

CURRICULUM GUIDE

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Common Core Connections



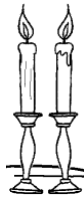
Comprehension Questions



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Common Core Connections: Grades 3-6

3rd Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

4th Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9

Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

5th Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7

Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

6th Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9

Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.



Comprehension Questions

March: Week One-Monday Afternoon

Pg. 1-24

“I am not eleven-year-old Reeni, I am /Odette, Queen of the Swans.” Pg. 1

How does dancing make Reeni feel?

Compare how the other dancers feel about ballet to how Reeni feels about ballet.

“I breathe in, blow out to warm the frost/ and try to pretend no one’s watching/but everyone is/and my noisy brain and mixed up feet/know it.” pg. 5

How do Reeni’s feelings about her dancing change when she knows people are watching her?

“...I stare/at the cracks in the floor/then remind myself/I may not look like Sasha/but I dance the way/she wishes she could.” Pg. 8

Why does it bother Reeni when Sasha watches her dance?

How does Ms. Allie make Reeni feel?

What two things does Ms. Allie say to Reeni that makes Reeni suddenly freeze with fear?

“When I think about being the center of attention/my Loud, Huge Voice drowns out Still and Small./It shouts from somewhere outside: “Watch Out! Be afraid!” pg. 13

What is the difference between Reeni’s “Loud, Huge Voice” and her “Still and Small”?

Describe Beck. What kind of friend is she? How does she make Reeni feel?

How is Reeni's relationship with her sister Jules changing? Why are these changes happening?

"Glowing in her light--/second place was enough./Glowing in her light--/I never cared/until this year/when she grew up too much/and left me/in the shadows." Pg. 21

"I want to believe a day will come/when I'll lose my fear of dancing for others,/like I lose myself and find myself/whenever I dance alone." Pg. 22

Why does Reeni want her Mom and Dad to stop calling her "Reeni-Beeni"?

Week One
Pg. 25-51

"I thought I'd grow up taller and thinner./What if I don't look like a ballerina?"/ Beck smiles like everyone knows the answer:/ You dance like one." Pg. 27

"And everything they hate/they call 'fat'./ Fat is not a size to them./ Fat = bad." Pg. 28

For most of Reeni's life she thought her problems in ballet were caused by how nervous performing made her feel. Suddenly she becomes convinced that her problems might be caused by her *size*. What makes her suddenly blame her size?

***How are larger sized people (fat people) shown in TV shows and movies, in cartoons, or on the internet? Is this realistic?**

Discuss why so many people feel that different = bad. Where do you think young people learn this?

"Music erases sixth grade worries,/ erases everything but itself/as my body fills the empty space/ with dance." Pg. 31

How does Reeni's YouTube exploration of 'weight gain' and "preteen girls" affect her?

"Strong and healthy is all that counts?/I don't think Mom heard the news/from sixth grade." Pg. 36

Besides losing weight, what else does Reeni think dieting will do to help her?

Discuss how many of Reeni's negative feelings about herself are coming from other people, and how many of her negative feelings are coming from inside her own mind.

- **What do you think convinced the other girls that they needed to diet?**

"Words pound, pound, pound/and force me to listen,/unfamiliar, odd/but heavy and hurting/as if I'm standing outside/in the storm/where no one has heard/that 'fat' isn't 'bad'." pg. 42

Why does Beck tell Reeni to stop listening to the other girls in the lunchroom?

How does Reeni's growing awareness about her size affect how she sees Ms. Allie?

- **What causes Reeni to suddenly think that maybe Ms. Allie doesn't perform ballet on stage due to her SIZE? Brainstorm other reasons why Ms. Allie chose to teach ballet instead of perform.**

Describe Reeni's family Shabbat dinner and discuss why Shabbat dinner is so important to Reeni.

Week Two

Pg. 52-74

What is Reeni looking for when she sneaks into the bodega to look at magazines?

- **When Reeni looks at the magazines in the bodega she says she is "...searching, searching/for a body that looks like mine". How are differently-sized people usually shown in the media?**

“Wish I could yell it, scream it, shout it:/ why are you saying that, creepy boy?/ I hate you. Hate, hate you.” pg. 56

How does the voice inside Reeni’s head make Reeni feel? What kinds of things does it tell her?

“you don’t have to dance the solo./No one expects you to be a star./she says./No one says you have to do it.” Pg. 67

Compare the things that Reeni’s sister Jules says to Reeni to the things Sasha says to Reeni. Describe how Jules and Sasha make Reeni feel.

“How can you want something so badly/and also be so afraid to do it?” pg. 72

Week Three

Pg. 75-86

Why are so many of Reeni’s happy memories from when she was much younger?

“...now a plain piece of bread/I’ve eaten every day of my life/feels like it is some amazing/gourmet item from an upscale store/where we don’t shop.” Pg. 75

How does Reeni’s focus on dieting affect her friendship with Beck?

- **Beck sees Reeni as a skilled ballet dancer and does not believe that size has anything to do with that. Why doesn’t Reeni see herself in the same way?**

Why does Reeni feel like she has to hide when she eats the sun butter sandwich?

“Shards of the smashed plate flare out/in a pattern/we scoop up./ Shattered insides/still a mess.”
Pg. 84

How are Reeni’s changing eating habits affecting the rest of her life?

“...and it’s funny how this little girl/makes me feel/so grown up,/so much a ballerina.” Pg. 86

How do you think Serena feels about Reeni?

Week Four
Pg. 87-99

Why does Beck want Reeni to stop dieting?

Why is Reeni confused about Jason?

“Not talking to her/makes a sound/like the Hebrew homework/I rip in half.” Pg. 92

Describe how missing Beck is affecting Reeni.

“How can someone understand you/all the time/then not?/How can you recognize yourself/all the time/then not?” pg. 95

How does Reeni feel while she is babysitting Serena and making the *icky-sticky-yummy* treats? Compare this feeling with how Reeni feels the next day.

Describe how Reeni’s feelings about food are changing as she keeps trying to diet.

April: Week Five
Pg. 100-115

“She used to draw me/dancing/but now she sketches/everything else but.” Pg. 103

Compare what Reeni calls her “Still, Small voice” to her “Loud, Huge voice”. Which voice does she listen to? Which voice do you think she SHOULD listen to?

Why is Reeni so dizzy all the time?

***At first the body shaming messages come from the other girls. But as Reeni keeps dieting, where does the body shaming start to come from?**

“I press my palm against a photo--/Jules taking a bow at the end of a show,/the spotlight a cone-
shape around her,/my fingers outline the light on paper/as if I might steal it/and make it mine.”
(pg. 112)

Week Six
Pg. 116-129

What happens when Reeni asks Jules if she can borrow a scarf?

Explore the possible reasons why Reeni keeps getting angry with her mother.

“...I’m full of whirling/thoughts of how to stop eating/too much when I’m hungry/a stranger
inside me/who’s taken control, just as noisy as my fear used to be.” Pg. 123

How does Reeni feel about herself when she helps Serena learn ballet?

“*Come on Reeni--/you can talk to me./* But I roll away, her touch a reminder/that she’ll be gone,
that she’s been away.” Pg. 129

Week Seven

Pg. 130-138

What happens when Reeni tries on her costume?

“I don’t believe her,/but I don’t want to tell her,/don’t want to be anywhere/but inside her arms.”
Pg. 133

Describe how Reeni feels when she overhears her Dad talking with her sister. Why do her feelings later change?

Week Eight-

Pg. 139-166

What does Mom do to surprise Reeni?

“Did they all come from a class, or are they saying,/Look, I’m a dancer./ If I told them I’m one too would they believe me?” pg. 140

“I can’t breathe. My eyes zigzag/from one dancer to the other,/ looking and looking for signs of roundness./ Anything. Anywhere. Nowhere. Now I’m shaking./There’s no one like me.” Pg. 142

Explain why Reeni gets mad at her Mom after the performance.

Describe how the doctor visit affects Reeni. Does it make her feel better or worse?

- **Reeni’s doctor focused only on helping her with the health of her body; what other kind of help does Reeni need?**

What does Reeni overhear after the doctor visit?

“Mom’s hand soft on my head./But even that gentle hand can’t sew/all the ripped pieces of me together.” Pg. 159

Explain why Reeni has trouble rehearsing her solo for Ms. Allie in ballet class.

Describe how Reeni scares Serena. How does Reeni feel afterward?

May: Week Nine
Pg. 167-171

“Little kids like multicolored bubbles pop out the door./ Does one of them dream of the spotlight?”
pg. 167

Why does Reeni feel she can’t do the solo?

What happens to Reeni’s “Loud, Huge Voice” after Reeni tells Ms. Allie that she’s quitting?

“Dancing was like that./The space between mountains/where flying was a possible dream./Fly, fly!
I remember the sound/like a whisper in my ears only.” Pg. 170

Week Ten
Pg. 172-173

Why doesn’t Reeni tell Serena that she quit dancing?

“By the time we eat it’s feeling crazy/that I’ve spent this year thinking about food,/as if ‘thin’
would be a magic trick/to make me someone/I think I want to be...” pg. 172

Describe what Reeni is starting to learn about dieting and how she sees herself.

- **Which is more difficult: to see others how they really are, or to see yourself as you really are?**

“I don’t have too much body./I have too little courage./Which I guess I always knew.” Pg. 173

Week Eleven

Pg. 174-182

“*Growing up is messy.*/I love that I don’t have to say more./I love that I have more to say.” pg. 174

How do Reeni and Jules heal their friendship?

Why does Reeni tell Dani “There’s nothing wrong with me.”?

“I’m hungry. I eat./ It feels just right.” Pg. 176

Think about a time when you wished you could be like someone else. How did your wish make you feel about yourself?

“I hope/that Mom/can see/I wish to make my own wishes/come true.” Pg. 177

Describe how Reeni feels when she goes back downstairs and starts to dance again.

Which one of Reeni’s voices speaks to her when she dances?

Compare how Reeni and Jules have both changed over the year.

“...maybe I’m blossoming too,/becoming someone/I don’t know yet, but still me.” Pg. 182

Week Twelve

Pg. 183-189

“I have the exact words I need.” Pg. 183

How do you think Reeni feels after telling Jason what she needs?

Why is it hard sometimes for us to hear our “Still, Small Voice”?

“The Still, Small Voice says, /Dance, Reeni—dance.” Pg. 184

What makes the Loud, Huge Voice come back for Reeni?

Which voice does Reeni decide to believe?

When Reeni returns to ballet class, her Still, Small Voice tells her “*Turn, Reeni, turn—Turn now and ask.*” What do you think Reeni is supposed to ask?

Week Thirteen-Sunday, May 27

Pg. 190-193

“Who I am tonight,/ is a changed Reeni, but the same, growing myself/into who I might become”
pg. 191

When the curtain rises and Reeni looks into the audience, who does she see? Is it who she expects to see?

“The music fills me like air and blood/and I dance for myself, with everyone watching./ Courage was right here, waiting for me.” Pg. 193

How does Reeni find her courage?

Think of something in your life now that you need courage to deal with. What are your “Still, Small Voice” and your “Loud, Huge Voice” saying to you?



Activity Trio

1. Family, Feelings, and Fabulous Food

Some of Reeni's favorite family times involve enjoying special foods at special times. In fact, sharing food with people we care about is one very important part of building and enjoying time with family and friends. In many families and groups of friends, people write down recipes and share them.

Choose someone in your life who makes a food that you have enjoyed at special times.

Ask them if they will share the recipe for this food (remember: special foods can have very easy recipes!). Then write the recipe down to share, followed by a description of a happy time when you had this food. Who was with you? Why were you together? How did eating this food make you feel?

2. I Am

Everyone has moments when they worry that they might not be ENOUGH—good enough, fast enough, thin enough, strong enough. The list of “enoughs” is endless and different for each person.

But there is a way to shove those “enoughs” back into their little box.

On a large piece of paper, cardboard, or recycled material, write the words “I AM” as a title. Underneath the title, begin writing all the positive things about yourself that you like that can begin with “I AM”. (i.e.: “I am a strong swimmer.”, “I am creative.”—and REMEMBER: every sentence must begin with “I am...”.) When you have listed everything you can, leave room at the bottom of your list to add more later as you grow, change, and learn new things. Feel free to decorate your list with drawings, cut out pictures, etc.... Consider keeping this list somewhere where you can easily take a look at it to remind yourself that you are MORE THAN ENOUGH.

3. Dear Me (A Semester/Year-long Writing Project)

We all send emails and texts to other people...but what about to ourselves?

For this long-term activity, you will be writing one letter to yourself each week. You can write these by hand or type them on a computer and print them out. Each letter must be at least 1 page long.

When your letter is complete, seal it in an envelope, write your name and date on the front of the envelope and either (a) put it into a special box or place for safe keeping (b) turn it in to your teacher, or (c) for online learning, send it to your teacher at the email address he/she/they send you; they will save it, unread, in a file for you.

Write your letter like you are telling your future self about your life as it is NOW—share your fears, the things that make you happy, the things that are making you sad. Talk about the hard things and what you are doing to make your life more positive and healthier.

At the end of the semester/year, your teacher will return your letters (or if at home, you will open your saved and sealed letters). When you read your letter, consider what has changed for you. How have you grown? What positive things have happened? How will you continue to work through challenges?



From the kitchen of _____

Recipe For: _____

Ingredients:

Directions:

Serves _____



Writing Ideas

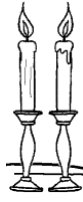
Describe a time when you felt like you were being forgotten or left behind.

Describe something that you love to do. Explore how it would feel if someone told you that you weren't good at it. What would you say? What would you do?

Compare the power of other people's opinions of us to the power of how we feel about ourselves. When should we believe other people? When should we believe our own feelings?

Sometimes it's hard to tell when someone is a true friend who cares for and about us, and when someone isn't. List the things YOU look for in a friend. Then describe the things you do to build the friendships in your life. Do these friends have the qualities in your list?

What if scientists created a mirror that not only showed us what we looked like on the OUTSIDE, but also showed us what we were like on the INSIDE as well—our personalities, how we treated other people, how we treated ourselves. Being as honest and positive as possible, describe what you would see if you looked into this mirror.



Teacher Notes

At the heart of *Reeni's Turn* is the very real and serious issue of body shaming. Children as young as 6 can already have opinions of “normal” and “abnormal” body shapes and sizes. These opinions typically grow from messages and images gleaned from the media as well as from opinions children overhear or are indirectly (or directly) taught by the adults and older children in their lives.

Body shaming is the act of humiliating, bullying, or insulting another person based on body shape and/or size and is aimed not just at those who have bigger and/or taller bodies, but also at those who are seen as too thin or too short, as well as anyone judged to be outside what is socially considered the “norm”.

In *Reeni's Turn*, Reeni starts to be shamed and teased for her weight as she starts puberty. Very quickly, Reeni's life-long anxiety about performing in front of others is overshadowed by self-consciousness over her size and weight. And because body shaming is so pervasive in our society, Reeni initially does not question the bullying. Instead, she falls quickly into a downward spiral of self-loathing, turning to fad diets as the solution to her problems. Ultimately, she isolates herself from her beloved ballet, friends, and family.

Here is where we encourage teachers to step out of their own doubts and comfort zones to guide their students to use critical thinking and empathy and take the lessons learned in *Reeni's Turn* and apply them to real life.

To help teachers engage with the challenging and sensitive topics of body shaming, the myths of dieting, and the potentially dangerous powers of media and peer pressure, we have included with the **Comprehension Questions** what we call **Reality Checks**, which are marked with a *. These questions take the challenges Reeni is facing at different points in the story and bring them into real life.

We encourage teachers to use these questions as a way to open up honest and vital discussion with young students. It is only by exposing body shaming to the light of honest consideration and factual discussion that we can begin to dismantle it.

The Myths of Dieting

(source: UC Berkeley, University Health Service)

Myth: Dieting makes you healthier.

Truth: Dieting causes a loss/absence of important nutrients that impacts overall physical health. Dieting can affect bone growth/health, potentially increasing the risk for osteoporosis, stress fractures and broken bones.

Myth: Fad diets (“Yo-Yo dieting”) are safe ways to lose weight temporarily.

Truth: “Yo-yo diets” can lead to slower metabolism, fatty liver disease, increased risk for heart disease and more. Other impacts of dieting can include loss of muscle strength/endurance, decreased oxygen utilization, thinning hair, loss of coordination, dehydration/electrolyte imbalance, weakness, fainting, and slowed heart rate.

Myth: Dieting builds self-confidence.

Truth: Dieting “redirects” a person’s thoughts from authentic thoughts/feelings about important life issues to a focus solely on body issues. The young person’s dissatisfaction with their own body creates a “not good enough” syndrome (or worsens existing feelings of inadequacy) that can impact every other part of their lives.

Myth: Images in the media have little to no influence on how young people feel about themselves.

Truth: Body dissatisfaction is modeled extensively in print, television and in online media, and strongly (and falsely) communicates to young people that the quality of their lives and their sense of self depends strongly on their body size/body weight/body shape.

Myth: DiETING and body dissatisfaction are issues only for people who are teenagers or older.

Truth: Children in preschool and kindergarten can express body dissatisfaction. Studies have shown a significant number of children in grades 1-3 express wanting to be thinner. Moreover, up to 80% of 9 to 11 year olds diet.



About the Author



When did you first start writing?

Ever since I was a child, I loved words—especially poetry, fiction, short essays. Writing was a way of expressing thoughts and feelings I wasn't able to share—couldn't make clear, really—by speaking. Writing made feelings and thoughts feel coherent and more important, instead of struggling to find the words to convey things out loud. While I no longer have those fears now, writing is still the way it seems I process

and more find their way into my poetry, fiction, and essays.

How much is Reeni like you were when you were her age?

One thing I shared with Reeni was a fear of speaking or performing in front of other people. It took me many years and a LOT of practice, but now I feel very comfortable in front of an audience. Also, like Reeni, I too struggled with how I saw myself from the inside, and how others judged me from the outside. And of course, Reeni and I share a deep love of music and dance.

When you were Reeni's age, what did you want to grow up to do?

While I always loved poetry, stories, and music as I was growing up, but also dreamed of becoming a cowgirl or a ballerina.

Have you always been a writer?

Yes. I have written many things—professional papers, essays, and stories—but especially poetry. However, in addition to being a writer, I have also been a clinical social worker, helping people of all ages find ways to work through their problems. Part of Reeni's story was inspired by work I did with women and tweens to help them find comfort and confidence in food and in their bodies, rather than continuing a pattern of dieting. And I think I'm still a cowgirl at heart!

For more information about Carol and her work please visit carolcovengrannick.com

Resources and Support

Websites

1. Kathy Kater, Body Image Health Curriculum (Gr. 4-6)
<http://bodyimagehealth.org/healthy-bodies-curriculum>
2. Denise Hamburger, BE REAL
<https://berealusa.org>

Books

Grades 4-5

Lisa Fipps	<i>Starfish</i>
Nikki Grimes	<i>Garvey's Choice</i>
Julie Murphy	<i>Dear Sweet Pea</i>
Lisa Schroeder	<i>Don't Judge Me</i>

Grades 6 and Up

Chris Baron	<i>All of Me</i>
Leslie Connor	<i>The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle</i>
Barbara Dee	<i>Maybe He Just Likes You</i>
Jen Petro-Roy	<i>Good Enough</i> <i>You Are Enough</i>

Image Sources

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clipart-library.com

REENI'S TURN

Curriculum Guide 2020



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