

Grade 3

**Stella Díaz Has
Something to Say**
by Angela Dominguez

Novel Guide

ISBN 978-1-68391-724-3

© 2019 Amplify Education, Inc., and its licensors
www.amplify.com

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, or translated into any other language in any form or by any means without the written permission of Amplify Education, Inc.

Core Knowledge Language Arts and CKLA are trademarks of the Core Knowledge Foundation.

Trademarks and trade names are shown in this book strictly for illustrative and educational purposes and are the property of their respective owners. References herein should not be regarded as affecting the validity of said trademarks and trade names.

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Amplify CKLA novel guide for *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say*. We know that you do a nearly impossible job, and we hope this guide helps make that job a little easier.

This guide contains nearly everything needed to facilitate a novel study—the only thing you will supply is the book. This novel study will help your students grow in their reading abilities and their enjoyment of authentic texts, but—crucially—it will also help them grow as individuals. *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say* will challenge students to consider what it means to belong, offer strategies for handling negativity from others and having the courage to be yourself, and develop their social and emotional well-being.

They will also, of course, develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. Each set of activities offers opportunities for students to practice each skill, and activities are designed for flexible implementation and differentiation. The following pages contain more detail about how to use this guide.

Thanks for all you do to enhance and enrich the lives of students.

The **Amplify**CKLA Team

About the Book

Stella Díaz Has Something to Say, published by Roaring Brook Press in 2018, is a novel by Angela Dominguez. It has earned the following recognition:

- 2019 Sid Fleischman Award
- 2019 Association for Library Service to Children Notable Children's Book
- New York Public Library Best Book for Kids 2018
- Top 10 Showstopper Favorite
- One of Chicago Public Library's "Best of the Best Books 2018"
- Global Read Aloud Choice 2019

Why We Selected It

Stella Díaz Has Something to Say introduces Stella, a young, Mexican immigrant third grader who lives with her brother and mother near Chicago. Even though she has been in America since she was a baby, she still struggles to find how she fits into this world. Stella speaks English and some Spanish but still feels uncomfortable using either language.

Over the course of the text, we follow Stella as she navigates her home and school life. Feeling alone, but longing for company, she hopes that a new student will become her new best friend.

This book offers many opportunities for exploring social studies content—such as immigration, citizenship, and civics—and developing students' social-emotional learning competencies.

About the Author

Angela Dominguez was born in Mexico City, raised in Texas, and currently lives on the East Coast, where she is an instructor at the Academy of Art University. She has written and illustrated several books, and she speaks at many schools around the country. She has loved reading and drawing since childhood.

Connections to CKLA Domains

A core foundation of Amplify CKLA is developing content connections throughout all units and domains, within and across grades. *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say* relates to the following Amplify CKLA domains.

- Kindergarten, Domain 12, *Presidents and American Symbols*
- Grade 2, Domain 11, *Immigration*
- Grade 4, Unit 1, *Personal Narratives*
- Grade 4, Unit 6, *Contemporary Fiction with Excerpts from The House on Mango Street*
- Grade 5, Unit 1, *Personal Narratives*

Things to Know

- This text is told from the point of view of Stella, a Mexican immigrant with parents whose language of origin is Spanish. Although the text is written in English, it contains some Spanish words and phrases. If you are not conversational in Spanish, it may be helpful to consult an online Spanish to English translation dictionary and pronunciation guide.
- A few themes throughout *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say* may provoke emotional responses and thus may necessitate a discussion with students. These are opportunities to offer students information for coping and the strategies for developing social-emotional learning capacities. For example, Stella is a legal alien with a green card. Students may be unfamiliar with the immigration process in the United States, and current events and the political climate may cause strong feelings about this topic.
- Stella is bullied by a classmate. This classmate is very crafty and is usually not mean when adults are present. Students may benefit from discussion about strategies for facing difficult people or bullies.
- In the book, Stella's parents are divorced. Her father lives in Colorado, a long distance from Stella's home in Chicago, and she struggles to navigate her relationship with him. Students may have similarly disrupted home lives, and this topic may bring up issues for them.

Additional Resources

As students read this book, you may wish to facilitate discussions of immigration, bullying, or family. The following resources may aid in your preparation for these discussions and help further your own understanding of the subjects. Please note that these materials are not all-encompassing, and some student questions may not be answered in them.

- **Teaching Tolerance** contains a variety of tools to facilitate classroom and school activities to instill tolerance and empathy. Some topics include immigration, bullying and bias, and race and ethnicity.
- **StopBullying.gov** is an official website of the United States government that addresses bullying. There are resources about bullying and cyberbullying, prevention, and how to become an “upstander,” someone who intervenes on behalf of a victim, instead of a bystander.
- **Welcoming Schools**, a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, has many opportunities for incorporating family diversity into the classroom. Its resources include checklists, lesson plans, and children’s book selections that reflect almost every home situation imaginable.

If students finish the book early, or if they enjoy it and want to read further, they may enjoy the following recommendations, which are also located in the “Student Resources” Blackline Master. We recommend that you review texts and use your discretion to choose those that will be most effective and appropriate for your classroom.

- *Sled Dog School* by Terry Lynn Johnson
- *Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire* by Susan Tan
- *A Boy Called Bat* by Elana K. Arnold

Implementing Novel Study

Amplify CKLA novel studies are designed for flexible implementation. They may be used for an entire class, or they may be assigned to individuals or groups of students. The following list contains some possible scenarios for implementing a novel study:

- **Dedicated classroom reading time**—Many schools have dedicated reading time set aside throughout the school day or week.

- **Enrichment or extension**—Students in need of an additional challenge may benefit from the novel study materials, which they may pursue independently if desired.
- **Gifted and Talented Instruction**—Novel studies may be used in pull-out time for students.
- **After-school or summer programs**—Students in these programs may benefit from novel study, as it offers engaging and flexible materials designed around authentic texts.
- **Flex unit**—Teachers who already designate some classroom time to novel study may enjoy having more text options without having to create their own scaffolding.
- **Post-Assessment unit**—Novel studies offer a way to capitalize on classroom time after high-stakes assessments without leaving students burned out on learning.



In the Classroom

For each reading selection, this guide contains a Blackline Master of activities, divided into five categories.

- **Ask** contains questions for discussion, reflection, or brief written responses. These questions cover information all students should understand as they read the text.
- **Explore** offers students brief research opportunities centered around items mentioned in the text. These opportunities help students build background knowledge and deepen their understanding of what they have read. If you would like to assign students activities from this category, assemble resource materials for them to consult as they research.
- **Imagine** activities allow students to use creativity to develop themes and ideas from the text through further reflection. They may write new scenes, explore character motivation, visualize a setting from the text, or consider how they would respond to characters' ideas.
- **Observe** prompts students to take notes or make other kinds of observations about what they have read. Students analyze characters' conclusions, explore the use of text features, make Venn diagrams and T-charts, and use other forms to gather and interpret information.

- **Understand** questions push students to explore Social-Emotional Learning connections to the text. Sometimes they consider a character's emotional or behavioral response, weighing possible alternative actions a character could have taken. At other times, students reflect on their own understanding of and response to challenging situations or experiences. These questions, which we recommend a teacher facilitate, offer a springboard to help students develop social-emotional learning competencies.

These activities are designed for customization and flexible implementation to best fit your students' needs. They may be conducted as whole- or small-group activities, or students can pursue them individually or with a partner. Teachers may wish to have students respond to the activities in writing, orally, or in other formats (such as multimedia).

Although teachers may use discretion to have students write about or discuss any of the prompts, those marked with  are particularly well-suited for writing, while those marked with  are especially useful for discussion.

Students who are ready for a challenge may complete each type of activity for every set of assignments; however, this is not a requirement. We suggest that students always start with the "Ask" activities to ensure that they understand a sufficient portion of the text. Then teachers may allow students to customize their experience with the book. If a student needs to build confidence, you may wish to assign them the activity type with which they are most comfortable. Conversely, you may wish to help students build particular skills by focusing on an activity type that targets those skills. We do suggest that students attempt each activity type at least once throughout the novel study experience.

Many of these questions are designed to be open-ended; however, questions for which specific answers exist have those answers provided in the Answer Keys located in the Teacher Resource section of this guide.

Fluency Practice

Students who need additional practice in fluency may benefit from any of the following options.

- **Read-Alouds**—Ask students to read the text aloud. This may be employed as a routine part of reading and works well in a whole- or small-group setting. Students may read chorally or individually.

- **At-Home practice**—If classroom policies allow, students may take the novel home to read aloud to a family member, pet, or any other listener.
- **Performance**—Students should pick (or you may assign) a passage from the text that they will practice reading, then read aloud to the class or other audience. We recommend a short passage of approximately 150 words. In this performance, students should read the text rather than memorizing it; reading, rather than reciting, is an important criterion of fluency practice.
- **Five-Day Fluency Routine**—Have students practice the Amplify CKLA Five-Day Fluency Routine with a passage from the text. We recommend a short passage of approximately 150 words for this routine. A detailed description of this routine appears near the end of this guide.

Vocabulary Acquisition

Students may use any of the following strategies to develop their vocabulary during the novel study.

- **Vocabulary notebooks**—Students may list unfamiliar words they encounter in the text, then research and record definitions for those words.
- **Amplify Vocabulary App**—Students may gain additional vocabulary knowledge through the Amplify Vocabulary App.

Additional Prompts for Longer Assignments

The following suggestions pertain to longer assignments you may wish to assign in conjunction with this text.

Writing

- **Narrative Writing:** Ask students to select a character other than Stella (her mom, Nick, Jenny, Jessica, Stanley, etc.) and write a journal entry about Stella from that character's point of view. What does this character think about the way Stella speaks and acts? What does he or she see as Stella's strengths and weaknesses? How does this character feel about her?

- **Informative Writing:** In the novel, Stella and her classmates must research an animal of their choosing, write a report on that animal, and give a presentation to the class. Have students conduct their own research about an animal (or country, person, state, etc.) and synthesize that research into an essay or book.
- **Opinion Writing:** Have students consider the book's title, *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say*, then write opinion pieces explaining what Stella had to say. They can form their opinion as a claim, then use evidence from the text to support that claim.
- **Writing about Literature:** Stella's mom tells a story about the volcanoes near Mexico City, a story that has been retold in a children's book called *The Princess and the Warrior*. Have students read this book (or read the book aloud), then determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say*.

Research

Ask students to research in depth a question they have derived from a topic in the text, using resources found in the classroom, school library, or (with proper supervision) the Internet. Students may share their research in different ways—writing reports, recommending changes they would like to see in their community based on what they have learned, poster presentations, short presentations to peers or community members, a blog post or school newspaper article, and so on. It is important to help students determine an appropriate application and venue for their research.

Potential research questions include:

- What is the current immigration process for anyone under the age of eighteen?
- Stella is from Mexico; however, she doesn't know a lot about her life or family there. Have students research their own genealogy and record their ancestry.

Performance Task

After students have read the novel, ask them to develop a poster or book trailer for it. This is similar to a movie poster or trailer, in that it is meant to interest others in reading the book. Students should think about how best to make others curious about the book without giving away the most important parts of its plot. They should think about the tone they want to convey about the book—whether it is exciting, scary, heartwarming, or something else.

We recommend you base your assignment on the tools typically available to your students. If video cameras or phones are available, you may wish to let them write, rehearse, and perform their trailer for recording and sharing. If these tools are not available, you may prefer to ask them to create book posters for the halls of your school.

For additional metacognition, we recommend you ask students to reflect on their work, including explaining why they decided to present the text in the manner selected. Their decisions will likely reveal insights about the text and its significance to them.

Reading: Chapters 1-3

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Where was Stella born, and when did she move to Chicago?
 - » Stella was born in Mexico. Her family moved to Chicago when she was a baby.
- 2) Who is Nick?
 - » Nick is Stella's brother, who is in eighth grade.
- 3) What happens during the family's "weekly appointments?"
 - » Stella's mom makes dinner, they play board games, and they stay up past their bedtimes.
- 4) Who is Stella's pet?
 - » Her pet is a blue betta fish named Pancho.
- 5) What two things did Stella's teacher, Ms. Bell, say at school on Friday?
 - » She said the class was beginning sustained reading and would get a new student.
- 6) Stella is glad she is not a betta fish. Why?
 - » She wouldn't want to be alone all of the time without her family.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella and her family came from Mexico. She speaks Spanish, eats *albondigas*, and salsa dances. What can you learn about Mexico?
- 2) Use the resources your teacher provides to find the meaning of the Spanish words in Chapters 1–3.
- 3) Jenny is Vietnamese. What can you learn about Vietnam? Research to discover facts about Jenny's native country.



Encourage students to look for people, places, and things (holidays, foods, sports, etc.) that are important in Mexico.

Imagine

- 1) Imagine what it would be like to be a betta fish like Pancho, then write a journal entry from his point of view. In other words, pretend you are Pancho and write about your life, thoughts, and feelings.
- 2) If you could design the perfect “weekly appointment” for your family, doing things that are fun or special, what would you do? Draw a picture or write a descriptive paragraph about your appointment.
- 3) In Chapter 3, Stella imagines a rule book for friendships. If you made a rule book of the top ten things best friends need, what would they be? What would be the most important rule?

Encourage students to think about how it would feel to be alone all the time, what you would think about, and how you would keep from getting bored.



Ask students to think about whether they have any rules or an unwritten understanding with their current friends.



Observe

- 1) Why is Stella so excited her class is getting a new student, when she already has a best friend, Jenny?
 - » She has been lonely because Jenny is in another class. She has trouble making new friends, and on the first day of school, the class laughed at her when she made a mistake.
- 2) After Jenny heads to class, Stella says that the friendship bracelet Jenny gave her “looks smaller than usual.” What does Stella mean?
 - » It feels less special or important now that Jenny has a new friend, Anna.
- 3) Why might it be hard for Stella to make new friends?
 - » She’s shy. She speaks with a Spanish accent at times, which may be difficult to understand. She believes she is different from others, which may affect how she interacts with them.
- 4) Stella says that on the first day of school her “stomach was in knots all day.” What does Stella mean, and why does she feel this way?
 - » She was nervous, and as a result her stomach hurt. She had first-day jitters and didn’t know if she would like her new teacher. She was in a class without her best friend, which made her nervous.

Ask if students can recall how they felt on their first day of school or on their first day of Kindergarten.



Understand

- 1) Stella's mom reminds her to help the new student "feel comfortable." If you were new, how could others help you feel comfortable?
- 2) Stella hopes to turn the new student into another best friend. What kinds of things could you say or do to befriend a new classmate?
- 3) Stella appreciates "that Pancho likes to be alone and is okay being quiet." What are the good and bad parts about being quiet and alone?

Reading: Chapters 4-5

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) What is Stella's library book, and what does she read about in it?
 - » She reads about the octopus in *What Lives in the Ocean* by Tonya Mickelson.
- 2) Who is the new student, and what does Stella learn about him?
 - » His name is Stanley Mason. He's from Dallas, Texas, speaks Spanish, and has blue eyes, freckles, and a monkey shirt.
- 3) Why does Stella feel nervous around Jessica Anderson?
 - » She can be mean, she laughs at Stella for saying words incorrectly, and she told everyone Stella had lice, even though she didn't.
- 4) Why is the school having a special assembly for Don?
 - » The school wanted to celebrate his becoming a United States citizen.
- 5) Stella remembers her mom being very nervous about getting the family's green cards. Think about what Stella learns about green cards. Why her mom might have felt nervous about them?
 - » Stella learns that once you have a green card, you do not have to leave the United States. Her mom probably realized how important this was to her family, so she felt nervous about it working out.
- 6) Why does talking about how to become a citizen upset Stella?
 - » She finds out she is an alien, and she thinks this explains why she doesn't fit in.

Ask students to think about what changes when you have a green card.



Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Don came to the United States from the Philippines. Research to learn where it is, how big it is, and what life can be like there.
- 2) Immigrants must take a test to become American citizens. Research this test's questions and see if you know any of their answers.
- 3) What are the words of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and why is it appropriate to sing when someone becomes an American citizen?

Imagine



Have students refer to Chapter 1, where Stella lists several thoughts and hopes for this new student, and consider how Stella's interests might affect what she looks for in a friend.



Ask students to think about what Stella has learned about herself since she last saw Jenny.

- 1) When Stanley is introduced to the class, Stella says he is “different from what I imagined.” Describe the student Stella probably imagined.
- 2) “Proper library etiquette” is very important to Ms. Morales. Using what you know about her from the text, create a poster about proper library etiquette that Ms. Morales might hang in the school library.
- 3) During the assembly for Don, Stella says, “There is so much that I want to say to Jenny, but I can’t.” What would she say to Jenny if they were alone and Stella wasn’t worried about feeling embarrassed?

Observe

- 1) Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast how Stella acts and feels in the library with Ms. Morales versus in Mrs. Bell’s classroom.
- 2) Use a T-chart to compare Stella’s feelings about becoming friends with Stanley before and after she falls out of her chair.
- 3) Use a glossary format to define the immigration-related terms *natural citizen*, *visa*, *alien*, *green card*, and *resident*. Write each word on the paper’s left side and its definition on the right.

Understand

- 1) Stella feels nervous to stand up and introduce herself to Stanley in front of the class. What could Stella do to work through her nervousness? How could her teacher and classmates help?
- 2) Stella wonders if she will feel “normal” as an American citizen. Why might it be a problem to use words like *alien* to describe immigrants and *natural citizen* to describe people born in a country? How might people in each category feel when described this way?
- 3) Stella only shares her drawings if “they are perfect.” Is this a good policy? Why or why not?



Ask students about times when they have received feedback on their work.

Reading: Chapter 6

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Why does Stella say that speech class is a nice “escape” from her classroom?
 - » Speech class allows Stella to escape feeling embarrassed and like she doesn't fit into her classroom. In speech class, she doesn't have to see Stanley, whom she is avoiding. There are fewer people there.
- 2) Stella's dad doesn't live with her. Where is he, and what does he do?
 - » He's in Colorado, works at Stella's tío's store, skis, and takes pictures.
- 3) Why does Stella think speech class is annoying?
 - » She has practiced many of the same exercises for three years, and she must convince Ms. Thompson that she is saying the words correctly.
- 4) Why is Stella excited to get back to class for math games?
 - » She is good at math and gets to show her classmates that she is smart. Numbers are easy for her to say.
- 5) What happens in the last round of the math game?
 - » It's between Stella and Stanley. Stella knows the answer, but she can't get her mouth to say it, and Stanley wins.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella lives in Illinois, and her dad lives in Colorado. Research these two states and find ways they are similar and ways they are different.
- 2) Stella says the Spanish alphabet is different from the English alphabet. Research the Spanish alphabet and see if you can pronounce each letter correctly in Spanish.

Imagine

- 1) During the final round of math games, Stella knows the answer but cannot make herself say it. How would the story change if Stella said it and won the math game? Rewrite the end of the chapter with Stella winning the math game instead of Stanley.

Have students consider whether or not students would cheer for her, how she'd feel about herself, and whether or not she would be nervous around Stanley.





Have students consider textual evidence as they craft their answer.

- 2) Jessica refuses to move over during math games. Why does she do this? Is it on purpose or accidental? Pretend you are Jessica and are writing a journal entry from your point of view. What does Jessica think about Stella?

Observe

- 1) Using a T-chart, make a list of Stella's dad's positive and negative qualities.
 - » Answers may vary but could include the following: Positive—He is likeable and can make other people laugh. Negative—He is not good at keeping jobs, he argues with her mom, he is unreliable, and he never gives her what she really wants.



Ask how it would feel for a shy child to have to speak in front of others and to have that speech corrected constantly.

- 2) At the end of speech class, Stella gets stickers, which makes her "feel a little better about Ms. Thompson." What are Stella's feelings about Ms. Thompson, and why does she feel that way?
 - » Stella is annoyed at Ms. Thompson when she asks about her father, tells her to speak up, and corrects her for speaking Spanish and mispronouncing words.
- 3) When Stella can't answer the math game question, she says, "This is a new low." What does she mean? List the ways her embarrassment affects how she behaves.
 - » She can't speak, she turns red, she spills things and falls, she speaks softly, and she speaks Spanish.

Understand



Ask students how they behave when they feel upset or uncomfortable.

- 1) Stella wants Ms. Thompson to "stop asking so many questions" about Stella's dad. Though Stella doesn't say it, she appears uncomfortable. What are some physical signs that someone is uncomfortable?
- 2) During the last round of the math game, the whole class cheers for Stanley. How would it feel if no classmates cheered for you? What might you tell yourself to stay strong in that situation?
- 3) During speech class, Stella thinks, "At least I sound better than" Janelle. When can it be good to compare yourself to others, and when might doing this cause problems?

Reading: Chapter 7

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Stella smells like her mom after a hug. What does Stella's mom smell like, and how does that scent make Stella feel?
 - » She smells like lavender and fresh laundry and makes Stella feel safe, warm, and grown up.
- 2) Why does Stella keep hiding from Stanley?
 - » He's good at everything, including running, drumming, balancing a spoon on his nose, and making friends. She doesn't know what to say to him.
- 3) In gym, the class plays kickball. Why do the girls pick Stella to go first?
 - » Stella is the fastest runner on the girls' team.
- 4) How does Stella get the nickname "Stella stares"?
 - » When Stanley rolled the ball to her, she didn't kick it but stood there and stared as it went by her.
- 5) What animal does Stella pick for her project, and what does Jessica have to say about it?
 - » Stella picks fishes, and Jessica says that fishes stare too, just like Stella.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Research Jacques Cousteau. How did he get interested in the water, what is a "Sea Flea," and how did he share what he learned with others?
- 2) Sherlock Holmes is not a real person. What is he, who created him, and what makes him unique?
- 3) Stella's class has to research and write a report on an animal. If you were in Stella's class, what animal would you pick? What information can you find about that animal?

Offer students specific topics to include in their report, such as the animal's habitat, external features, food, etc.





Review the definition of *mortified* and have students consider how their bodies would feel, how they would move, and what their attention would be focused on if they experienced a constant state of strong embarrassment.

Imagine

- 1) Stella states that she is “more mortified than usual” during class. Describe what it would feel like if you went through a day mortified.
- 2) At the end of the chapter, Stella states that the solution to her troubles is to have Jenny in her class. If Jenny and Stella were in the same class, how would the day have been different, starting with the time her mom dropped her off at school?
- 3) Stella asks herself, “Could this day get any worse?” However, several good things happened to her during this day. Rewrite the chapter, focusing on the positive things that happened instead of the negative things.

Observe

- 1) Jenny helps Stella think of and practice different strategies for dealing with Jessica. List the strategies Jenny suggests and how each one is supposed to help.
 - » The girls make a list of things Stella could say so that Jessica won’t tease her for just staring. Jenny also suggests Stella ask questions, which makes it easier to talk to others.
- 2) When Stella and Stanley enter the school at the same time, she goes into the office to hide. List the ways Stella has hidden from others throughout the book.
 - » She hides in the office and behind a book, covers her face, doesn’t speak, sits on the grass by herself, puts her head down on her desk, gives short answers, doesn’t make eye contact, etc.
- 3) During the kickball game, Stella wishes she had “magic words” that would make the class stop teasing her. Use a T-chart to list at least three different things Stella could say to the class, Coach Smith, or Jessica, and the effect each statement would have.
 - » Answers may vary, but students should craft plausible effects for each statement.

Understand

- 1) When Stella misses the kickball, her classmates begin to tease her with “Stella stares!” How could you help someone who is being teased or bullied?
- 2) Stella and Jenny think of questions Stella can ask to learn about another person. What are some questions you might use to start a conversation with someone you don’t know well?

Ask students to think about actions they could take as well as how they might involve peers or adults in stopping the situation.

Have students think of questions for different topics, such as favorite foods, hobbies, etc.



Reading: Chapter 8

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Why does Stella's family go to Fantastic Time Machine, even though it's not a special occasion?
 - » Mom had a great day at work, and they decide to celebrate an "unbirthday."
- 2) What makes the Fantastic Time Machine more than just a regular restaurant?
 - » The servers dress up, and there is dancing, an arcade, and a salad bar in an old car.
- 3) Why do Stella and her family leave the Fantastic Time Machine?
 - » Jessica and another girl tease Stella. Stella tells her mom that she's tired.
- 4) Why doesn't Stella tell her mom that Jessica was being mean to her at the Fantastic Time Machine?
 - » She's embarrassed and doesn't want her mom to worry. Her mom spent money for them to have a good time, and she doesn't want to ruin it.
- 5) What does Stella think Jessica may be right about?
 - » Jessica may be right that Stella only stares and needs Jenny to talk for her.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella's favorite personality at the Fantastic Time Machine is Einstein, and her mom's is Elvis. Pick one of these men and find out what made him famous.
- 2) A Shirley Temple is a drink named after someone famous. Research to find out who Shirley Temple was and why a drink was named after her.
- 3) Stella once pretended to camp like they did in *Little House in the Big Woods*, a novel by Laura Ingalls Wilder. How was life different for young people during the 1870s when Wilder was growing up?



Have students think about where people in the 1870s lived, got their food, and went to school. They could also consider how people traveled or shared information with people who were far away.

Imagine

- 1) Design your own themed restaurant. Be sure to think about the food, decorations, and entertainment.
- 2) Invent a drink named after someone famous. Explain why you picked that person, what ingredients would be in the drink, and how it would be served.
- 3) After Jenny falls asleep, Stella stays awake trying to think up the perfect comeback to Jessica's teasing. What would you say to Jessica if you were Stella?

Have students think about responses with different attitudes, such as being funny, assertive, mean, etc.



Observe

- 1) Stella describes the Fantastic Time Machine as “nothing from the outside, but... amazing on the inside.” Using a T-chart, compare how those same words might describe Stella.
- 2) Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast how dancing at the Fantastic Time Machine is similar to and different from dancing at home.
- 3) Of Jenny's mom, Stella says, “Ms. Le is strong like my mom. She takes care of Jenny all by herself, too.” Why does Stella think of these two women as strong?

Have students compare what people who know and love Stella see versus how Stella appears to people who do not know her very well.



Ask students to think about the amount of work it takes to do something by yourself versus doing work with someone else, such as a parent, grandparent, or other adult.



Understand

- 1) Stella lies to her mom and Jenny about how she feels. Why do some people lie about how they feel? Is there ever a good reason to lie to someone?
- 2) Stella loves to dance and sing when she feels safe. What do you like to do when you are sure no one will make fun of you?

Reading: Chapter 9

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Why do Stella's relatives from Mexico City want to visit at Thanksgiving, an American holiday?
 - » They love to eat the American food Stella's mom cooks, because it is "exotic" and different.
- 2) Where does Stella's family buy Latin American foods for the relatives' visit?
 - » They go to a different town, farther away from their home, to a store called *La Sorpresa* that specializes in Latin American foods.
- 3) How does Stella feel about her *abuelo*, her mother's father?
 - » She is close to him and enjoys spending time with him. He helped care for the family after Stella's mom and dad got divorced, and Stella feels like he really cares about what she has to say.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella's relatives are coming from Mexico City, Mexico to Chicago, Illinois. Research how many miles separate these cities, how much it costs to fly between them, and how long the trip takes.
- 2) America is home to people from many different countries and heritages. Research to find out what specialty markets are near where you live, what kinds of food they offer, and from which countries those foods come.

Imagine

- 1) Stella doesn't feel like she fits in at school or in Mexico City. Imagine a place where Stella would fit in and explain why it is perfect for Stella.
- 2) Stella's family from Mexico City loves it when her mom makes American food. If you were going to make an American food for someone from a different country, what food would you make and why?



Have students consider the things that help Stella feel comfortable and happy.



Ask students to think about their own favorite foods (macaroni and cheese, hamburgers, chicken nuggets, etc.).

Observe

- 1) Use a T-chart to show how a Mexican quesadilla is different from a Salvadoran quesadilla.
 - » A Mexican quesadilla has tortillas and cheese and is served warm. A Salvadoran quesadilla is a golden cake with sesame seeds.
- 2) List the different places Stella's *abuela* can cook dishes from, and explain what that reveals about Stella's ancestry.
 - » Her *abuela* can make dishes from Spain, Italy, Cuba, and Central America. It means that, although Stella was born in Mexico, her ancestors are from all over the world.
- 3) When Stella hears people speaking Spanish in the market, she says it "feels like a warm blanket." What does she mean by this? List other things she could have named that would create the same feeling as a warm blanket.

Have students brainstorm words that describe what a warm blanket feels like, then have them name other items that could create a similar feeling.



Understand

- 1) Stella and her relatives from Mexico don't speak each other's languages well. How would it feel to have family with whom you couldn't talk and share? What are some ways you could solve this problem?
- 2) Stella keeps many worries to herself, which makes her miserable. When is it helpful to share your concerns with another person?

Communication problems aren't always language based. Have students consider how they would communicate with people who have different physical abilities (such as hearing or speech impairments) or different backgrounds.



Reading: Chapter 10

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Stella hopes to be like her Tía Margarita when she grows up. Why?
 - » She speaks four different languages, travels the world, and is a creative, smart, professor.
- 2) Stella sets the table for Thanksgiving because she has an “artistic eye.” What does that mean?
 - » It means seeing something from a unique, creative perspective. Stella folds the napkins in fancy ways and makes turkey name tags for everyone.
- 3) Before they arrive, Stella thinks about hiding from her relatives like she hides at school. Why?
 - » She hasn’t seen them in two years, she doesn’t speak Spanish well enough to talk to them, and they don’t know anything about her.
- 4) Stella notices how happy her mom looks when she’s singing with Stella’s *abuelo*. Why is she so happy?
 - » Her mom loves Stella’s *abuelo*. He used to sing with his musician friends when she was a child.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella’s favorite song her *abuelo* plays is “*El Corrido de Chihuahua*.” Research *corridos*. Why are they important in Mexican culture?
- 2) Stella and Nick wait at home while their relatives go through customs. Research to learn about the customs process. What do you have to do when going through customs?



Have students review Stella’s explanation of the customs process.

Imagine

- 1) Stella describes how much her family loves each other, how nice that is, and how much easier life is with relatives around. If the relatives enjoy each other so much, why might Stella's family stay in America?
- 2) Stella wishes her family had never left Mexico. How would her life be different if they had stayed? Retell a scene from the book, using Mexico City as the setting instead of Chicago.

Have students consider what a day in Mexico City would look like if Stella—a native Spanish speaker—went to school there and came home to a big family.



Observe

- 1) Stella wishes they had never left Mexico. Using a Venn diagram, map out what life would be like in Mexico, what it is like in America, and what would be the same no matter where Stella lived.
- 2) When Stella greets her *abeulo*, he says a lot with his body language. Using a T-chart, make a list of things Abuelo says and does when he first sees Stella on the left, and what they reveal or how they make Stella feel on the right side.
- 3) Stella's brother "beams" when he greets Juanis. In earlier chapters, Nick usually smirks to show he is happy. Think about the difference between a smirk and a beam, and explain why Nick might beam in this scene.

Understand

- 1) Stella states, "It's hard to want to talk when people aren't even listening to you," because Juanis keeps interrupting her. Pair up with a classmate. One partner should tell a story, but halfway through, the other partner should interrupt and guess the end. Try this several times. How easy is it to have a conversation in this way?
- 2) Stella feels happy that some things, like smiling and laughter, don't need to be translated, because she knows right away what they mean. List other gestures, sounds, or actions that don't need a translation—moments when you know what the person is thinking or feeling without words.

Have students begin with simple questions, like "Where is the pencil sharpener?" but have them stop before they get to the object. Are partners able to communicate well?



Have students play game of charades as a means of identifying gestures that do not need translation.



Reading: Chapter 11

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Why does Stella like going to work with her mom?
 - » She likes to see where her mom works and what she does all day while Stella is at school.
- 2) What does Stella do while her mom is working?
 - » She writes and illustrates a book about pirates called *Captain Rob and Monkey*.
- 3) What does Stella's mom do for Stella before they leave work?
 - » She binds *Captain Rob and Monkey* so that it looks like a real book.
- 4) What does Stella do when she gets to school on Monday?
 - » She shows Ms. Bell the book she made over Thanksgiving.
- 5) How does Stanley respond when Ms. Bell announces Stella's book?
 - » He says, "Cool! Pirates!"
- 6) Ms. Bell states that the students will have to give a presentation of their animal report. How does Stella feel about this?
 - » At first she thinks it might not be so bad. Then she looks at Jessica and thinks it could be terrible.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.



Have students name other kinds of public transportation (such as the bus), then consider how public transportation might affect the environment, traffic, or other aspects of daily life.

- 1) The Metra is a form of public transportation in Chicago. Research where it goes and when was it built. How is public transportation beneficial to a large city?
- 2) Stella's mom works for a radio station. Research a local radio station. Find out what kind of jobs people have there, what special words or radio lingo they use, and what happens behind the scenes.
- 3) Stella reads about anemonefish on the train. Research to discover what other information you can learn about anemonefish.

Imagine

- 1) Stella created a fictional book about pirates. If you were going to write your own book, what topic would you write about? If you have time, write and illustrate your own book. If you're proud of your work, ask your teacher if you can read it aloud to the class.
- 2) The train's slogan is "Metra: The Way to Really Fly!" Create a slogan for things you use or see every day.
- 3) Going to work with her mom is special for Stella, because she gets to spend time alone with someone she loves. If you could create a special outing with someone you care about a lot, who would it be, and how would you choose to spend your time together?

Remind students that stories have a beginning, middle, and end, as well as characters, a setting, a problem, and a solution.



Observe

- 1) Create a list of the steps, in order, that Stella takes to make her book. Begin when she has the idea and end when she shares her story aloud with the class. Then add a word or phrase to describe how Stella feels as she works on each step.
- 2) Stella feels confident that she can do a good job on the presentation until she looks at Stanley and Jessica. Why does she change her mind? Support your thinking with examples from the text.

Have students consider how Stella reacts when Stanley is around (turning red, freezing, dropping things) and how Jessica has acted toward her (calling her names, turning the class against her, etc.).



Understand

- 1) Stella pretends a lot during this chapter. Why might someone pretend, and what effect does pretending have? When is it helpful or good to pretend, and when might it cause problems?
- 2) When Stella goes to work with her mom, she gets to see a part of her mom's world that is usually private. What part of your world do you usually keep private, and who would you share it with if you could?

Have students think about external parts of their lives as well as internal ones, such as their creative ideas, hopes, fears, etc.



Reading: Chapters 12-13

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) What does Stella's family do on New Year's Day? Where?
 - » They go to the Wisconsin Dells. They snowshoe, eat lunch, and walk around downtown.
- 2) Why didn't Stella's mom celebrate Three Kings Day with her children?
 - » It is a Mexican holiday, and she wanted Nick and Stella to fit in.
- 3) What Christmas presents did Stella's dad send for her and Nick?
 - » Her dad sent socks and gloves from her *tío's* store.
- 4) Why does Stella eat with Lauren? How does she get to know her?
 - » Stella eats lunch with Lauren because Jenny is sick. She tries asking Lauren questions to get to know her better.
- 5) What "genius" idea does Nick have about Stella's presentation?
 - » He suggests they go to Shedd Aquarium for research and presentation ideas.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella's family goes to Wisconsin Dells on New Year's Day. Where is Wisconsin Dells, and why does it attract people?
- 2) Nick tells Stella about legal aliens. Research legal aliens who have contributed to America.
- 3) Nick teases Stella about Bigfoot. She's pretty sure he doesn't exist, though many people have told stories about him. Learn about Bigfoot, then reimagine the snowshoeing scene with Bigfoot as a real character.
- 4) In Mexico, Three Kings Day is more important than Christmas. What does this holiday honor, when is it, and how is it celebrated?



Have students look for information that reveals Bigfoot's internal and external characteristics, then think about how both of those explain the kind of character he might be in a story.

Imagine

- 1) Describe all the lives Stella touches, then identify the lives you touch by being in the world. Draw a web to show these connections.
- 2) Stella dislikes the socks and gloves her dad gives her for Christmas. Design a Christmas do-over for Stella and her dad. What could Stella's dad do that she would like better than socks and gloves?

Have students think about how they affect the lives of family members, best friends, classmates, teachers, people they help or serve in small ways, etc.



Observe

- 1) Stella's dad says, "You know I'd do anything for you guys," but Stella and Nick don't seem to believe it. Using a T-chart, list the things Stella's dad has done, and compare it to all of the things Stella and Nick wish he had done or would do. How is her dad doing at meeting their needs?
- 2) Stella stays quiet when Jessica teases her at indoor recess, but she reacts when Bridget says, "Maybe she's stupid." Why does she stand up for herself at this point?
- 3) Nick and Stella have a very special relationship. Sometimes Nick acts like a pest, and other times, he is sweet. Using a T-chart, find examples of both throughout the book. How does Nick treat Stella most of the time?
- 4) Nick gives Stella several examples of how being an alien is a positive thing. List his reasons, then rank them in order from the most effective argument to the least effective argument.

Have students go back through the text and find all of the times when Stella has talked about being smart.



Understand

- 1) Stella's mom doesn't celebrate Three Kings Day in America because she wants Stella and Nick to fit in. Why might people think that hiding part of who they are will help them fit in? Does it work?
- 2) Stella states that being in the gym with people crowded together feels lonelier than being out at recess alone. Have you ever felt lonely even when there were people around you? Why might a big crowd make you feel even more lonely?

Ask students if there are times when it is appropriate to hide who you are.



Reading: Chapters 14-15

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Why does Anna sit with Stella and Jenny at lunch?
» Her best friend, Isabel, is absent.
- 2) Why is Stanley embarrassed at the Valentine's Day party, and how can Stella tell he feels this way?
» Stella's mom feels his hair and says it is as soft as a teddy bear. Stanley's face gets red.
- 3) What is Stella's real name, and what does her mom say it means?
» Estrella, which means star. Her mom says she can "light up the dark."
- 4) How does Pancho react to Stella's spelling bee poster?
» He "zips around his fishbowl," which, to Stella, means he likes it.
- 5) After Stella spells her first word correctly, she grows excited for the next round. Why does she like the spelling bee so much?
» She loves to show how smart she is, and she is fairly good at spelling.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.



Offer students specific kinds of information to research, such as habitat, diet, adaptations, etc.

- 1) Stella is most afraid of one sea creature: the great white shark. Research this fish, then use what you learn to create an informational essay, book, presentation, or other item.
- 2) The Scripps National Spelling Bee takes place every year, with students under the age of fifteen participating for the championship. These talented students have lots of strategies for improving their spelling. Research the event, the people behind it, and the tools the contestants use to help them be successful.

Imagine

- 1) Pretend you are making Valentine's Day cards for the students at Stella's school. Instead of writing about Valentine's Day, write a line or two of advice. What would you write for Stanley, Jessica, Jenny, Stella, Lauren, and Anna?
- 2) Stella's teacher asks her to make a poster for the third grade spelling bee. How would you advertise a spelling bee so that people will notice it, know some of the important information about it, and want to attend it?

Ask students what each character might need to learn about himself or herself.



Observe

- 1) A turning point is an important moment when something starts to change. What was the turning point when Stella started to feel brave? Back up your answer with examples from the book.
- 2) Driving home from the Valentine's Day party, Stella's mom can tell that Stella is upset. Where else in the book has Stella's mom been able to tell that Stella is upset about something?
- 3) Stella begins to realize that hiding from problems is not as effective as facing them. How has she changed from the beginning of the book to now?
- 4) When Stella walks up to the stage, her "legs feel wobbly like *flan*." This is a simile, because it compares two things using *like* or *as*. Look up *flan*, then think about American foods that would be just as "wobbly." Write three new similes with the sentence starter, "Stella's legs felt wobbly like _____."

Have students review Chapters 12–15 to find examples of Stella's growing bravery.



Ask students to name when Stella last hid in the book, then to compare that to her behavior in Chapters 14–15.



Understand

- 1) While Stella eats lunch with Jenny and Lauren, Jessica comes over and tries to bully her. Stella chooses to ignore her. When is it best to ignore someone, and when is it a good idea to do something more active?
- 2) Stella's mom holds her hand, which makes Stella feel safe. What other things can people say or do to comfort one another during a difficult time?

Ask students what sort of situations might need support from others, such as adults.



Reading: Chapters 16-17

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) How does Stella's family celebrate her performance at the third grade spelling bee?
 - » They go to the local library, listen to an author, and get frozen yogurt.
- 2) Stella tells Pancho a secret after her visit to the library. What does she tell him?
 - » Stella tells Pancho that she may want to be an author one day.
- 3) Why is Stella's dad in town?
 - » He and his brother, Stella's *tío*, are there for a conference.
- 4) What does Stella's dad teach her on their visit?
 - » He teaches her how to bowl better.
- 5) When Stella and Nick come home, what is their mom doing?
 - » She is making *albondigas* for dinner.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella explains that a starfish can regrow a lost arm. This is called regeneration. What other animals can regenerate, and how do they do it?
- 2) Stella's mom tells her that Frida Kahlo has the strength of a starfish. Research to find out more about this artist.
- 3) Stella loves going to the library. With all of its books, speakers, and contests, it's a treat for her to go there. Learn more about your community library. What programs does it offer, and how can you take advantage of its services?

Imagine

- 1) Stella thinks her dad isn't all bad, he just doesn't know any better. Write Stella's dad a friendly letter, giving him advice about how to be a better dad to Stella and Nick.
- 2) Stella won third place for illustrating a scene from her favorite book. If you were to illustrate your favorite scene from a book, which scene would you pick, and what details would make it easy or hard to illustrate? After thinking about these questions, try illustrating the scene.

Have students name some ways Stella and Nick might need him, and how he could better meet those needs.



Observe

- 1) Stella and her father have similar childhoods. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast their childhoods. Does one of them appear to have more positive things going for them, or are they equal?
- 2) Stella believes she is a starfish. Describe as many examples as you can of times when Stella has regenerated after losing a part of herself.
- 3) What details from the book show how Stella connects with the author at the library?
 - » The author is a girl, she writes children's books, she writes some in English and Spanish, she had trouble with her speech as a child, people didn't think she was smart, and she read a lot.

Ask students to think about how Stella has been hurt or suffered a loss, and how she has grown in spite of it.



Ask students to name things that Stella and the author have in common.



Understand

- 1) Stella mentions *The Wizard of Oz*, the tale of a girl who feels like she doesn't belong and runs away from home. In the end, she finds out that home is the one place she does belong. Where do you belong? Where do you feel safe and loved? If you haven't found that spot yet, what place would you create for yourself if you could?
- 2) Frida Kahlo, the author at the library, and Stella are all starfish. Who in your life is a starfish, and what makes them that way?

Remind students that, in this context, anyone that suffers a loss and can come back stronger is a starfish. Ask students if they or anyone they know has come back from a loss.



Reading: Chapter 18

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Stella gives her brother a card with a sea dragon on it. Why did she choose the sea dragon?
 - » Her brother takes care of her and gives her piggy back rides. Male sea dragons take care of and carry their young. Nick likes dragons, and when Stella is learning to ride her bike, he helps her until she is ready to ride the bike herself.
- 2) What are the four presents Stella gets for her birthday?
 - » Tickets to Shedd Aquarium, a book, colored pencils, and a bike.
- 3) Stella decides that Stanley may not always be the best at everything after all. What makes her believe this?
 - » Stanley only made it as far as she did in the spelling bee. She was as good as he was.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Some people believe that when you blow out the candles on your birthday cake in one breath, your wish will come true. Research to find other superstitions or beliefs about wish making.
- 2) Stella says Nick is like a sea dragon. Research the sea dragon. What does it look like? Where does it live?

Imagine

- 1) At dinner, Stella gets a fortune cookie. Pretend that you are writing the fortunes for the cookies. What would be a good fortune for Stella? Nick? Their mom?
- 2) On Stella's birthday, her mom tells her she gets to make the rules. If you were going to create a list of rules for the day, what would they be?
- 3) Pretend you are Stella and compose a letter to Nick, telling him how you feel about him deep in your heart.



Ask students if they have ever made a wish with something other than birthday candles, such as a turkey wishbone, eyelash, coin in a fountain or well, shooting star, etc.



Brainstorm a list of things Nick has done over the course of the text, both positive and negative. Then, have students consider which actions are significant and which ones are not.

Observe

- 1) As Stella learns how to ride a bike, she goes through different stages of comfort with the process. Create a timeline about her feelings during this new experience, from beginning to end.
 - » First, she is afraid. She starts, but stops and is close to crying. She doesn't want to fall. She chooses to be brave and takes a deep breath. She tries over and over. She is able to do it by herself a few times. Then she rides in circles. At first, she is wobbly, but the more she does it, the better she gets. She imagines riding with her friends, then with Stanley, and soon she is almost racing.
- 2) Stella has grown a lot over the course of the book. Compare Stella from the beginning of the book to Stella now, on her ninth birthday. How would she have responded differently to learning to ride a bike if she got it at the beginning of the book instead of now?
- 3) Think about the gifts Stella's mother gives her for her birthday and the presents her father gave her at Christmas and on his visit. Compare and contrast Stella's mom and dad using a Venn diagram. How are they similar and how are they different?

Understand

- 1) Stella says that her dad was supposed to teach her how to ride a bike, but Nick did instead. Has there ever been a time when someone has stepped in to help you even though the job was meant for someone else?
- 2) For Stella's birthday, she gives Nick a present and card for being such a good brother. Some people choose to celebrate others on their birthday by asking for donations instead of presents or doing other generous things. Why might someone do this? If you were going to celebrate someone or something else on your birthday, who or what would it be?
- 3) Stella's mom says that "Everyone falls at some point." What does she mean by this, and when have you fallen in your own life? Were you able to get back up?

Ask students if they have ever had homework help from someone other than their teacher, sports help from someone other than their coach, and so on.



Ask students how the starfish analogy relates to this quote from Stella's mom.



Reading: Chapter 19

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) Stella hopes to accomplish two things on her trip to Shedd Aquarium. What are they?
 - » She wants to get ideas for her presentation and see the lionfish, the last sea creature for her project.
- 2) Who does Stella see at the aquarium, and how does she respond?
 - » She sees Stanley and tries to hide from him.
- 3) When Stella's mom asks what's wrong, how does she know that her mom is serious?
 - » She speaks only Spanish.
- 4) When do Stanley and Stella finally talk?
 - » They talk when Stella is picking out a book at the gift shop.
- 5) Why did Stanley think Stella was hiding from him?
 - » He thought it was because she didn't like him.
- 6) What idea does Stella get for her presentation, and who suggests it?
 - » Stella is going to dress up as Jacques Cousteau, and Stanley gave her the idea.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) How do places like Shedd Aquarium care for the creatures they have on exhibit? What steps do they take to ensure the creatures' health and safety?
- 2) Stella states that the sea turtles look like they're doing tai chi. What is tai chi? Where did it begin, how is it done, and why are people doing it in parks where Stella lives?

Imagine

- 1) Stella comes up with lots of creative descriptions of the different sea creatures she sees: the sea turtles look like they're doing tai chi and the sea otters look like Olympic gymnasts. Pick at least three other animals, not necessarily in the sea, and describe them in a unique way.
- 2) How would Stella's visit to the aquarium have been different had Stanley not been there on the same day?

Remind students to think about both the positive and negative things that would happen if Stanley were not there.



Observe

- 1) Stanley introduces Stella to his father by sharing her strengths as he sees them. Compare Stanley's description of Stella to Stella's descriptions of Stanley. How do they see each other versus how they see themselves?
- 2) Stella and Stanley have a lot in common. List how they are similar, then review your list. Do you think Stella would have acted differently toward Stanley if she had known how much they had in common?
- 3) Stella loves the book she got, but the day's end was "probably the best present of all." What does she mean by this, and how will her time at school change because of this "present"?
- 4) When Stella talks to Stanley in the gift shop, she begins to realize that it's easy, just like talking to Jenny, Anna, or Nick. How is this similar to what she learned from the spelling bee and riding a bike?
- 5) Stella knows that her mom can tell she's lying just by looking at her. Which of Stella's behaviors might make her mom think Stella is lying?

Have students go back in the text to each of those new experiences. Have them pay attention to how Stella felt before trying it versus how she felt at the end of the experience.



Ask students to think about how they act when they are nervous.



Understand

- 1) Stella receives a lot of advice over the course of the book. What is some of the best advice you ever received, and how did it help you?
- 2) Stella's best present on her birthday wasn't something you could buy in a store. What is the best non-store present you have ever received, or what non-store present would you like to receive and why?

Encourage students to think about people with whom they would like to spend time, experiences they would like to have, or a way they would like to feel, such as more confident or less shy.



Reading: Chapter 20-Author's Note

Ask

Use evidence or quotations from the text to answer the following questions.

- 1) How does Stella feel on the morning of her presentation?
 - » She's "mostly happy," because school has been going well for her lately.
- 2) What news does Ms. Thompson have for Stella and her mom?
 - » She tells them that Stella has graduated and no longer needs to go to speech class.
- 3) How can Stella tell her presentation is going well?
 - » People smile at her, nod, and applaud at the end.
- 4) Stella's summer officially begins when her family does what?
 - » They walk to Oberweis, an ice cream shop, to get ice cream.
- 5) Stella comes home and plays with Stanley and Jenny. What do they do together?
 - » They ride bikes, ride bikes with no hands, and howl.

Explore

Use the resources your teacher provides to investigate the following items.

- 1) Stella and her family pretend to be spies on the way to get ice cream. Research to learn more about spies.
- 2) During his presentation, Stanley hands out a fact sheet on monkeys. Research monkeys to discover the information Stanley might have shared with his classmates.

Imagine

- 1) Stella's mom asks what flavor of ice cream she looks like. Think about the characters in the book, and decide what flavor of ice cream each one would resemble.
- 2) If it is true that "you are stronger than you realize" and that you can accomplish anything you put your mind to, what would you try, if you knew it was impossible for you to fail?



Ask students to think about how they would answer this question based on their life at school, at home, with friends, etc.

Observe

- 1) In the Author's Note section, the author shares the things that she has in common with her character, Stella. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between them.
- 2) Stella feels a bit like a sea otter now, because she has people to protect her: Nick, Jenny, her mom, and her family in Mexico. However, these people were all in her life at the beginning of the book. If the people who protect her haven't changed, why does Stella feel different? Look through the book for evidence to support your answer.
- 3) Stella changes dramatically from the beginning of the book to the end. List the ways she has changed, then decide if these changes are mostly positive or mostly negative.

Have students create a list of the things she was afraid of, but is not afraid of anymore.



Understand

- 1) Angela Dominguez, the author of *Stella Díaz Has Something to Say*, said that it was hard for her to be different and misunderstood at times. When have you felt out of place, like you didn't fit in, or that people didn't understand you?
- 2) Stella has lots of people who protect her now. Think about your own life. Who would be in your sea otter family? Who protects you?
- 3) If you were going to change one thing in your life after reading this book, what would it be and why?
- 4) Angela Dominguez says she wrote this book to help people find the starfish within them. How are you like a starfish?

Ask students to think about family members, friends, teachers, coaches, and others who might offer them support.



Overview of the Five-Day Fluency Routine

Research demonstrates that fluency practice produces gains in reading comprehension. Amplify CKLA's fluency instruction includes modeled reading, assisted reading (such as choral or paired reading), and independent reading, along with breadth of text encounters and extended deep reading of selected texts. This multi-faceted approach ensures that students receive low-stakes practice along with engaging, authentic fluency tasks, such as performances. Daily instruction regularly provides students with fluency practice. Additionally, each unit includes at least one extended fluency performance, which requires students to spend five days with a single short text, culminating in a performance. The program also includes supports for students to practice fluency at home.

It is important to remember that the primary goal of the five-day fluency routine is to equip students to read the passage accurately and with expression. As they gain accuracy and confidence, they will naturally begin to read more quickly. However, because students who are pushed to read more quickly often sacrifice accuracy, it is important not to pressure students to race through the text or to read with undue speed. Because this is not a memorization drill, students should read the text as they perform; even if students say they have memorized the passage, encourage them to read the words rather than recite them from memory.

The five-day fluency performance routine includes the following components.

- **Day 1:** Teacher introduces text and reads it aloud several times, modeling different tones or inflections and encouraging students to reflect on each one. For example, if the teacher reads in a monotone, students should realize that this is not a stellar reading; they may suggest better approaches, such as reading in a happy tone, an excited tone, a nervous tone, or other tone appropriate to the selected text.

During this week, students are encouraged to start reading the target text aloud at home using reading logs to record each session with a student's "Happy Hearer." Alternatively, students may create their own log page in their reading journals.

- **Day 2:** Students practice reading the text chorally, with varying inflection, tone, or other elements.

- **Day 3:** Students practice both choral and paired readings, continuing to develop tone, inflection, and expression.
- **Day 4:** Students continue practicing paired readings in preparation for the following day's performance.
- **Day 5:** Student pairs perform their reading.

If you choose to evaluate students' performance at this stage, you may use the Fluency Passage Performance Rubric to evaluate each performance. Students who still struggle with fluency at this stage in the year may benefit from additional practice with the materials in the Fluency Supplement, available on the Amplify CKLA website.

Fluency Passage Performance Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic
Accuracy	Reading contains no errors in pronunciation.	Reading contains minimal errors in pronunciation.	Reading contains numerous errors in pronunciation.
Rate	Reading is conversationally paced or paced to show appropriate emphasis and inflection.	Reading is uneven, with interspersed periods of speed and sluggishness.	Reading is labored and slow.
Expression	Expression is strong throughout the reading. While the tone and volume may vary, they do so in keeping with the student's understanding of the piece.	Reading generally sounds like everyday speech, with possible lapses into expressionless speech.	Words are pronounced, but they are not spoken in a manner that indicates an understanding of their meaning.

Dear Family Member,

Your child has been assigned a Fluency Performance Passage in conjunction with the texts we are studying in class. This passage will be introduced in class, and students will spend several lessons practicing reading this passage aloud. On the fifth day, students will perform a reading of this passage. We follow this routine because repeated readings of text help build reading fluency, which includes automatic word recognition, expression, accuracy, and speed. Additionally, over one hundred studies have shown that deep reading, in which students spend time reading and rereading a single text, has a dramatic impact on reading comprehension. In fact, it is such an important impact that it helps students better comprehend the passage they have practiced as well as passages they will read in the future.

As part of our in-class practice, students study and discuss this passage. I will demonstrate different ways of reading it aloud, and students will analyze what makes a good reading. They will also practice reading this passage aloud in various ways.

You can assist your child by asking him or her to read the passage aloud at home. Even if your child remembers some or all of the words, remind him or her to read the passage rather than recite it from memory. Children may practice by reading to family members, caregivers, or even the family pet. Please log each reading your child completes in the Happy Hearers Log, which accompanies this letter.

Thank you for your help!

Happy Hearers Log

An important way to prepare for your Fluency Passage Performance is to practice reading the passage to others. They may be your parents, your siblings, another family member or friend, or even the family pet. Whoever they are, they're sure to be a Happy Hearer when they get to listen to you read your passage!

Each time you practice reading your Fluency Passage to a listener at home, record it in the Happy Hearers Log.

Day of the reading	Name of the Happy Hearer	Notes

Core Knowledge Language Arts

Amplify.

Senior Vice President and General Manager, ELA

Alexandra Clarke

Vice President, Elementary Literacy Instruction

Susan Lambert

Editorial

Elizabeth Wade, PhD, Managing Curriculum Developer

Patricia Erno, Managing Curriculum Developer

Kristen Kirchner, Content Writer

Amber McWilliams, Product Manager

Christina Cox, Copy Editor

Project Management

Jennifer Skelley, Director, K-8 ELA Print Production and Operations

Leslie Johnson, Associate Director

Zara Chaudhury, Associate Project Manager

Design and Production

Erin O'Donnell, Art Director

Contributors

Bill Cheng

Ken Harney

Molly Hensley

David Herubin

Ian Horst

Sara Hunt

James Mendez-Hodes

Christopher Miller

Tory Novikova

Sheri Pineault

Diana Projansky

Todd Rawson

Julia Sverchuk

Elizabeth Thiers

Jeanne Thornton

Amanda Tolentino