

The Pages Between Us

Common Core Aligned Teacher Guide

Whole Book Questions





What is Olivia and Piper’s goal with the notebook? What obstacles come in the way of reaching this goal? Explain how they overcome these obstacles.

Explain how the notebook both helped the friendship of Olivia and Piper and hurt the friendship of Olivia and Piper.

Describe the ways that Piper and Olivia show courage, both big and small, in the book.

Family is important in this book. How do each of the girls view their families at the start of the book? How do their relationships with each of their families change by the end of the book?

The Pages Between Us is an epistolary novel – a story told in the form of letters. Evaluate the pros and cons of writing a book in this way.

How would the story change if it wasn’t in letter form? What does this point of view add to the book?

Write a letter to Piper and Olivia based on one of the scenes in the book from the point of view of another character in the book. Which character would you choose and what would they write about? How would writing from that character’s point of view change a certain plot point from the book?

Piper and Olivia give each other codenames at the start of the novel. Even though they stop using them, come up with three potential nicknames for each of them. Explain why you chose each nickname.

School is the most important setting in this book. Describe what makes this setting so important and explain how it impacts the rest of the book.

Piper writes, “It’s kind of funny, Olivia, how you are the only kid in your house and you feel alone. Because sometimes I feel the same way. Like there are all these activities happening around me. Things to do, people to see, diapers to change. And I’m just kind of...there. Watching it happen. Not really A PART of anything.” What does Piper mean by this? Explain and provide details from the book to support your response.

Piper talks about feeling ignored in her family, “I wonder if anyone else in my family even notices that. Doubtful. Noticing me isn’t something that’s written on my mom’s big whiteboard of family events.” (40) Do you believe this is true? Why or why not? Use specifics from the book to support your response.



Piper and Olivia both feel like they are alone in their families. Piper tells Olivia, “Talk about feeling alone in the world. I know you say you feel ignored at your house too, but my feeling ignored means NO ONE IS AROUND. It’s not the same. Sorry for my sudden whiny moment, but I just want to remind you how lucky you are.” (101) Do you agree with Piper? Is Olivia lucky? Compare and contrast how Piper and Olivia’s situations are the same and different.

Both Olivia and Piper feel as if they are unnoticed in their families. Talk about why each of them feel this way. How are their feelings the same? How are their feelings different?

Piper and Olivia try out multiple different clubs in their school. Select three of the clubs that they go to and discuss the pros and cons of each of them. What club do you think is the best fit for Olivia? What club do you think is the best fit for Piper?

Olivia has the idea to document their words like anthropologists. If you were to do the same thing, what are some important documents that you would include? What would they find in your pages? What things do you love? What makes you sad? Happy? Nervous?

When Piper writes a letter to Jackson, Olivia critiques it and tells her that there are some parts where she uses “SERIOUS HONESTY.” (48) What do you think she means by this? What are some other times in the book when SERIOUS HONEST is used?

Take a look at the first letter that Olivia wrote to Jackson. (46-47) Make suggestions to the letter like Piper did. What advice would you give her about this letter? Are there things she should change or keep the same?

Olivia tells Piper: “And me with a sprained toe I got from trying to practice conversation, something I was failing at with my OWN FAMILY.

Jason seemed to be the glue that pulled us all together. Now that he’s not home, my parents talk mostly about him, and I don’t talk much at all. Mom’s latest concern is his eating habits at college. Is he only eating Top Ramen? Is he getting enough vitamin C? They discuss this every night. Like I said, the three of us are missing our glue.” (121)

What does Oliver mean by this? How are they “missing their glue?” Think about what happens to Piper and Olivia as the book progresses. How is their experience similar?

Olivia and Piper both experience a lot of change in this book. Identify two different things in each girl’s life, explain how they deal with it, and what the outcome is.

Olivia and Piper end each of their correspondences with a list of things they are grateful for. Select two secondary characters in the book and create a list of grateful for them. Create your own gratefuls.



When Olivia tells Piper about Ellie, she says, “And we even talked about how our chess moves are like trying to get through life in middle school – always making one move at a time, but thinking three steps ahead so we don’t get humiliated.” (172) What does she mean by this? How do we see examples of it in the book?

Piper is always trying to make life like her favorite show, *Love and Deception*. Olivia says, “Guess what? Life isn’t a soap opera, Piper. So why are you always trying to make it one?” (231) Do you think this is true? Is Piper trying to make life like a soap opera? Explain why or why not.

Olivia tells Piper, “It’s strange how I thought this notebook was going to be the thing that kept us together...the thing that would be our lifeline. But all it did was tear us apart.” (230) Explain what she means by this. How did it tear them apart?

Olivia tells Piper, “Why couldn’t you have postponed the party? Don’t you see that I’ve finally found MY thing? That Chess Club is the place where I truly feel like myself? I don’t even feel like myself around you anymore.” (231) Why does Olivia feel this way? Do you think this is a realistic feeling for her? Why or why not?

How does Olivia’s opinion of chess club differ from Piper’s opinion? How does it affect the story?

The title of the book is *The Pages Between Us*. Analyze and explain the meaning of this title. Why is it important in the story? Use specific evidence from the book to support your analysis.

Piper and Grace are friends, but through the course of the book, they learn that they are each their own individual people. How do they differ from each other? Discuss each of their personal characteristics that make them unique characters.

How do the characters of Piper and Olivia change from the beginning to the end of the novel? Track each of their progress at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the book. Use specific examples to support your views.

Throughout the book, Piper and Olivia feel as if their relationship is changing. What are some of the things that make them feel this way? How does their relationship change by the end of the book? How does their relationship stay the same by the end of the book?

Olivia is mad at Piper for not understanding that she needs to compete in the chess tournament and Piper is mad that Olivia is not going to her party. Do you believe they have the right to be mad at each other? Why or why not?



Explain the importance of the fake orchid flower that Piper gives to Olivia. What does it symbolize? Pick three other items from the book that are important to Piper and Olivia and explain why you chose each.

Select three characters who are viewed by Olivia, Piper or both differently than who they really are in the book. Compare and contrast how the character is first viewed and how that view changes by the end of the book. Use specific examples from the book to support each view. What causes this view to change?

One of the themes in the book is feeling like you belong. Where do we see examples of this? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome. Cite specific textual examples to support your responses.

Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

Another important theme is friendship. Where do we see examples of this? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome. Cite specific textual examples to support your responses.

Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

Identify another theme or central idea in the book. Where do we see examples of it? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Cite specific textual examples to support your responses.

Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

We read books for enjoyment, but sometimes we discover that books can teach us things. What has *The Pages Between Us* taught you? Describe in detail.

This guide aligns with Common Core Standards in Reading Literature:

ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.10, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.10, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6, and 6.10