

Study Guide Questions for *Speak* (First Marking Period)

1. Explain Melinda's most significant conflict in "First Marking Period." Give at least two examples of how it affects her life at school.
2. Who are Rachel and Heather? How does each feature in Melinda's life? How does Melinda view each of them?
3. What happens to Melinda in the lunch room? How does this affect her, possibly for the entire year?
4. Explain what Melinda means when she says, "my room belongs to an alien." (p. 15)
5. In what way does Melinda identify her teachers? Does she identify all of them this way? If not, how so?
6. How does Melinda communicate with her parents? Give at least two examples. What is her overall opinion of her parents?
7. Explain what the narrator feels is *ironic* about the cheerleaders at her school.
8. How does Nicole fit into Melinda's life? (Look at the description of gym class.)

9. What assignment does Mr. Freeman give his students? At first, Melinda thinks this assignment is too easy. How does it change over time?

10. Why does Melinda spend so much time and effort fixing up her “sanctuary”? Describe it in detail. What is Melinda’s purpose in having a “sanctuary”?

11. Why does Heather want to join five clubs? What are her goals for freshman year? Does Melinda share these goals? Why?

12. Why won’t Melinda’s friends talk to her anymore? Why is everyone so mad at her?

13. At the Homecoming Pep Rally, the reader finds out why Melinda has become “Outcast.” What happened?

14. Would you describe Melinda as a leader, a follower or something else? Give at least two examples to support your claim.

15. How does the *protagonist* react when her parents tell her she can’t go trick-or-treating?

16. Between the pep rally and the time Melinda spends at Heather’s house, what insights into the Melinda-Heather friendship does the reader get?

17. Who are “The Marthas”? What are they like? How does this affect Melinda’s friendship with Heather?
18. Identify at least one *theme* or *symbol* used in “First Marking Period.” Give at least two examples of that *theme* or *symbol* in use. How does this add to the story?
19. In science class, Melinda is paired with David Petrakis. What do they have in common? Describe their relationship.
20. At the end of “First Marking Period,” IT appears. Who or what is IT? Why does IT make Melinda so upset?

