



## Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

**Book Title:** *The View from Saturday*

**Author:** E.L. Konigsburg

**Interest Level:** 3-6

**Lexile:** 870L

**Length:** 163 pages

**Guide developed by:** Alex Cox

### **Summary**

*The View from Saturday* is about a paraplegic teacher, Mrs. Olinski, and four sixth graders, all underdogs, who overcome challenges in their personal lives, school lives, and social lives to succeed in areas where they are only expected to be losers. Their triumphs are told in their own words, as well as in the words of third-person narrators, and the characters come alive in the telling as interesting and passionate human beings. This is a story of friendship, identity, and understanding that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

### **Conceptual Connections**

**Conceptual Lens:** Belonging

**Other Key Concepts:** friendship; identity; giftedness

### ***Essential Understandings:***

- Friendship can bring about a sense of belonging.
- Friendship is an important part of identity.
- Understanding giftedness is essential to a gifted child's identity.

### ***Essential Questions:***

- How do individuals gain a sense of belonging?
- How can friendship influence a person's identity?
- Why do gifted individuals need to understand their own giftedness?

## **Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)**

### **Introductory Activity/Hook**

Students who are in a gifted class often feel a need and want to belong outside of the “gifted” label. Whether you belong to a sports team, academic bowl, band, or dance club, the friendships you make can help shape your identity. Complete the *A View from Saturday* anticipation guide by answering “T” if you feel a statement is more true and “F” if you feel the statement is more false. (See last page of Novel Guide for anticipation guide.)

### **Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions**

#### ***Identification:***

- What is the Academic Bowl? How is each character's life experiences used in the Academic Bowl?
- What did Ethan mean by, “Sometimes silence is a habit that hurts”?
- What did Mr. Singh mean when he said, “Every voyage begins when you do”?
- Why is Ethan excited about Julian's tea party?
- Why did Ham Knapp not make the Academic Bowl team?
- What is the “real magic” Julian performs for Epiphany?
- How did each student's Academic Bowl question pertain to his or her life experiences?

#### ***Catharsis:***

- How did Mrs. Olinski feel when Ham Knapp wrote something cruel on her chalkboard? How did she feel about the word “cripple”?
- How did Mrs. Olinski feel about The Souls?
- How did Ethan feel about Nadia? How did Nadia feel about Ethan?
- How did Nadia, Noah, and Ethan feel about Julian's tea parties in the end of the book?

#### ***Insight:***

- What makes you feel needed and wanted by your friends?
- How do your life experiences make you smarter?
- How do you feel about being labeled as “gifted”?
- How do you choose your friends?

### **Universalization/Follow up Activity**

You are in charge of choosing a team of four to compete for the school quiz bowl. You cannot choose your team based on grades, but rather connections the students have with each other. Part of succeeding in a group is being able to get along and respecting each other's opinions! Write a 5-8 sentence paragraph explaining your criteria for choosing your team. At the end of class, share your ideas with your partner.

## Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

### Before Group Discussion (Activities for students to complete independently)

**A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions** related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

#### **Knowledge Questions**

- Who were the main characters?
- What is the Academic Bowl?
- Who was Nadia's grandfather in relation to Ethan?
- What was the name of the school the students attend?
- What was the team name that competed in the academic bowl?
- What did Julian do to get the team to come to his tea party?

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- Why did Mrs. Olinski choose Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian for the Academic Bowl team?
- Why did Julian choose *Alice in Wonderland* as a clue for his tea party?
- Why was Ham Knapp not chosen to be on the Academic Bowl team?
- Why is Ethan excited about Julian's tea party?
- Why does Noah know about calligraphy?
- Why does Julian know about acronyms?

**B. Vocabulary Study:** Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

#### **Vocabulary Words**

- |                 |       |                    |       |
|-----------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| • epiphany      | p. 2  | • incandescently   | p. 24 |
| • bated         | p. 3  | • thorough         | p. 17 |
| • nitpick       | p. 5  | • precision        | p. 21 |
| • unaccompanied | p. 12 | • calligraphy      | p. 87 |
| • ironic        | p. 13 | • coiffed          | p. 21 |
| • fortunately   | p. 14 | • multiculturalism | p. 22 |
| • maimed        | p. 15 | • paraplegic       | p. 71 |
| • superstitious | p. 15 |                    |       |

**Group Discussion:** Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

**Higher-Level Questions** (using Bloom’s categories):

**1. Application:**

- How can the term “Gestaltism” be applied to The Souls?
- How would you react if you were Ethan meeting Julian for the first time?
- Gestaltism means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. What do you think this means?
- How can you apply Gestaltism to a team in which you have been a part?

**2. Analysis**

- Julian is a magician that performs tricks, but what is the real magic he performs?
- Ethan says, “Sometimes silence is a habit that hurts.” What does he mean by this?
- What does Mr. Singh mean by, “Every voyage begins when you do”?
- How does the author show that Julian is very determined?

**3. Evaluation**

- What does this story tell you about friendship? About identity?
- What gifted traits did you see in Ethan? Julian? Nadia? Noah?
- In what ways do you see Gestaltism in *The View from Saturday*?
- How is friendship and important part of identity?

**4. Synthesis**

- What do you think the outcome of the story would be if Mr. Singh had never bought Sillington Place?
- How would the story be different if Mrs. Olinski chose Ham to be one of The Souls?
- Other than *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, what book would you choose to send the invitations to the tea party? Why?

**After Group Discussion:** Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

**A. Connections to the Curriculum:** Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts**—Julian answers a question about acronyms in the Academic Bowl. Divide the class into two teams and have them compete to find as many acronyms as they can within a given time period. Students must be able to tell what each letter in an acronym stands for. Post the teams lists and review each acronym.
- **Social Studies**—Ethan is asked this question in the Academic Bowl: “The following places in New York State are associated with famous women in American history. I shall name a place; you are required to tell me why it is important and name the woman associated with that place.” (page 60) Using the state of Alabama, students will research two women that were famous during the Civil Rights Movement who were important to women’s rights. Students will write 3-5 paragraphs citing sources where appropriate.
- **Science**—Nadia and her grandfather has an interest in the life cycle of sea turtles. She wrote a research paper about these animals, and she explained the turtles’ way of life to her father. In groups of 3-4, students will choose one endangered animal to research in detail just as

Nadia did. Then, they will come up with a rescue plan similar to Grandpa Izzy and Grandma Draper's. They will present this to the class.

- **Art—*The Fine Art of Writing*:** Noah learns calligraphy while visiting Florida. Calligraphy was developed in China over 2,000 years ago. Display different types of calligraphy (you can find pictures from the internet or books with calligraphy) on your white board. Students will try their own hand at this ancient form of writing! Students will also write a B & B letter to a partner using calligraphy, just like Noah.

**B. Creative Reading:** Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story

*The View from Saturday* Anticipation Guide

Directions: In the blank, put "T" (true) if you believe the statement is mostly true. Put "F" (false) if you think the statement is mostly false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Friends should have all the same interests.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. You can be best friends with someone of the opposite sex.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The most important thing in friendship is trust.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In order to be gifted you must also be smart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In order to be gifted you must always make A's.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Gifted kids are weird.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Competition is healthy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Being academically successful means a person is gifted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. You must have many friends in order to belong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Being a part of a team means you must be a leader.