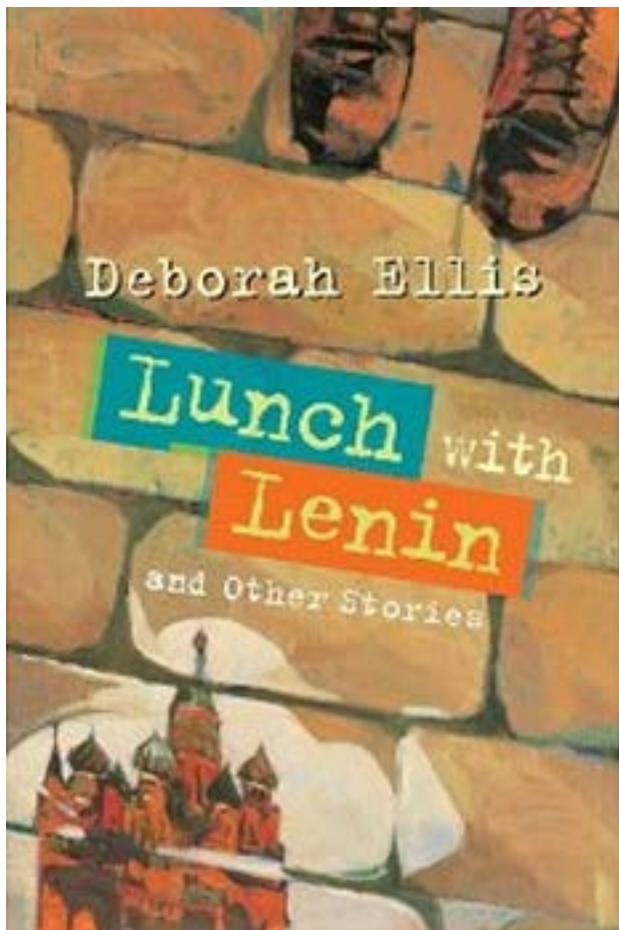

Teacher Tips: Using *Lunch with Lenin* for Drug Education



In *Lunch with Lenin and Other Stories*, award-winning author Deborah Ellis has provided an incredible resource for drug education. Harrowing, inspiring, and often surprising, these ten stories explore the lives of teens affected by drugs in settings as diverse as northern Canada, small town America, and a rural farm in Afghanistan.

The Grade 9 *iMinds* module (carbc.ca/Portals/0/School/iMinds/G9Module.pdf) uses this text to explore and develop drug literacy in the context of studying English literature.

The following three learning activities can be used in a wide variety of other learning environments.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Refer to *iMinds* Grade 9, Lesson 3, and follow the read-stop-imagine instructions in the opening exercise involving the short story called *Lunch with Lenin*.
- Or, you could use any of the other stories in the collection in a similar way. You would need to identify “stop points” in the story you choose.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT’S THE RELATIONSHIP?

- Allow students to choose a story to read. Ask them to identify and record the ways in which they empathize/sympathize with the main character’s dilemma and circumstances (and/or the ways in which their lives differ). You might have them use a Venn diagram like the one in *iMinds* Grade 9, Lesson 2 to record their observations.

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- Or, pick a story set in a country your class is interested in or is currently studying (e.g., Russia, Afghanistan, Canada). Ask students to read it (or read it aloud to the class) and discuss how the experience of drugs in the story may be culturally or historically significant.

ACTIVITY 3: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Pick three stories united by substance, region and/or theme (e.g., *The Dark Side of Nixon*, *Prodigal* and *Another Night in Disneyland* involve alcohol use and are set in North America; *Pretty Flowers*, *Dancing with Beads* and *The Cactus People* have at their core poverty and remnants of imperialism.)

- Ask students to read all three stories and compare and contrast them in interesting ways (e.g., individual factors, social factors and environmental factors). A Venn diagram might be one way for students to report their observations.

Or, break the class into groups, assign each group one story, and have them read and discuss the story in terms of the various factors that influenced the drug use represented in the story. Then, have students form new groups of three, each having read a different story, and ask them to share summaries and record similarities and differences in the main character's personality, social circumstances and environment. As a class, reflect on how different circumstances may affect the impact of drug use.