



Discussion Guide

by
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Thinking About Themes

Meeting the Characters

Spotting the Plot

Activities

Puzzle

In ***Azalea, Unschooled***, eleven-year-old Azalea and her family decide to try the freewheeling model of home education called unschooling. When the family's business is threatened by an unknown vandal, Azalea is determined to use her unschooling skills to solve the mystery.

Azalea, Unschooled

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Middle Grade Fiction, Ages 8 - 12

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6 x 9, 130 pages, with b/w interior art

Thinking About Themes

Every book has themes, or big ideas, that run through it. Some of the themes in *Azalea, Unschooled* are:

Friendship

It's not always easy to make friends...or to keep them. Why is friendship so important to Azalea?

Family

Sometimes you have to share a room with someone who drives you crazy! How do the members of Azalea's family learn to understand one another better?

Change

It's tough starting over...and over...and over. What changes do Azalea and her family face when they move to Portland?

Choices

Some are easy, but others keep you up at night. What big choices do Azalea and her family make throughout the book?

How about you?

What other themes did you find in the book? Which of the themes in the book feel important in your own life?

Meeting the Characters

The characters are the people in the book. (The book would be pretty dull without them!)

The narrator

Who tells the story? How would the book be different if someone else told the story?

The family

How are Azalea and Zenith different from one another? How are they similar?

The friends

Why are Azalea and Gabby such good friends? How does Nola affect their friendship?

How about you?

Which characters in *Azalea, Unschooled* would you like to be your friends? Did any of them remind you of yourself, or of anyone you know?

Spotting the Plot

The plot is the action that takes place over the course of the book. Usually, it starts with some kind of problem that the characters face. In the middle of the book, the characters try to solve the problem. Often, they fail the first time around (otherwise it would be a very short book). Eventually, the plot comes to some sort of resolution, or ending.

The Problem

What is the main problem that Azalea has to solve? What are the smaller problems?

The Middle

How does Azalea try to solve the problems? What mistakes does she make along the way?

The Resolution

Which problems get resolved at the end of the book? How are they resolved? Are there problems that remain unresolved?

How About You?

What did you think was the most exciting thing that happened in the book? The saddest? The funniest?

Activities

Ten Things

In *Azalea, Unschooled*, Azalea helps her father by making a list of "Ten Things You Didn't Know About Portland." Make a list of "Ten Things You Didn't Know About Me." Do you have a favorite food? A wild wish? A hilarious hobby? List whatever you want; it's up to you!

Your Tour

Azalea's father takes visitors on tours through Portland, Maine. Suppose you were giving tours of *your* town or city? Where would you take people? What would you talk about? Make a brochure that uses words and pictures to describe your tour. Remember, you want people lining up to fill that tour bus!

Un Fun

Each chapter title in *Azalea, Unschooled* uses **Unschool** instead of **school**. For example, some of the chapter titles are "Unschool Trip," "Unschool Playground," and "Unschool Break." Can you think of any more school terms that would be more fun with **un**? How would the **un** version be different?

Azalea, Unfooled (A Puzzle)

Zenith and the other kids are having a little fun with Azalea. They're all hiding. Each kid is in a different space. Use the clues below to help Azalea figure out where each kid is hiding!

Use the chart to keep track of the answers. Put an X in each box that you know is a wrong answer, and a circle in each box that you know is a right answer.

	inside the tool shed	on top of the tire swing tree	underneath the tarp	behind the steps
Gabby				
Gibran				
Nola				
Zenith				

Clues

1. Gabby is not on top of or underneath anything.
2. Gibran is not inside, on top of, or underneath anything.
3. Nola is not on top of the tire swing tree.

Hint: Remember, once you match a kid to a hiding space, you can X out all the other kids for that space, and all the other hiding spaces for that kid!

Azalea, Unfooled Answer Key

Gabby is inside the tool shed.

Gibran is behind the steps.

Nola is underneath the tarp.

Zenith is on top of the tire swing tree.