

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR *Dream*

ABOUT THE BOOK

The sky is the limit.

Idalee Lovett is content with her life in small-town Colby, North Carolina, living in her family's huge house with rooms for rent. But she has big dreams, just like her mama. While Mama is on tour for the summer with her cover band, Lovey Lovett and the Junkyard Dogs, Idalee decides to hone her craft as a songwriter—since her truest wish is to hear her country songs on the radio one day.

When the local radio station announces a songwriting contest with the winning song being recorded by an up-and-coming singer, Idalee is determined to win. It would definitely be possible if only she could buy the shiny blue guitar in Asheville's music shop. Idalee doesn't have much money, but she knows exactly how to get it—the long-lost treasure her late granddaddy hid somewhere in their house. With the help of her friends Odell, Howard, Charlie, and an adorable little dog named Wishbone, Idalee is going to search in every nook and cranny until she finds it. But little does she know, the biggest treasure of all is only discovered when you believe in yourself with your whole heart.

In this stand-alone companion to *Wish*, nothing is impossible as Idalee learns the power of chasing her dreams one guitar strum at a time.



Ages 8–12 • 9780374392949
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara O'Connor was born and raised in Greenville, South Carolina, and currently lives in Asheville, North Carolina. She has written many beloved and award-winning books for children, including *Halfway to Harmony*, *How to Steal a Dog*, *Wonderland*, and the #1 New York Times bestseller *Wish*.

The Common Core Standards push readers to look closer when reading a text, including examining key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas. This educators' guide for Barbara O'Connor's *Dream* includes discussion questions and activities to be used in grades three to seven as this text is read as a whole group, small group, or a combination. This guide could also be modified to be used with a student who is reading the novel independently.



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Utilize this anticipation guide with your students to see where they stand on these statements. Discuss with them why they agree or disagree with the statements before you start reading.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE					
Pre-Reading		Statement	Post Reading		Explain
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree	
		First impressions are always correct.			
		You should do whatever is necessary to succeed.			
		Having a goal is important.			
		It is important to have confidence.			
		If something is hard, you should give up.			
		Having allies makes tasks easier.			
		Goodbyes are always a bad thing.			

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- At the beginning of the novel, a lady from town says some not very nice things about Idalee's house and mother. Do you think Idalee dealt with the situation in the best way? What did her response show you about her?
- Throughout the book, Sterling (and Idalee) worry about new tenants "upsetting the equilibrium." (p. 60) What does that statement mean? What type of tenant could upset the equilibrium?
- Look at the last sentences of each chapter. What do you notice? Do you think the author chose these lines carefully? How can you tell? What do you think her purpose was for making sure these lines were important?
- On page 21, Idalee points out that Odell's time just sitting in a truck must be boring, but Odell says it is the best time. What does this conversation tell us about people in general?
- Odell says he has the superpower of sweet talk, and he shows off his skill many times in the story. Look at examples throughout the book when Odell sweet-talks someone. How does Odell reword things to make it more acceptable for others? Do you think he is truthful in his rewording?
- On page 100, Idalee points out that she likes calling it a plan more than scheme. Why? How does the connotation of the two words differ?
 - Follow-up: Can you think of other words that are synonyms but have different connotations?
- When Idalee first met Charlie, she was very upset to be in Colby and was quite angry. Then she met Howard who became her first real friend. When he sees Charlie getting upset, he yells "PINEAPPLE." Why does yelling "pineapple" work for Charlie?
 - Follow-up: One of the people who made Charlie's transition so tough was Audrey, Idalee's friend, who was mean to her when she first moved there. However, Audrey apologizes right away when she returns. What does this tell you about Audrey? And what does Charlie forgiving Audrey tell you about Charlie?



8. Both Idalee's mama and Jackie are reaching for more than what they currently have. What are the positives and minuses of wanting more? Use examples from Jackie's and Lovey's story to show positives and negatives that come with wanting more.
9. Charlie, throughout the book, shares when the best times are to make wishes and the rules that come with making wishes (example, see page 108). What are the best times for you to make wishes? Do you have any rules that come with making wishes?
10. Odell and Idalee visit all the tenants' rooms when looking for the treasure. How did each tenant's room match (or contradict) their character?
11. Do you think Patty is a bunch of "hogwash" like Odell says or do you think that Patty is the real deal? (page 142) Use examples from the book to support your answer either way.
12. When Idalee visits the Odoms, she wishes she could be like them. Why do you think that she is in awe of their life? What would she lose if her life was like theirs?
13. Throughout the book, Idalee swears she needs a new guitar to write her songs. Why do you think she is so fixated on wanting a new guitar? Does she really need it?
14. Why do you think Idalee decided to put her grandfather's songs into the contest?
 - o Follow-up: How do you think Odell knew what she'd done? And why do you think he changed it?
15. Idalee has many female role models, and they are all very different. How do each of the women in her life influence her?
16. There are many goodbyes throughout the book as Lovey goes on tour and tenants change. And although goodbyes are always tough, they are also a positive thing. How are goodbyes often both a good and a bad thing?
17. Both *Dream* and its companion book, *Wish*, have one-word titles. How do the titles embody the narratives of the books?

READING ACTIVITIES

1. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE SCAVENGER HUNT

- o Review the different types of figurative language with your students (specifically idioms, personification, imagery).
- o Then tell your students that they are going to go on a scavenger hunt for figurative language in *Dream*!
- o Then group different students together to share the figurative language they found and put them in the figurative-language sorter to show all that was found.

METAPHOR	SIMILE	PERSONIFICATION
HYPERBOLE	ONOMATOPOEIA	IDIOM

- **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.



FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE SCAVENGER HUNT

Find different figurative language examples in DREAM by Barbara O'Connor

[illegible]

2. CHARACTER-TRAIT CHARTS

There are a lot of characters in *Dream*. While reading, have students keep track of them by filling in a Character-Trait Chart. Please note that these are only some of the characters; students may add whomever else they want to their chart, but should definitely have the four friends and the tenants.

Name	Who are they?	What do they look like?	How do they act?	Did they change throughout the book?	What else should we know?
Idalee					
Odell					
Charlie					
Howard					
Jackie					
Lovey					
Sterling					
Mrs. Randall					
Tucker					
Patty					
Mrs. Odom					

When finished, ask students to explain how the author made sure the reader saw, understood, and knew each character in the book. Use examples to support your answer.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3
Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

3. SONGWRITING

- Using Idalee's first verse of her song "Dream" as a mentor text, ask students to write their own "Dream" song.
- You could also give your students the title of one of Idalee's other songs and ask them to write the song that would go with that title.
- Students could also write their own song.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

4. ONE WORD

- Idalee is driven by the word "dream." This is like the idea of one-word resolutions that was started by myoneword.org. They state that choosing one word gives you a single focus and "centers on your character and creates a vision for your future."
- Ask students to take five minutes to quickly write goals that they have for a certain period of time (school year, calendar year, middle school, etc.).
- Once they have written down all of their goals ask them if they see any connections between everything they wrote down. Ask them to write down some single words that fit the connections.
- Then from the list, have them pick their one word.
- The word can be private or shared. Allow time for students to share their word if they wish.
- Optional: Have students turn in their brainstorming to you and add a note on why they chose the word they did.

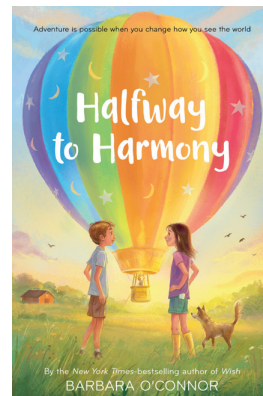
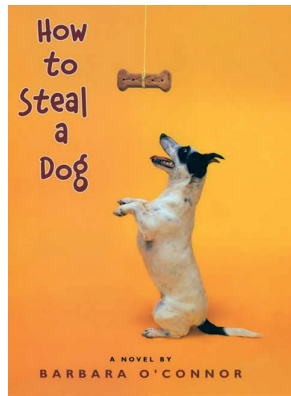
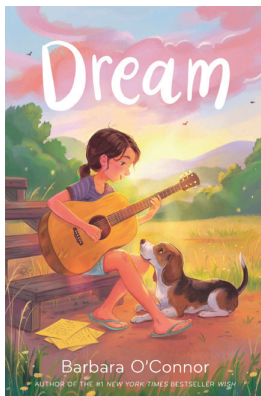


5. ANTICIPATION GUIDE

- o Revisit the anticipation guide from pre-reading and ask students to explain why their point of view stayed the same or changed.
- o Ask students to share insights from the anticipation guide.

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ALSO BY BARBARA O'CONNOR



This guide was created by Kellee Moye, a middle-school librarian at a Florida Power Library–designated school in Orlando, Florida. She is the author of educator guides across grade levels, coauthor of the *Unleashing Readers* blog, 2024 ALAN president, and served on the ALAN board of directors from 2016 to 2018. Moye is the administrative assistant for the 2025 Caldecott Award Committee, former jury member and cochair of the 2020–2021 Schneider Family Award, and served on the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee (member and chair, 2012–2014). She is a member of ALAN, AASL, ALA, and FAME. Contact her @kelleemoye.

