

The Carnegies



The Carnegie Longlist 2026 Shadowing Resources



Twenty Four Seconds From Now

Carnegie Medal for Writing

Author: Jason Reynolds

Age range: 14+

Description:

Told in reverse, there's an emotional honesty to the story of Neon and Aria and the build up to their first time having sex. Boys' emotions are uncovered with candid honesty and warmth. The importance of being thoughtful and true to yourself, as well as considering how one's own actions impact on others are key themes in this innovatively told and intimate story which invites readers to consider what masculinity is rather than dictating this.

Themes:

- Emotional literacy
- Family
- Friendship
- Love
- Vulnerability
- Sexual intimacy
- Intergenerational bonds and trust

Shadowing Ideas:

1. What was happening 24 minutes ago? How about 24 hours ago? 24 days? 24 months? 24 years? Decide whether you want to research this on a global, local or personal scale and investigate. Share your findings with the rest of your shadowing group.
2. There is a form of synaesthesia which causes a person to associate colours with other senses such as smell, taste, music. Research some other forms of synaesthesia. What words might you associate with certain colours – Red, Blue, Yellow etc. Don't dwell too much on the why – follow your instincts. Talk about your associations as a group and turn them into a poem/picture/poster, either together or individually.
3. This book addresses some mature issues, including sexual activity, relationships, consent and contraception. Is this something you feel is addressed adequately in your school and curriculum? Do you know where to go for advice and support if you need it? Do you feel this book portrays young adult relationships in a healthy, realistic and inclusive way? Can you think of any other books which achieve this? Have you experienced any books that don't quite manage this?