her voice, conveying his/her emotions once Evan has revealed the truth.



The original Broadway company of *Dear Evan Hansen*.

# ACTIVITY

## CONSIDER MUSIC



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen, Will Roland as Jared Kleinman, Mike Faist as Connor Murphy (from left) (Original Broadway Cast)

## MUSIC

### Reinvention: Shaping your own personal narrative

In *Dear Evan Hansen*, Evan — with the help of his friend Jared — “reinvents” Connor through a series of fictitious emails detailing their “friendship.” Through this imagined friendship, Evan also begins to reinvent himself. Together in “Sincerely Me” they sing:

“CAUSE ALL THAT IT TAKES IS A LITTLE REINVENTION  
IT’S EASY TO CHANGE IF YOU GIVE IT YOUR ATTENTION  
ALL YOU GOTTA DO  
IS JUST BELIEVE YOU CAN BE WHO YOU WANNA BE  
SINCERELY, ME”

### DISCUSS:

Do you think it is possible to “reinvent” yourself — either how you perceive yourself or how others perceive you? How can believing in yourself help to shape your personal narrative?

# ACTIVITY

## REFLECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### THE DIGITAL EFFECT

#### Social Media: Catalyst and Accelerator

It happens every day in our modern world. We post a photo, a video, or a “newsworthy” event to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and within seconds the “likes” come pouring in, followed by dozens of comments and countless re-tweets and shares. Within minutes these numbers can multiply and within hours they can explode. Before we know it, that story is trending.

The speed at which information can spread over the Internet is undeniable.

#### WRITE:

Write an essay discussing the positive and negative implications of this catalytic impact. How can social media be used to control the flow of information/mobilize events/shape perceptions and alternatively how can it spin out of control — taking on a life of its own? Draw from examples in *Dear Evan Hansen*, your daily life, and the world at large.

#### Your online self: Is it the real you?

Some might say that social media sites offer them a place to share more of themselves than they might feel comfortable sharing in real life (IRL). Others might feel pressure to curate the most perfect version of themselves since it’s so publicly on display.

**DISCUSS:** How do you feel? Is the persona you project through social media the real you? Why or why not? Do you behave differently on different forms of social media? Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram — and how about on your Finsta account?



Ben Platt with Jennifer Laura Thompson and Michael Park as Mrs. and Mr. Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

For Common Core State Standards see page 33.

#### A MESSAGE FROM ALIZA WEINBERGER, AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

M

#### ASSISTANT AT MASHABLE

There’s a moment near the beginning of *Dear Evan Hansen* when Alana reprises a few lines of “Waving Through a Window,” tapping on the screen of her phone. The first time I saw the show, I immediately fell in love with that song. But seeing Alana’s moment hit me hard. I’ve often been that person staring into my phone or my laptop screen, wondering if anyone is listening and convinced no one is. That’s why I, like so many others, obsess over the number of likes I get on any given post. That social media engagement validation is quantifiable, immediate, and compelling.

It’s even harder to ignore since getting online engagement is now my job. I’m a digital content marketer, a job that didn’t exist when I was in high school, and I’ve been trained to know all the ways to get as many likes online as possible. Because of that, I know how arbitrary those likes can be. And just like Evan’s viral speech, what goes online is rarely the full story.

The Internet is a complex place. Terrible things can happen there, like bullying, no privacy, and miscommunication. You can waste so much time scrolling through other people’s Instagram photos or swiping through Snapchat stories and imagining their lives are better than yours. But the Internet is also pretty amazing. I wouldn’t work with it otherwise. You can connect with people around the world, finding new friends you’d never have met. You can learn almost anything, and you can never really be bored. It can be a real force for good, when channeled the right way. The fans who contributed to #YouWillBeFound are proof of that.

Spending my work days glued to my screens has made me take a hard look at how social media impacts my life, the good and the bad. People talk about not wanting to bring their work home, but I always seem to have my personal accounts open when I’m out with friends or see something Snapchat-worthy while out and about. Unplugging is hard, but it’s a good idea. Taking the time to breathe and reevaluate, to remember what you love about your social media and what you want to come back to, is a great idea. Evan would take a break to hang around some trees, whereas I prefer taking walks around New York or reading a book. No matter what you do, screen-free time doesn’t need to be a punishment or a chore.

The Internet, and social media, is a tool; it’s not good or bad. But what you do there can be either. It helps to take a step back and see. Stop waving through that window and stop to decide if you really wanted that view in the first place.

# ACTIVITY

## COMPARE MUSIC & LYRICS

### MUSIC/LYRICS

What role do the songs play in a musical?

Songs have a dramatic function that are an integral part of the storytelling: They help to develop character and/or move the action of the plot forward.

In musicals, it is a general rule that characters break into song when the emotional stakes have become so high

that ordinary speech fails them. Through their songs, the characters can reveal their innermost thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams, grapple with difficult decisions, and come to important realizations about themselves. Musical theater lyrics use many poetic devices, including rhythm, rhyme, repetition, figurative language, symbolism, and metaphor.

### LYRIC ANALYSIS

#### WRITE:

Read the lyrics of “Waving Through a Window.” Write an essay exploring how Pasek and Paul use figurative language to reinforce the isolation and insecurity that Evan feels at the beginning of the musical.

#### WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW

I'VE LEARNED TO SLAM ON THE BRAKE  
BEFORE I EVEN TURN THE KEY  
BEFORE I MAKE THE MISTAKE  
BEFORE I LEAD WITH THE WORST OF ME  
GIVE THEM NO REASON TO STARE  
NO SLIPPIN' UP IF YOU SLIP AWAY  
SO I GO NOTHIN' TO SHARE  
NO, I GOT NOTHIN' TO SAY  
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN  
IF YOU KEEP GETTIN' BURNED  
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN  
BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED, BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED  
ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN  
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?  
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW  
I TRY TO SPEAK BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR  
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR  
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE PASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW  
OH  
CAN ANYBODY SEE?  
IS ANYBODY WAVING BACK AT ME?

WE START WITH STARS IN OUR EYES  
WE START BELIEVIN' THAT WE BELONG  
BUT EV'RY SUN DOESN'T RISE  
AND NO ONE TELLS YOU WHERE YOU WENT WRONG  
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN  
IF YOU KEEP GETTIN' BURNED  
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN  
BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED, BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED

ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN  
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?  
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW I TRY TO SPEAK  
BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR  
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR  
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE  
PASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW  
OH  
CAN ANYBODY SEE?  
IS ANYBODY WAVING...?  
WHEN YOU'RE FALLIN' IN A FOREST  
AND THERE'S NOBODY AROUND  
DO YOU EVER REALLY CRASH  
OR EVEN MAKE A SOUND? (4X)  
DID I EVEN MAKE A SOUND?  
DID I EVEN MAKE A SOUND?  
IT'S LIKE I NEVER MADE A SOUND  
WILL I EVER MAKE A SOUND?  
ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN  
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?  
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW I TRY TO SPEAK  
BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR  
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR  
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE  
PASS  
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW  
OH  
CAN ANYBODY SEE?  
IS ANYBODY WAVING BACK AT ME?  
IS ANYBODY WAVING  
WAVING  
WAVING  
OH OH

# ACTIVITY

## EXAMINE SONGS

### CHARACTER JOURNEY: COMPARING “WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW” AND “YOU WILL BE FOUND”

#### WRITE:

Examine the first stanza/chorus of “You Will Be Found,” the finale to Act 1, and compare the lyrics to those in “Waving Through a Window.” Has Evan changed? If so, how? How do Pasek and Paul use the continuity of metaphors and symbolism to show Evan’s emotional journey throughout the first act of the musical? Consider the audiences of each song — to whom is Evan singing?

#### YOU WILL BE FOUND

(First stanza and chorus)

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE NOBODY WAS THERE?  
HAVE YOU EVER FELT FORGOTTEN IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?  
HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU COULD DISAPPEAR?  
LIKE YOU COULD FALL, AND NO ONE WOULD HEAR

SO MAYBE LET THAT FEELING WASH AWAY  
MAYBE THERE’S A REASON TO BELIEVE YOU’LL BE OK  
’CAUSE WHEN YOU DON’T FEEL STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND  
YOU CAN REACH, REACH OUT YOUR HAND

OH, SOMEONE WILL COME RUNNIN’  
AND I KNOW THEY’LL TAKE YOU HOME

EVEN WHEN THE DARK COMES CRASHIN’ THROUGH  
WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND TO CARRY YOU  
AND WHEN YOU’RE BROKEN ON THE GROUND  
YOU WILL BE FOUND  
SO LET THE SUN COME STREAMIN’ IN  
’CAUSE YOU’LL REACH UP AND YOU’LL RISE AGAIN  
LIFT YOUR HEAD AND LOOK AROUND  
YOU WILL BE FOUND

YOU WILL BE FOUND  
YOU WILL BE FOUND  
YOU WILL BE FOUND  
YOU WILL BE FOUND



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen (Original Broadway Cast)

# ACTIVITY

## DISCUSS SCENE DIALOGUE

### honesty

- a : fairness and straightforwardness of conduct  
b : adherence to the facts : sincerity

Review the final conversation between Evan and Connor at the end of the second act.

### DISCUSS:

What dramatic conceit does book writer Steven Levenson use to present this conflict? What does this conversation reveal to us?



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen, and Laura Dreyfuss as Zoe Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

### Scene begins

*Evan, alone.*

EVAN

I'm not doing this. I'm done.

CONNOR

You can't just stop now.

*And Connor is there.*

EVAN

I don't think I can live with this anymore.

CONNOR

What about my parents?

EVAN

No more emails.

CONNOR

How can you do this to them?

EVAN

No more Connor Project. No more orchard.

CONNOR

After everything they've done for you? They need you.

EVAN

Need me for what? To keep lying to them?

CONNOR

That lie is the only thing that's keeping them together.

EVAN

That's not true.

CONNOR

Oh really? They seemed like a pretty happy family when you met them?

EVAN

I don't want to lie anymore.

CONNOR

And what about Zoe?

EVAN

Zoe said, she just ... she wants me.

CONNOR

Right.

EVAN

She likes me for who I am.

CONNOR

Except you didn't happen to mention that everything you've told her, it's all been one big fucking lie, did you?

*Evan says nothing.*

Oh. You left that part out.

EVAN

So then, what if ... what if I did tell her the truth?

CONNOR

She'll hate you.

EVAN

Maybe she would understand. Maybe everyone would understand.

CONNOR

Everyone will hate you.

# THE MIX

The Dear Evan Hansen UK Tour is partnering with @themixuk, the UK's leading digital charity for under 25-year-olds. The show deals with sensitive topics relevant to young people and this partnership will ensure that anyone affected by the issues in the show knows where to find support.

"We are incredibly excited about this partnership and the positive impact it will have on the young community.

By working together, we can make a real difference in providing the tools and support young people need to navigate their lives confidently."

Zoe Bailie  
Deputy CEO, The Mix

DEAR EVAN HANSEN THE MIX



The Mix will provide training to the cast and creative team on how to appropriately respond to queries from the public, both online and offline, and equip them with the knowledge to direct individuals to the right support channels. The partnership also aims to create engaging and informative content to help elevate and empower young people at a time when they need it most. This will include resources and tips on essential life skills for transitioning into adulthood.

# THE MIX

# CHARITY PARTNERSHIP