

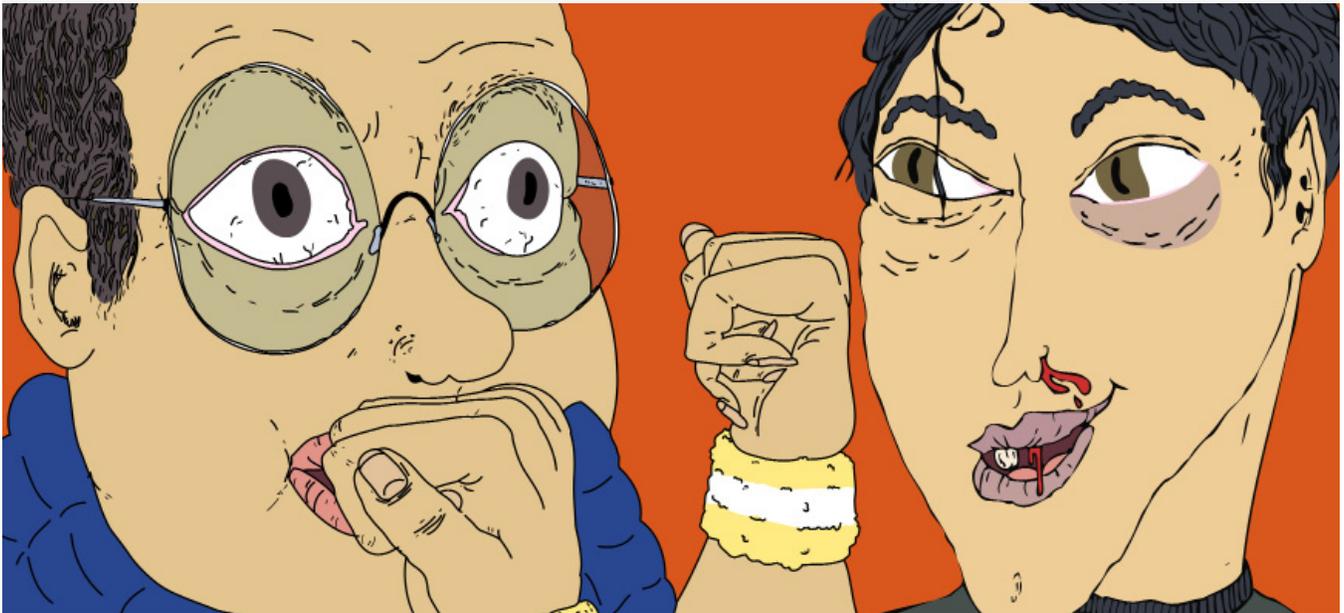
# Creases

by **Chiwan Choi**

Illustrated by **Maddie Saunders**

Curriculum developed by **Rosalind Helfand**

Supplementary Curriculum and Copy Editing by **Léna Garcia**



## OVERVIEW

### Quick Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

Student Population	
Age/Grade Level Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages 16 and up</li> <li>• Grades 10 and up</li> </ul>
Genre/s	Fiction, coming of age
Length	1,100 words
Content Advisories	References to sex, alcoholism, gang activity, and drug use. Some explicit language.
One Sentence Summary	As two young men bound by friendship, experience, and violence drive the nighttime streets of South Los Angeles together, one muses upon the past, present, and future events that connect them.

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<p><b>Topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boyhood</li> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Masculinity</li> </ul> <p><b>Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming of age</li> <li>• The bad seed</li> <li>• Life's twists and turns</li> <li>• On a roller coaster to doom</li> <li>• Loyalty in friendship</li> <li>• Forgiveness</li> </ul>
Historic Events / Time Periods for Study	The year 2000 and the beginning of the new millennium in Los Angeles.
Complementary Classic and Historic Texts	<i>A Separate Peace</i> , by John Knowles
Author and Artists Information	<p><b>Chiwan Choi</b> lives in LA and is a founding partner of Writ Large Press.</p> <p><b>Maddie Saunders</b> lives in Glendale and teaches at ArtCenter College of Design.</p>

Lesson Planning	
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

## Author Biography

**Chiwan Choi** is the author of two collections of poetry, *The Flood* (Tía Chucha Press, 2010) and *Abductions* (Writ Large Press, 2012). His most recent project was *Ghostmaker*, a book he wrote, presented, and destroyed in 2015. He is currently working on *The City is My Book*, a novel to be written on a series of utility boxes in downtown LA, and a new untitled collection to be published by CCM-Entropy in 2017. Chiwan is also one of the founding partners of Writ Large Press, an indie publisher that uses the book to resist, disrupt, and transgress.

## Artist Biography

**Maddie Saunders** is currently enrolled full time as a student at ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, where she is also a teaching assistant. She has participated in numerous gallery shows around LA over the last few years. Her wacky sense of humor can be seen in the illustrations she creates. She lives in Glendale.

## SYNOPSIS

As two young men drive the nighttime streets of South LA, one thinks about the other and the experiences, good and bad, that bind them. The story dips into their past, present, and future, weaving a layered musing that ranges from the fight that brought them together to the violent and vulnerable moments that would mar their lives and shadow them with despair to the joy and camaraderie of the present moment. This short-fiction piece explores the nature of love and friendship and the strange beauty of those carefree, happy moments that dissolve in the face of time and the choices that shape us, for better or for worse.

## CURRICULUM

### Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

#### Topic

Why do we have best friends? Do you have a best friend? In your journal, write about how you met your best friend or a time when you made a good friend.

#### Main Ideas

You're 90 years old and looking back at this time in your life. Which moments do you remember the most vividly? Why? Write about them in your journal.

#### Passage-Specific Themes

Read the following excerpt from *Creases*:

“...trying to find the meaning of what we have done to each other in the name of respect, of manhood.”

Without having read the story, speculate in your journal about what this line might mean or refer to.

#### Universal Themes

Does everyone deserve a second chance? Why or why not. Discuss.

### Key Vocabulary

Definitions are very context-dependent. Make sure that any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
arc	beloved	Glock 9
buzzed	cum	rock (as in crack cocaine)
pressure	contorted	soju
intersection	in spite of	juvie

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
trophy	enormity	polyester
ruin	respective	menthol
character	lodge (as in stuck)	cocaine
pavement	clammy	Koreatown (in LA)
tumbling	expires	
reflect	increments	
windbreaker	manhood	
rustling	creases	
grumbling		
accent (as in emphasis)		
lumpy		
gestures		

## Vocabulary Activity Options

- Where does the term “clammy” come from? Research and write about the history of this term and how it came to be used to refer to sweaty hands.
- Think about the different types of silences that humans experience. Write a list of those silences, and then identify the kind of silence experienced by the narrator and his friend. Discuss your ideas with the class. Analyze what the narrator means by “accent” when he says, “the grumbling engine of the truck putting an accent on our silence.”  
**Extension:** Discuss in class what it means to be comfortable or uncomfortable with silence. What is an uncomfortable silence? What is the value of being comfortable with silence? Ask the students to then reflect in their journals about their own levels of comfort or discomfort with social and other silences. If time allows, make a trip to a library and practice being silent. Debrief about the experience afterwards.
- What are creases? What do you think is meant by the “creases of Crenshaw” in the context of this story? What is meant by “the small gestures of midnight” in the context of this story? Discuss each with your class.

## Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. How would you characterize the narrator’s friendship? Is it a recipe for disaster as his friend’s father warned?

2. Do you think that some or our friends can influence our behavior more—for better or for worse—than can others? Why or why not? Given that friends can influence our behavior, what are the upsides and the downsides to having a close friend?

## Text-Dependent Question Options

1. Under what circumstances did the narrator and his friend first meet?
2. Do the narrator and his friend care about one another? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. How does the narrator describe the principal of the school where the boys met? How does the description make the reader feel about the principal?
4. What clues does the narrator give throughout the story to relate what kind of person his friend is? Identify these clues. After analyzing them together, write a character profile of the narrator’s friend.

**Part Two:** Identify clues that reveal what kind of person the narrator of the story is. Analyze these clues and discuss the narrator’s personality. Did the author use direct or indirect characterization to reveal the narrator’s personality?

5. What moment in the story did the artist choose to illustrate? Do you think the illustration fully conveys the emotions and tension of that moment? Why or why not?
6. The narrator says about his friend, “There is still a heart attack inside him about to awaken on the sunniest day of the year.” Is this a literal or figurative statement? Explore arguments in favor of both possibilities.
7. What does it mean to be masculine in our society and culture? What is the role and function of masculinity in this story? Cite examples from the text to backup your response.  
**Part Two:** Read the following excerpt from the story: *“However, as Jodi was running toward the office to tell of our fight, the sight of her backside and the faded circles on each cheek of her stretch Jordache jeans made my breath lodge up at the top of my brain as we both went tumbling to the ground.”* How does this moment and the discussion of Jodi make you feel? Why do you think the author chose to include it? Do you think everyone in the class would agree with your reaction to this moment? Why or why not?

## Writing Exercise Options

### Narrative

Write a short-fiction story about a friendship between two people. How do they meet? What experiences cemented their friendship? Has the friendship lasted?

In *Creases*, the story takes place in a car—and in the memories of the narrator. Choose a specific setting for your friendship story.

### **Descriptive**

Describe someone you care about. Don't just describe them physically, describe the events and the moments you've shared with them that help to define your relationship.

### **Analysis**

In *Creases*, the narrator sings “C-c-c-c-cocaine,” a line from the song “Feel Good Hit Of The Summer” by the band Queens of the Stone Age. Listen to the song on YouTube. What is the mood and tone of the song? How is a similar mood and tone evident in the story?

Write a short essay responding to the questions above.

## **Complementary Reading Text Option**

*A Separate Peace*, by John Knowles

### **Writing Exercise**

Write an essay comparing and contrasting the friendships in *A Separate Peace* and *Creases*. What struggles and emotions experienced by the narrators of the two stories are similar and different from one another?

## **Activity Options**

### **Classroom Activity One**

Why are some people more attracted to taking risks than are others? When is risk worth it? When is it not worth it? Are young people really more likely to take risks?

Split the class into two groups, with one side advocating for greater risk taking, and the other advocating for a more cautious approach to life.

**Post Debate Discussion:** Ask the students to rank themselves as risk-takers or play-it-safe people. Then ask them to discuss the types of results they might get with each of these attitudes.

## Classroom Activity Two

The author describes the friends' first meeting as a fight with their "faces contorted into movie character rage." Choose a specific style of painting or drawing, then paint or draw your own version of a face off with two people's "faces contorted into movie-character rage."

Ask the class to share their art and discuss the styles they chose.

**Extension:** Ask the students to create stage pictures by acting out snapshots of the characters in particular moments. Ask them to get out of their seats and demonstrate or embody rage through expression, gesture, physical stance, and other aspects of body language.

## Home Activity

Chart your life. Include at least 10 key events from your life, and create a line graph that charts the ups and downs of your life over time (for example, one axis may be your life events; the other axis may be whether that event was good, bad, or neutral).

## Guest Speaker

1. Invite the author, Chiwan Choi, to speak with the class about his motivation for writing this story and his work as a writer and publisher.
2. Invite the illustrator, Maddie Saunders, to speak with the class about how she interpreted the story and her work as an artist.

## Field Trip

Visit the anthropology department of a local university and speak to a Cultural Anthropology professor about the role of breaking rules together in cementing human friendships. Also learn all about what anthropologists study and do for their various career options.

# SUPPLEMENTARY CURRICULUM FOR TEST PREPARATION

## Story

*Creases*, by Chiwan Choi

### **Timed Writing Exercise**

In 25 minutes, write a two-paragraph response in which you reflect on the narrator’s description of clothing in “Creases” by Chiwan Choi. What do the narrator and George communicate about themselves through their clothing? Be sure to quote and paraphrase from the story itself.

### **Online Component**

Within the 25-minute deadline, ask students to post their response on the class website or turn in the assignment on Turnitin.com.

If handwriting your response, please use the box below:

### **Pre-Editing Activity**

Students exchange digital or hard-copy responses.

## Editing Activity

At your peer tutoring job, a student asks you for feedback on this two-paragraph response. Focus on the student's use of textual evidence to support their analysis. Are the evidence and analysis integrated? Are the quotes introduced and contextualized? If not, write a brief email to the student discussing areas in which the response needs revision. Be sure to address the response's overall strengths, as well as one area in which the student could improve.

## Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

Grades 11 and 12 reading, writing, speaking & listening, and language standards.

## Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

## Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

## Complementary Reading Text Writing Exercise

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

## Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.