



Curriculum Packet and Discussion Guide for

CONSIDER THE OCTOPUS

By Nora Raleigh Baskin and Gae Polisner

"Superlative writing and character development uplift this timely story . . . An inspiring tale of friendship and conservation." —*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**

"With nonstop action . . . and empathetic characters, this is a fast, fun read. A sure winner for readers interested in the environment and adventure, or even just in adventure." —*School Library Journal*

"On a scale of 1 to 10, I would give this book a 9. . . . it made me laugh. . . . and has a really powerful message. — Ronak Bhatt, *TIME for Kids*

PREPARATION AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Thinking about the dedication, title and cover art:

How do the title and cover art prepare you for what the story might be about? Make some predictions about the story from those two aspects of the book. Be sure to examine both the front cover and the art that extends inside the jacket and onto

the back. 💧 **Deeper dive:** Once the book is over, design your own ideal cover for **CONSIDER THE OCTOPUS**.

- The story opens with two quotes, one from Greta Thunberg and one from Nikola Tesla. What do these quotes mean to you? Why have the authors chosen to include them? 💧 **Deeper dive:** Choose one of the two quotes and discuss what it actually means. Find a quote from a famous figure in pop culture or history that you might use if you were writing a book about the environment and ocean pollution.
- From interviews with the authors, they intend this story to be a comedy or “farce.” They refer to it also being a “comedy of errors” or “comedy of mistaken identity.” What do these terms mean and how does the cover clue you in (or not) that there may be lighter humor elements to the story? How do the quotes that open the story do this as well? 💧 **Deeper dive:** When you’ve completed the book, brainstorm five alternative titles that might be good for this story.




CLOSE READING AND VOCABULARY:

(Think about and talk about a few, some, or all of these questions.) **Chapter 1**


- When we first meet Jeremy or “JB” Barnes, his chapter begins with his name in the heading and, in quotes, “Face of the Oceania II” between his first name, his nickname and his last name, Barnes. What might “Face of the Oceania II” mean? What predictions about JB might you make from this heading?

- What is the tone of JB's first chapter? What do you know about JB by the end of his first section? How would you describe him?

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- Sidney Miller's section headings read differently than JB's. Why do you think the authors chose to do this? What do you know about Sidney by the end of Chapter 1?
- On p. 5, Sidney says, "It's synchronicity, Nana." What does that word mean? What does Sidney mean by that sentence? Explain.
- Who are the important characters we have been introduced to by the end of Chapter 1? Why do you think they are important (or not) to the story?
-  **Deeper dive:** What predictions can you make about JB and Sidney and their story by the end of the first Chapter? Why do you think those predictions might be true?

Vocabulary: hypocrite, "executive decision", schmooze, climatologist, algorithms,

synchronicity.  **Deeper dive:** The word synchronicity becomes important to the story. What does it mean? What are some synonyms and antonyms for synchronicity?




Chapters 2 - 4

- In Chapter 2, JB simply needs to go pee. Did you sense tension - or concern - when he leaves to go do this? If so, why? How has the author made something minor and ordinary feel suspenseful?
- Sidney's first sentence of chapter 2 has her mentioning the bathroom. Why does the author do this here? What are she setting up?
- JB and Sidney refer to the "SEAmester" kids. Who do you think these people will be? Can you make some predictions? How and why?
- Sidney introduces the reader to Rachel Carson in Chapter 2. Who is the real Rachel Carson? Why would Sidney name her goldfish this? What does the fish's name tell you about Sidney?
- At the end of Chapter 2, Sidney says, "I know exactly why I'm here. I know what

I am supposed to do.” What does she mean by this? Why does she come to this conclusion?


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- In Chapter 3, the author has Sidney compare what’s happening to a game of *Tetris*. Why does she do this? What are the comparisons she makes?
- In Chapter 4, JB’s section heading is “Executive Decision Maker.” Why does he call himself this? What does he mean by it? Does the title fit?
- Here, we meet Alex Mylanakos, a character who never appears - or does he/she? What purpose does Alex serve? If you’re not sure yet, are you able to make some predictions?

Vocabulary: summit, angle optics, configure, willpower, lanyard, destiny, weary, sheepishly, clincher.  **Deeper dive:** Choose one of these words and provide a list of synonyms and antonyms.




Chapters 5-13




- Before Chapter 5 begins, a new section is titled “TEN DAYS EARLIER.” How did you feel when you realized the authors are going to go back in time? What do you predict you might learn in this section?  **Deeper dive:** Come back after this section and see how accurate your predictions were.
- Chapter 5 sees JB calling himself “I Am the Chicken.” Why does he choose this nickname for this chapter? What does it tell you about JB?
- JB says Becky Mars “stomped on his heart.” What kind of language is this? How does it make you feel when JB uses it? What does it tell you about JB?
- In this chapter we learn about JB’s parents. How does he feel about his mother? His father? How does it feel to have JB deliver the information about his family as the punchline to a “Why did the chicken cross the road?” joke? Why do you think he does this?
- At the end of his section, JB says, “So many things can make a kid have to puke these days.” What does he mean by this? Is he only talking about his

seasickness?

- In Sidney's section of Chapter 5, we see her room. What kinds of things does she have? What does her room tell us about who she is? Who are the



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bobblehead people she names?  **Deeper dive:** Describe your room - or the room of a fictional character you love. What's in that room? Do you collect anything? What does your answer tell you about you -- or that character?

- In Chapter 5, we learn Sidney keeps a dream journal. Have you ever kept one? What kinds of dreams do you have? Do they tell you anything about yourself?
 **Deeper dive:** Keep a dream journal for a week or two.
- In Chapter 5, we learn about several people who are important to Sidney. Who are they and how does she feel about them?
- JB's part of Chapter 6 starts, "I'm thinking about a girl and a boy..." Why does the author do that? What are we beginning to see about connections between Sidney and JB? Is there another place in this section where we see a surprising connection to Sidney?
- Sidney's part of Chapter 6 is very emotional? Why? How does she feel about the people she's with? How do they feel about her? Does anything good come from this part of her story?
- On p. 38, Sidney says her Nana said, "What am I, chopped liver?" What kind of statement is this? Can you figure out where it comes from and what it might mean?
- What coincidence (bit of synchronicity) opens Chapter 7?
- In Chapter 7, JB describes the Great Pacific Garbage Patch? Have you ever heard of it? Did the description help you to "see" what it is? How does the description make you feel? He also describes the ship. Same questions. 
Deeper dive 1: Learn more about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/great-pacific-garbage-patch> How would you describe it?  **Deeper dive 2:** Take a virtual tour of a research ship. What do you recognize from the book? Describe the part of the ship that are most interesting to you
<https://www.marine.ie/Home/sites/default/files/VirtualTour/index.htm>

- What happens at the end of JB's part of Chapter 7? Why is it important to the story?
- In Sidney's part of Chapter 7, she talks about eating a hot dog. What does this tell you about Sidney? What are the possible reasons she has never actually eaten a hot dog?

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- What kind of synchronicity is taking place in Sidney's part of Chapter 7?
- In JB's part of Chapter 8, we really get to meet the rest of the crew of the Oceania II. Who are they and what do we learn about them? What does JB think of them?
- JB also gets an assignment in this section. What is it and what makes Captain Jim think he'll be good at it? Why might JB feel pressured about the assignment?
- Sidney describes her summer camp experience in Chapter 8. Have you gone to summer camp? How did your experience compare with Sidney's?
- In Chapter 9, Captain Jim writes that the crew is counting on JB's "expertise." Why does this matter to JB? Does the assignment JB has seem easy or hard? How would you go about it?
- In Sidney's part of the chapter 9, Sidney and her Nana actually learn the word synchronicity for the first time. Who teaches them it? What bits of synchronicity take place in this chapter?  **Deeper dive:** Revisit the meaning of synchronicity. Have you ever experienced synchronicity in your life? Describe. Better yet, turn it into a story or poem!
- Sidney's Nana tells Sidney again about her grandpa in this chapter. Why do you think this matters to the story?  **Deeper dive:** Do you have a fond memory of a loved one you have lost? Describe. Better yet, turn it into a story or poem!
- In Chapter 10, JB first learns about the Laysan albatrosses. What does he learn? How does it make him feel. Predict how that might affect him.
- What does JB discover at the end of this chapter? How does it make him feel?
- In her part of Chapter 10, Sidney chooses "Octopus vulgaris" as her profile photo. Why does she choose that? Can you make any predictions from the photo she picks?

- In Chapter 11, the moment that changes everything finally happens. What is it, and do you think JB could have avoided it?
- At the end of Chapter 11, Sidney says she has to tell her nana everything. Predict what might happen. What do you hope will happen?

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- In Chapter 12, the crew of the Oceania II is talking about trying to get media attention to save the ship's mission to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. What do you think of this strategy? Why would media attention help?
- In this Chapter we see Sidney and Nana starting to plot to get Sidney on the ship. Why does she want to go so bad? Why does her nana want her to go, do you think? **Deeper dive:** Have you ever pushed your family to let you do something way out of your comfort zone? Why? What was the outcome?
- In Chapter 13 we get to see JB texting with his friend Nicky. What's their relationship like? Why do you draw these conclusions?
- In this Chapter Sidney and Nana lie to Sidney's parents. How do you feel about this, and why? Think back to the beginning of the book. Predict what might happen next.

Vocabulary: siblings, navigational, cutting-edge, horizon, fragments, nonsensical, analysis, platitude, microbeads or microplastics, industrial, déjà vu, disposable, rummaging, sarcastic, newsworthy, publicity, impromptu, hallmark, corresponding, mandatory, compromise, fortuitous, expertise, Yiddish, cordially, brainstorming, precognitive, avatar, reputable, poker face, zooplankton.



Chapters 14-19


- At the start of Chapter 14, we're literally back at the beginning of the story, but now you know a whole lot more about JB, Sidney, and how they got to the spot we find them in. What do you they should do? Predict what you think might happen.
- Later in Chapter 14, Sidney describes the ocean water as having, "no color at all except deep." How does this description make you feel? 💧 **Deeper dive:**

How would you describe the color of the ocean? Write a poem about the ocean and try to describe how it looks, sounds, feels and smells.

- At the end of Chapter 14, Sidney thinks, *I'm doing this for you, Rachel Carson*. What does she mean by that?
- Where does the beginning of Chapter 15 find our protagonists Sidney and JB? How do you feel about that?

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- When JB goes up to the bridge to the welcome party, we see some of his thoughts in italics. How is JB feeling? How does this compare to how he's acting?
- In Chapter 16, JB realizes there are a few problems with his plan to pretend that Sidney is Alex Mylanakos. What are those problems, and what do you think he should do?
- Chapter 18 is set up like dialogue to a play. How did you feel about it? Why do you think the authors' chose to write the scene this way?
- At the end of Sidney's part of Chapter 19, she tells us, "And that's the last thing I remember." Why? What happened to her, here?
- The words "thump, thump, thump, thump..." appear throughout the early pages of JB's part of Chapter 19. Why has the author done this? How does it make you feel?
- Who is Diamond Blue? Why do you think JB decides to trust her? Do you feel like he can and should? How come?
- How are JB and Sidney feeling about each other by the end of Chapter 19?
- At the end of Chapter 19, the authors share Operation Code Pink Octopus JB and Sidney came up with. What would you change or add? Predict what you think might happen.

Vocabulary: grudge, paramount, reptile, amphibian, festive, roil, wrangler, chivalrous, humiliate, intention, schematic, debate, risk/reward ratio, resignation, jeopardy, gimmick, elaborate, ruse.  **Deeper dive:** All sorts of vehicles, vessels, and buildings have schematics. Design a fictional schematic for a place you wish you could visit.



Chapters 20-24

- Sidney starts chapter 20 in the cabin with Katie and Diamond Blue. Why is this chapter important to Sidney? 💧 **Deeper dive:** In Chapter 20 we also get some

colorful details about the objects in the dry lab. Are any of those objects familiar? Chose an object to research. Sketch the object and provide a description of what it is and what it does.

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- In Chapter 21, JB and Sidney (and the reader) all get to see the edge of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch up close. What do you learn? How does it make them feel? How does it make you feel? What does Sidney mean when she shares that “*No new water is ever made.*”
- At the end of chapter 21, JB remembers a story he saw on TV from a reporter named Damian Jacks. Why do you think he’s interested in remembering this particular person?
- In chapter 22, JB tweets to Damian Jacks. What do you think of his tweets? Do you think they’ll be effective? Why or why not?

Vocabulary: official, tentative, grimace, optimal, co-conspirator, unison, supernova, whirlwind.




Chapters 23-31

- In chapter 23, Sidney’s conscience begins to get to her and she shares that she feels bad for lying to JB’s mom. What causes her to have this change of heart? Do you think she should tell the truth or keep lying? Why? What does she mean at the end of the chapter when she shares that, *The best way to lie is to tell the truth?*
- What kind of gift does JB make for Rachel Carson in chapter 24? Why is this

whole chapter important to their story?  **Deeper dive:** Do you think you can really teach a goldfish to do tricks? Research the answer. Write a story about teaching an animal a trick. Is it true or fiction? If all the students share their stories can they tell factual ones from fiction?

- At the end of Sidney's part of chapter 25, she shares her thought that, "If all goes well, if *anything* goes well, Megan will get to see it on TV." What do you think she's talking about? What do you think she's hoping will happen. Predict what YOU think will happen.

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- In JB's part of chapter 25, he makes an observation about his mom. What is the observation? Why do you think it's important to him?
- At the end of his part, he also shares that he's "wondering how I'll ever explain the half of it." What does he mean by this? What does it tell us about JB?
- In chapter 26, JB says he heard Sabira tell his mom, "We can't lose sight of the good we are doing, just because there isn't someone to document it to the world." What does she mean by this?  **Deeper dive:** What ways can this statement apply to your lives as you grow up under the public pressures of snapchat and Instagram and other social media?
- In chapter 26, Dr. Barnes also has made everyone leave their phones back on the ship. "Today is about being present." Do you agree with her decision or disagree? What does she mean by that?
- At the end of JB's part of this chapter he shares that, "... I'm almost too sleepy to see, and my mom, the chief scientist, steers us smart science SEAmester kids toward a white-sand island far off in the distance..." Why is this moment a big deal - maybe even a turning point - for JB?
- And the end of chapter 27, Katie blurts the truth about Sidney. Why do you think she does this? Predict what might happen next.
- JB's part of chapter 29 starts with him using the nickname "Womaning Up" in the heading. Why does he use this? What does he do to "woman up"? What does this tell you about JB?
- How do you feel when Dr. Barnes says Marco has to take both JB and Sidney back to the ship, and they won't get to see the Laysan albatrosses or the Midway Atoll?


- Chapter 30 begins with a helicopter. Did you know immediately who it would be?
- During Damian Jacks' interview in the section called ONE CRAZY HOW-IS-THIS EVEN-HAPPENING? INTERVIEW, the point of view we are used to throughout the story suddenly changes. What was the point of view before? What is it in this section? Why do you think the authors chose to do this?
- How do you feel at the end of Damian Jacks' interview. Do you think Dr. Barnes will change how she feels about what JB and Sidney have done?

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Vocabulary: variable, buffet, incognito, optimum, dispenser, impersonate, jinx, deflated, projection, stance, anvil, liability, protocol, peripheral vision, lope, chiseled, consumption, murmuration.



Chapters 32 – end

- In chapter 32, JB returns to the thought of the chicken jokes he was making when he arrived on board the ship. Why do you think the author chose to do this? How do his chicken jokes make you feel?
- What are the gifts that JB gives Sidney in this chapter? Why does he choose the items he chooses? How does one of them seem like synchronicity to Sidney?
- What do you think JB and Sidney want the reader to know at the end of chapter 32 when they're talking about dead - and new - scientists?
- In chapter 34, Sidney shares some of the hashtags that are trending in relation to their story - the story that Damian Jacks has reported. What are some other hashtags you might use to encapsulate the funny or important parts of their story?
- At the end of chapter 35, JB texts a silly joke to Sidney? Why do you think he makes that choice instead of saying something more important?  **Deeper dive:** Lots of people use humor to help them get through hard things. What coping tools do you use? And, do you have a favorite joke?
- After THE END, the authors say OH, WAIT, WE'RE KIDDING. ONE MORE THING...

How did you feel when you saw this? What did you think would come next?
How did you feel about the end -- ahem, beginning --of the story?

- In chapter 36 who appears in the story who you already knew from JB and Sidney's summer aboard the Oceania II? Who appears that you haven't met before?
- What point of view (perspective) is this last chapter told from? When have you seen this point of view before in the story?

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- At the end of chapter 36, who is JB running to greet? How do you know this? What are the clear clues?

Vocabulary: swanky, analogy, befallen, animosity, jealousy, anonymous, donor, mentor, smithereens.



LARGER QUESTIONS:

Character Development:

At the beginning of the story, Jeremy JB" Barnes is charged with inviting scientists to the Oceania II for a global summit. What traits does JB possess that would make him a good fit for this role? What traits does JB possess that do not make him a good fit for this role? How does the way JB views himself change throughout the course of the story?

Sidney Miller is a 12-year-old podcaster who is trying to find a way OUT of another boring summer camp. What traits does Sidney possess that make her want to lie to her parents and go aboard the Oceania II even though she knows she wasn't really invited? What traits make her well-prepared for her journey? What traits make you worry that she'll fail?

The cast of CONSIDER THE OCTOPUS, including the crew of the Oceania II, include many minor or secondary characters: e.g. Nana, Dr. Barnes, Captain Jim, Marco, Randi, Vance, Sabira, Chicki, Diamond Blue, Katie and more. Choose TWO minor or secondary characters and discuss who they are, some information about them, and

how they move the plot along or help the main characters. What is their role? Did you like or dislike them, or both? Why are they important to the story?

Story Structure

When the story opens, we are in the middle of the story, at the moment JB is about to meet Sidney. The opening section is called NOW. JB begins the story and his parts of each chapter come first. His section headings include nicknames like “I am the Chicken” and “Face of the Oceania II” while Sidney’s sections, that come second, only include her name “Sidney Miller.”

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By chapter 20, the chapters begin with Sidney instead of JB, and in some chapters, there’s only Sidney OR JB, or sometimes Sidney or JB have a second part in the chapter. Section headings are sometimes clear like TEN DAYS EARLIER and sometimes more vague like WHO CAN KEEP TRACK OF THE DAYS ANYMORE? And by the end, there’s THE END, but then the authors say OKAY, FINE. THE BEGINNING.

In certain chapters the usual point of view of JB and Sidney switch to an omniscient third person who seems to be narrating the story.

Talk about these structural aspects of the story and why you think the authors chose to play with structure the way they did. How does it drive plot? How does it add to the humor, confusion, surprise, or other emotions you feel?

THE SCIENCE OF THE STORY:

- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch: Do some more research on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and some of the methods scientists are currently having success with to start cleaning up the unfathomable amount of plastic pollution in our oceans. What other environmental conservation and clean up are necessary to protect our planet?
- The following real scientists, activists, or conservationists are mentioned in the story: Greta Thunberg, Nikola Tesla, Rachel Carson, Jacques Cousteau, Albert Einstein, and Marie Curie. Research who they are and share their contributions to our world and country.
- The following scientific terms, locations, animals and/or equipment are

mentioned in the story. Choose two to research more carefully, and share your findings with the class: Octopus Vulgarus, Gyres, wet lab, dry lab, Heavy (Brown-tipped) Starfish, ghost nets, drifter buoys, Rosette (Water Sampler) Laysan albatrosses.



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WORDS AND PHRASES TO SAVOR:

Read these quotes or passages aloud. Think about the word choices the authors have made and how the sound and sense of words that are well-chosen can make us feel and see something we're not actually looking at, and be so rewarding to read. Or how something so brief and straightforward can have such a big impact:

“Like how, now, 7:36 is already 7:52, and so the sky is turning to dusk, even though I haven’t done anything except stand here endlessly watching over the railing to see if I can maybe spot a dolphin or shark fins, or at least the white gray shadows of marlins or belugas or sperm whales skimming underneath, or catch the see-through purple shimmer of a Portuguese man-of war bobbing on the surface like some ruffly soup dumpling except with long, deadly tentacles trailing just below the waves.” (p. 48-49)

“Since when is the death of our oceans not a big enough story?” (p. 139)

“Maybe the two of us are supposed to do something really important.” (p. 143)

“This can’t possibly be our planet, the one that is rotating on its axis while it is revolving around a giant plasma ball. The one that is perfectly in balance, a closed system, a hydrological cycle of rain, rivers, clouds, sun, the ground, the sky. The ocean.” (p. 167)

“Because every drop of water we have, all of it, circles around, evaporates into the sky, and comes back down as rain, or mist, or snow. It sinks into the ground and fills rivers, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and the well in my backyard.” (p. 167)

“Humans made it, so we need to fix it.” (p. 168)

“Kids, not adults, are the future of our planet.” (p. 171)

“The darkness goes on forever, so you can’t tell the ocean from the night sky, except for the stars like dots against the black.” (p. 195)

“But everyone looks up in the sky at the same time, hearing it long before we can see anything. The thumping rhythm, blades slapping against air, and the engine’s steady churning coming closer, and getting louder.” (p.220)

“The rumble of a big ship taking off from shore is like an earthquake under your feet.” (p. 243)



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

I Am Poetry

Write an “I Am” poem from the point of view of either JB or Sidney. This activity encourages students to walk in the shoes of the characters, see with the eyes, hear with the ears, and feel with the heart of someone other than themselves, and builds empathy. Students can work individually or collaboratively.

Below is the standard “I Am” poetry format, but readers can be encouraged to modify any

verbs. I am _____

[character's name and identity]

I wonder _____

I see _____

I want _____

I am _____

[not the character's name; additional information about the character]

I pretend _____

I feel _____

I worry _____

I cry _____

I am _____

[not the character's name; additional information about the character]

I say _____

I dream _____

I try _____

I hope _____

I am _____

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[character's name, including more information about the character as a conclusion]

Recycled/Garbage Art

Share Kelly Crull's book, WASHED ASHORE, Making Art from Ocean Plastic and this video: <https://kellycrull.com/washed-ashore-book> then have kids gather plastic and other recycled materials to make their own art pieces. Display these pieces for the school to see.

Activism

In CONSIDER THE OCTOPUS, JB and Sidney come up with OPERATION CODE PINK OCTOPUS, a plan for how they will bring media attention to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and the ship's mission to help clean it up.

Have students break up into groups and collaborate to create their own OPERATION CODE PINK OCTOPUS to bring the gravity of ocean pollution to the attention of their family and school. What are some things readers can do to help reduce plastic usage in their homes, schools and wider community and world?



POSSIBLE READING, WRITING, SPEAKING & LISTENING, and SCIENCE STANDARDS

READING STANDARDS

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. [Daily reader response assignment and Discussion Questions]

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development;

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summarize the key supporting details and ideas. [Discussion Questions Larger Questions]

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. [Discussion Questions]

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. [Discussion Questions, Larger Questions and Words and Phrases to Savor]

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter) relate to each other and the whole. [Discussion Questions, Larger Questions]

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. [Discussion Questions, Larger Questions]

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. [This will be accomplished by research and writing projects suggested in Deeper Dives and in post-reading activities]

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

Text Types and Purposes:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. [This will be accomplished through the Deeper Dives and after-reading writing activities.]

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style

are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. [This will be accomplished through the Deeper Dives and after-reading writing activities.]

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WRITING STANDARDS

Range of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. [This will be accomplished through the Deeper Dives and after-reading activities.]

SPEAKING & LISTENING STANDARDS

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. [Whole group engagement in Discussion Questions and Deeper Dives would address this standard.]

SCIENCE STANDARDS

These performance expectations were developed using the following elements from the NRC document A Framework for K-12 Science Education:

MS-LS2-2. Construct an explanation that predicts patterns of interactions among organisms across multiple ecosystems. [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on predicting consistent patterns of interactions in different ecosystems in terms of the relationships among and between organisms and abiotic components of ecosystems. Examples of types of interactions could include competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial.] And MS-LS2-5. Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. [Clarification Statement: Examples of ecosystem services could include water purification, nutrient recycling, and prevention of soil erosion. Examples of design solution constraints could include scientific, economic, and social considerations.] [Discussion of how ocean pollution affects marine life and birds, methodologies of ocean clean-up, and after-reading activities that include activism will address this standard.]

RST.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions (MS-PS2-1), (MS-

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PS2-3) [Close reading Discussion Questions, Deeper Dives, The Science of the Story discussions, and after-reading activities that include activism will address this standard.]

WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. (MS-PS2-4) Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. (MS-PS2-1), (MS-PS2-2), (MS PS2-5). [Close reading Discussion Questions, Deeper Dives, The Science of the Story discussions, and after-reading activities that include activism will address this standard.]

ESS2.C: The Roles of Water in Earth's Surface Processes: Nearly all of Earth's available water is in the ocean. Most fresh water is in glaciers or underground; only a tiny fraction is in streams, lakes, wetlands, and the atmosphere. (5-ESS2-2) [Close reading Discussion Questions, Deeper Dives, Savoring Words and Phrases, The Science of the Story discussions, and after-reading activities that include activism will address this standard].

ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems: Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1) [Close reading Discussion Questions, Deeper Dives, Savoring Words and Phrases, The Science of the Story discussions, and after-reading activities that include activism will address this standard].

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Organisms, and populations of organisms, are dependent on their environmental interactions both with other living things and with nonliving factors. (MS-LS2-1) Growth of organisms and population increases are limited by access to resources. (MS-LS2-1) and LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience: Disruptions to any physical or biological component of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all its populations. (MS-LS2-4) [Close reading Discussion Questions, Deeper Dives, The Science of the Story discussions, and after-reading activities that include activism will address these standards].



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WNYC Story that inspired Gae & Nora to write the book!

<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/otm-great-pacific-garbage-patch-worse-you-think>

Nat Geo:

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/great-pacific-garbage-patch>

“The Jenny” Ocean Cleanup Mission and Milestones:

<https://theoceancleanup.com/milestones/system-002/>

The Ocean Cleanup on the Midway Atoll:

<https://theoceancleanup.com/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/midway-atoll>

More info on Laysan Albatrosses:

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/animals-a-to-z/laysan-albatross>

***THE SMOG OF THE SEA*: 30-minute documentary by musician and environmentalist Jack Johnson.** <https://vimeo.com/181069340>

ANTARCTICA: The Melting Continent (and other books by) Karen Romano Young

<https://www.karenromanoyoung.com/copy-of-a-girl-a-raccoon-and-the-mi>

WASHED ASHORE: Making Art from Ocean Plastic

<https://kellycrull.com/washed-ashore-book>

***THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH* (song) by Todd Snider**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6RKH2o-9vA>

Free Image Bank from the Ocean Agency:

https://www.theoceanagency.org/ocean-image-bank?gclid=Cj0KCQjwgO2XBhCaARIsANrW2X32mRCvgmVsgRXmIAy5rDtaLPDVkMrBK-uT7DEG5QiLxIhvdD1At20aAnIjEALw_wcB

PLASTIC OCEAN: How a Sea Captain's Chance Discovery Launched a Determined Quest to Save the Oceans

<https://www.amazon.com/Plastic-Ocean-Captains-Discovery-Determined/dp/1583335013>

Additional 3d tour of a research vessel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgJIMF5ylmY>



Nora Raleigh Baskin is the ALA Schneider Family Book Award-winning author of *Anything But Typical*. She was chosen as a Publisher's Weekly Flying Start for her novel *What Every Girl (Except Me) Knows*, and has since written a number of novels for middle graders and teens, including *The Truth About My Bat Mitzvah*, *The Summer Before Boys*, and *Runt*. Nora lives with her family in Connecticut. Visit her at norabaskin.com.



Gae Polisner is the award-winning author of seven novels for young and young-at-heart readers including the multi-award winning *THE MEMORY OF THINGS* which is used in schools around the country. An attorney and writer, Gae lives on Long Island with her husband, two sons, and a suspiciously-fictional-looking small dog she swore she'd never own. She is an avid swimmer and, when not writing, can be found in the open waters of the Long Island Sound. You may follow her on twitter and Instagram @gaepol, on facebook at gaepolisnerauthor, and find her books wherever books are sold.



This guide was created with the gracious input of *Jennifer Sniadecki, media literacy facilitator, librarian, and professional development presenter 20*