

Jumping

by **Kosiso Ugwueze**

Illustration by **Cathleen Abalos**

Curriculum developed by **Roz Brown**

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"> • Ages 14 and up • Grades 9 and up
Genre/s	Fiction
Length	2,115 words
Content Advisories	Some allusions to sex and sexuality.
One Sentence Summary	Kenneth an insecure, straight-laced, shy student, struggles with his own self-doubt in order to transition his friendship with May, an outgoing, worldly expatriate and exotic beauty, into the romance of his dreams.

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<p>Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romance • Insecurity • Self-confidence • Taking risks • Cross-cultural relationships • New age spirituality <p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming of age • Opposites attracting • Turning a hopeless situation around • Finding confidence in oneself
Historic Events / Time Periods for Study	<p>The New Age spirituality and pacifism movement anywhere from 1990 to 2016—mainstream interest in crystals, chakras, folk art, cultural diversity.</p> <p>History of Senegal—In March 2000, Senegal peacefully adopted a new constitution, recognizing multiple parties, and granting women property rights equal to those of men.</p>
Complementary Classic and Historic Texts	<p><i>Pride and Prejudice</i>, a novel by Jane Austen</p> <p>“Jump,” a classic-rock song and music video by Van Halen</p>

Lesson Planning	
Author and Artists Information	<p>Kosiso Ugwueze is a Nigerian-American author living in Los Angeles, CA.</p> <p>Cathleen Abalos is an artist living in Los Angeles, CA.</p>
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2</p>

Author Biography

Kosiso Ugwueze is a Nigerian-American writer. She received her B.A. in English and International Relations from the University of Southern California. She has a professional background in consulting and public health communications. Kosiso has attended the VONA Voices Writing Workshop as well as the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. She lives in Los Angeles, California. This is her first publication.

Artist Biography

Cathleen Abalos works professionally as a freelance illustrator and has shown her work in numerous gallery exhibitions across Southern California. As an educator, she is teaching children the value of an arts education. Cathleen earned her B.A. from California State University, Long Beach and is a board member of The Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles.

SYNOPSIS

In this fiction story about how love pushes us to be our best selves, Kenneth, an insecure, shy college student, waxes on the many ways in which he loves and admires May, a worldly expatriate and exotic beauty, whom he considers out of his league. May encourages his affection

and provides many opportunities for Kenneth to take their relationship to the next level, but he falters every time. Eventually he hurts May's feelings, and she voices her frustration at his tendency to overthink everything. Driven by the unspeakable prospect of losing her for good, Kenneth gathers all of his courage and "jumps" to salvage his final shot at transforming their friendship into the love of his life.

CURRICULUM

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

Topic and Main Ideas

Using YouTube, view and listen to the music video for the song "Jump" by the band Van Halen. Allow it to set the tone for your journey into the story *Jumping*, and write in your journal what emotions or message you think the singer wishes to convey. Then, think about a time when you had an opportunity you could either grasp or miss and whether or not you jumped into action. What did you learn from the experience?

Passage-Specific Themes

Read the following excerpt from the story *Jumping*:

"If she told me to jump off that roof, I think I would have. I think I would have flung myself as hard as I could, smiling all the way down. There were so many things I would have done for May. Like the time I drove from Long Beach to Santa Monica in the middle of the night because her car had stalled. Her parents were out of town. 'I didn't know who else to call,' she had said to me that night as we stood on the side of the road. She had put her arms around me and I had thought I would float away into the dark."

Then read:

"'You know what your problem is?' May suddenly said, turning so that we were both facing the ceiling.

'What?' I asked.

‘You think too much. You’re always in your head. You have that frown on your forehead when you’re thinking and I see it all the time. Just jump. Just close your eyes and jump.’”

Write in your journal about what it means to “think too much” and “always [be] in your own head.” Then debate in class whether this is truly bad or not.

Universal Themes

Write an entry in your journal about what it means to be in love.

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
smog	meandering	Authorized Personnel Only
maze	Make Art, Not War	Senegalese
kinky	prominent	Dakar
giddy	mirage	Erykah Badu scarves
basking	universe	pixelated
gaze	limitless	gravitational pull
intensity	mystic	eclectic
jet black	sophomores	chakras
unique	soothing vibe	reggae
distinct	straight-edge	
flinched	aura	
devour	pinning	
dazzling	obscure	
inadequate	dreadlocks	
meekly	salvage	
shrugged	contorted	
	seethed	

Vocabulary Activity Options

1. Using the vocabulary chart for this story, write a list of three dyads (pairs of words), which are opposites or suggest extreme contrast. Then write a sentence using each dyad.
2. What, in the context of the story, does the expression “straight-edge” mean? What might it mean in another context, and why do you think the author has chosen to use it in the story?
3. What, in the context of the story, could the term, “Authorized Personnel Only” tell you about the personalities of the characters? Write a paragraph in your journal about how May and Kenneth each tend to respond to convention and how the other’s point of view may enhance or challenge the other’s actions.

Then, describe an experience you and another person in your life have benefited or suffered from as a result of your differing points of view.

4. Examine the list of words in column three of the vocabulary chart. Write two lists, using all of the terms, placing each under one of two headings: Cultural or Personal. Write a sentence or two in your journal about how cultural and personal qualities overlap, and give an example of how a cultural influence impacts a personal experience in your life.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. How would you characterize Kenneth’s concept of self? How does it contrast with his perception of May? Does May agree with him? How closely do you think each character’s perception of self and the other matches each one’s actual life experiences?
2. Do you think the title *Jumping* refers to the literal or figurative meaning of the term? What, if any, equally effective other words might the author have chosen for the title? Discuss three alternative titles and their possible merits with your class.
3. When Kenneth expresses fear of heartbreak and being devoured by May, do you consider any of his reservations valid? What does he risk if he “jumps” versus if he does not? Can inaction result in as much or more damage than action?

Text-Dependent Question Options

1. What qualities does Kenneth associate with May? Cite three examples from the text, and describe how these contrast with the way Kenneth perceives himself.
2. How does Kenneth feel about the members of May’s social circle and his ability to fit in? Cite three examples from the text to support your answer.
3. Citing examples from the text, describe May’s room. Then, write a sentence each about how the décor reflects the following:

1. Her sense of aesthetics.
2. Her political point of view.
3. Her ethnic and cultural pride.

Part Two: Compare and contrast the elements in May’s room with those of the roof in the opening paragraph. Which location provides the best space for Kenneth to jump, or does his decision depend more upon his mind set? Write a short essay explaining your answers.

4. Kenneth describes May as giving lectures about “The universe and chakras . . . “ Research chakras, and, citing evidence from the text, discuss connections between the subject of chakras and the author’s development of Kenneth’s character in *Jumping*.
5. Look at the illustration accompanying the story. May looks directly into the eye of the viewer from the extreme foreground, while a small silhouette of Kenneth jumps in the background. Why do you suppose the artist chose this particular configuration? Using a stream-of-consciousness writing style and clues from the story, create a journal entry expressing your thoughts on the subject. A stream-of-consciousness writing style asks only that you get your thoughts down on paper exactly as they come up in your mind, as a continuous, uninterrupted flow. Do not worry about grammar or punctuation or whether or not your words would make sense to anyone else.
6. Research the meaning of the term foil when used as a literary device. How is Kenneth May’s foil, or is May Kenneth’s foil? How so? Explain your reasoning using examples from the text.

Writing Exercise Options

Narrative

In *Jumping*, we experience Kenneth’s feelings about May. But what are May’s feelings about Kenneth? Write a one- to two-page short story from May’s point of view, in which she describes how she feels about Kenneth.

Descriptive

If you had a choice about the sort of room you lived in, how would you furnish, decorate, arrange, and customize it to tell the world something about you? How and why would you arrive at the details you selected? What would they signify?

Analysis

Analyze the text and identify three examples of Kenneth’s perception of May’s penchant for the mystical. Given his own penchant for math and accounting, do you think he admires, fears, or disbelieves in the examples you have cited?

Write a journal entry discussing Kenneth’s perceptions. Compare and contrast these to your own interest in, experience of, or reaction to the three examples. Speculate on whether it’s possible to embrace these concepts and retain scientific and academic integrity. Must one choose between the two? Is it possible to love and fear someone or something with equal intensity? Why or why not?

Option Two: Research the subjects of the goddess archetype and feminine deities from throughout history. Identify three such deities from different cultures. Write a short essay analyzing May’s character in the story in comparison to the goddess archetype and feminine deities. Discuss whether Kenneth views her as a normal human or something more. Do you agree with Kenneth’s views? Would May agree or wish to be viewed as such?

Complementary Reading Text Option

Pride and Prejudice, a novel by Jane Austen
“Jump,” a classic-rock song and music video by Van Halen

Writing Exercise

Instruct students to read a detailed summary of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (or the full novel may be assigned), the lyrics to Van Halen’s “Jump,” and the story *Jumping* by Kosiso Ugwueze.

Identify the message common to all three sources. How are they similar and how do they differ? Write a short essay on the common message of these sources and on the ability of literature to transcend time, technology, geography, culture, and ethnicity.

Artistic Exercise

Instruct students to view the illustration by Cathleen Abalos for the story *Jumping*, read a detailed a summary of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (or assign the full novel), and the lyrics to Van Halen’s “Jump.” Using any media, students must create an illustration for the novel

or the song. Display the finished illustrations around the classroom, sharing them with artist Cathleen Abalos in the event that she visits as a guest speaker.

Activity Options

Classroom Activity One

Ask the students to give examples of possible fears and write them on a sheet of paper posted in the front of the room. Have them list possible consequences of acting on each of the fears on a second sheet of paper and the consequences of inaction on a third. Encourage a discussion on the risks and rewards of action and inaction. Revisit the list of fears and whether or not the discussion has changed anyone's view of their initial entries.

Classroom Activity Two

Place three small folding tables in front of the classroom. Ask students to each bring two objects from home, one symbolizing May's personality and another representing Kenneth's. Break the class into three groups, instructing Group One to make a pleasant arrangement of the "May" objects. Have Group Two arrange the "Kenneth" objects, and ask members of Group Three to each select "the best" object from the other two tables creating a final display of combined objects on the third table.

Discuss the items on each table one by one, noting the reason each object was selected and identifying patterns and common themes between each. Ask Group Three to explain their choice of objects for the combined-theme table. Take an informal poll, and tally the popularity of each collection of objects. Discuss the significance of the outcome.

Home Activity

Ask students to each bring two objects from home, one symbolizing May's personality and another representing Kenneth's. Instruct them to prepare to discuss their reasoning behind the objects chosen. Then, ask students to present their items to each other in groups of four to five.

Guest Speaker

1. Invite author Kosiso Ugwueze to speak with the class about her inspiration for writing the story, her career as a writer, and both the academic and experiential preparation required. Allow a Q&A, and get the author's feedback on either pictures of the three tables from Classroom Activity One or present the actual displays on the same day as her visit.

2. Invite illustrator Cathleen Abalos to speak with the class about her interpretation of the story and her career as an artist. Ask her to lead the class in a drawing activity depicting an incident in which each student has had to—or may yet want to—“jump.” Display the drawings above the tables in front of the room. Thank her for visiting; in farewell, have the students rise, hold hands, and jump.

Field Trip (two parts)

Kenneth noted May’s penchant for New Age objects. Visit Psychic Eye Book Shops in Sherman Oaks, and get permission for students to photograph or sketch three objects that stand out to them. Ask them to research the history and meaning of the objects, to write about the reasons for their choices, and to speculate about whether Kenneth would also relate to any of the objects.

Part Two: Kenneth says he likes math and is interested in accounting. Visit a college bookstore. Tour the bookstore and learn how it’s organized. Then, examine the math, engineering, and accounting textbook sections. Ask students to select three textbooks, read the introduction, table of contents, and/or syllabus for each. Instruct the students to write a journal entry as to why or why not they may enjoy these fields of study or career choices.

SUPPLEMENTARY CURRICULUM FOR TEST PREPARATION

Story

Jumping, by Kosiso Ugwueze

Timed Writing Exercise

Working on a 40-minute deadline, you’ve been asked to write an advice column for your school’s newspaper. Your question comes from the speaker in Kosiso Ugwueze’s *Jumping*, who asks: What does May mean by “Just jump. Just close your eyes and jump”? Drawing on concrete details from the story, compose a 350-word advice column addressing his question.

Online Component

Within the 40-minute deadline, ask students to format and post their column on the class website.

If handwriting your column, please use the box below:



Pre-Editing Activity

Students exchange digital or hard-copy columns.

Editing Activity

As an editor of the same newspaper, you must review the online column to be published in print. Focus on the writer'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 paragraph to the writer discussing areas in which the column needs revision. Be sure to address the column's overall strengths, as well as one area in which the writer could improve.

Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.A Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: 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.9-10.3.A: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Complementary Reading Text Writing Exercise

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.