

Title: Writing Awkward Romance

Synopsis:

Romance isn't all candlelight dinners and Hollywood kisses. Sometimes it's coffee dates that feel more like job interviews, or one-sided "dates" where only one person realizes it's supposed to be romantic. "Writing Awkward Romance" explores the ways writers can capture the messy, uncertain, and cringe-inducing realities of dating – from fumbling over text messages to navigating third-wheel disasters. For fiction, awkward romance isn't just funny; it's the stuff of real human connection.

The Snark's Blog: [here](#)

Discussion Questions

Use these questions to spark conversation and reflection in the classroom:

- Define a "date." Define "date-adjacent." What has to be the approach and intent of either party.
- What makes a romantic interaction awkward – the situation itself, or the characters' inability to handle it smoothly?
- Can awkwardness sometimes make characters more endearing? When does it make them unbearable?
- How do cultural expectations (who asks, who pays, how soon you text back) intensify awkward romantic encounters?
- What's the difference between "relatable awkward" and "cringe so hard it's unreadable"?
- Should awkward romance always end in resolution (laughter, love, breakup), or can it stand as its own ending?

Writer's Prompts

Creative exercises to help students apply the themes of the topic:

- **Prompt 1:** Write a scene where one character thinks they're on a date, and the other thinks it's just coffee. Show the moment of realization.
- **Prompt 2:** Imagine two characters who like each other but keep missing signals – wrong place, wrong time, wrong words. Stretch it until the reader screams, "Just kiss already!"
- **Prompt 3:** Write a dinner date where everything goes wrong: the food, the conversation, the timing. Make it funny and painful.
- **Prompt 4:** Create a situation where an ex shows up mid-date. How do your characters react? (Bonus points if it's at a group dinner.)
- **Prompt 5:** how two characters both convinced the other one isn't interested – so they keep pretending it's casual while obviously dying inside.

Class Activities

These activities will help expand on the themes of the topic:

- **The Misread Signal Game:** Students write down a simple line (“I like your shirt”) and pass it around. Each reader must perform it as a compliment, a flirt, or a casual remark. Watch how quickly “coffee” turns into “date.”
- **Awkward First Impressions:** In pairs, students roleplay the most painfully awkward “first meeting” they can imagine (spilled coffee, misremembered names, showing up in the wrong outfit).
- **The One-Sided Date Debate:** Divide the room. One half argues that one-sided dates are comedy gold, the other half insists they’re just sad

Closing note from the blog’s writer, The Snark

Look, love is awkward. If your fictional couples are gliding through courtship like Olympic figure skaters, you’re doing it wrong. Make them stumble, choke on their words, misread the signals, and spend two chapters wondering if “Want to hang out?” meant Netflix-and-chill or help me move my couch. Awkward romance is what makes the “happily ever after” feel earned – and hilarious.