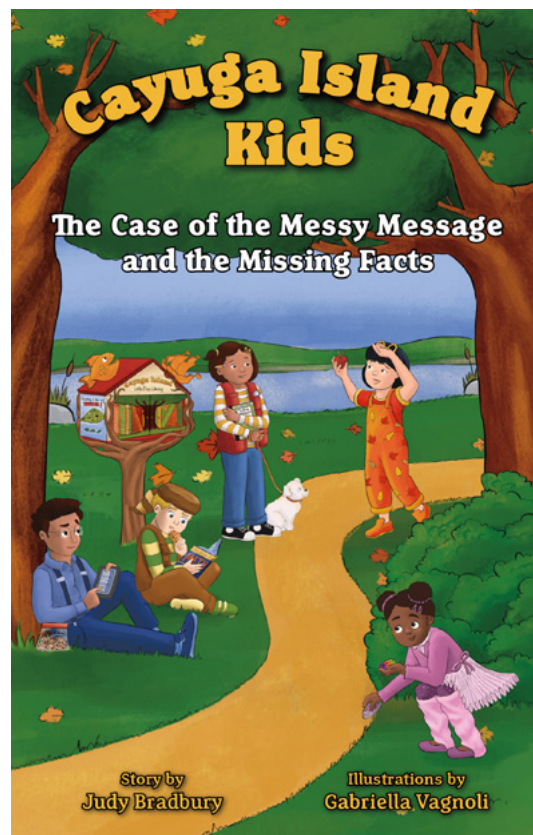


# Cayuga Island Kids

## Book Three

### The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts

## Educator Guide



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*Common Core State Standards addressed by the questions and activities  
in this guide are noted throughout.*



Cross Your Fingers  
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## About the Cayuga Island Kids series

Cayuga Island Kids is a lively chapter book series intended for ages 7-10, Grades 1-3. The stories center on five friends who live on a residential island a few miles upstream from Niagara Falls. In each book, the characters embark on adventures and solve mysteries, learning and growing as a result of their experiences. Although the stories are fictional, the Cayuga Island Kids series touches on history, science, conservation, community, research skills, kindness, and friendship. The stories are anchored by social-emotional themes. Each of the characters in the Cayuga Island Kids series has a distinct personality and individual interests, but they are all big-hearted, curious, adventurous, resourceful, kind, and they possess a sense of humor.

## About the Author



**Judy Bradbury** is an award-winning author, literacy advocate, and educator, and host of the popular Children's Book Corner blog. She is also a Cayuga Island kid. Judy grew up on the island, which is located a few miles upstream from the mighty Niagara Falls. In the summers, she rode the bicycle her father built

for her across the island in search of mysteries to solve. Judy loves sharing her books with students and leading writing workshops. Learn more at [www.judybradbury.com](http://www.judybradbury.com). IG: judy\_bradbury; Twitter: @JudyBwrites

## About the Illustrator

Although she has always loved to draw, **Gabriella Vagnoli** became an illustrator via a circuitous route that allowed her to explore many other interests including theater, music, teaching, and languages. Her work in these fields all had a common thread: communication. And this is what she loves best about illustrating children's books—the opportunity to visually communicate a story in a way that will indelibly imprint it on young minds, just as she still has with her the illustrated stories from her childhood in Italy.



## Book Three: *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*

### About the Book

It's Fall as Book 3 in the Cayuga Island Kids chapter book series opens, and although they are busy with school, homework, and projects, the five friends who live on this residential island still find time for adventure. *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* is lively and fun contemporary fiction centered on themes relating to the importance of not jumping to conclusions.

In *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*, Julian explores food science as he experiments with recipes for the perfect chocolate chip cookie. Being a cookie sampler takes Mac's mind off his troubles with fractions. Yoko practices gestures and facial expressions in anticipation of the school play tryouts, and Maya helps Ms. Choi with the Make-and-Take-Club. Lacey is taking care of the Little Free Library that Gram built, and, of course, searching for the next mystery to solve.

And then two of Ms. Choi's glitter pens go missing. The clues and evidence point to a suspect, but are the Cayuga Island Kids jumping to conclusions? When a classmate jumps to conclusions and shares false information about Julian's cookies, the kids join forces to set the facts straight. And while researching explorers for a school project, the kids uncover misinformation that blurs the truth, and makes the reasons for being a fact detective crystal clear. Sorting through clues and evidence—just like research—means making sure you have all the facts, and not just a fraction of the truth.

Young readers will cheer for the Cayuga Island Kids as they embark on this latest adventure involving misinformation, faulty assumptions, flour bugs, glitter pens, and chocolate chip cookies. Readers will encounter science, mystery, research skills, history, teamwork, social-emotional themes, humor, friendship, and even a real chocolate chip cookie recipe.

**Target Ages/Grades: Ages 7-10; Grades 1-4.**

## Praise for The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts

*"The Cayuga Island Kids deliver again! I love the newest title in this smart series for its cozy mystery, convivial characters, and warm sense of community. Bonus: It is chock full of fun facts (and even a recipe!) woven into a story centered on the importance of gathering all the facts before drawing conclusions, an insight young readers will naturally tuck into their own life kits. Outstanding!"*

—LESLIE CONNOR, AUTHOR OF *THE TRUTH AS TOLD BY MASON BUTTLE*,  
A 2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST; AND TWO-TIME WINNER OF ALA'S SCHNEIDER FAMILY BOOK AWARD

*"To solve a mystery surrounding missing gel pens, young readers engage with the concepts of misinformation, disinformation, and jumping to conclusions. This is a delightful read for 7-10 year-olds, with age-appropriate word choice and just the right amount of description. The Cayuga Island Kids—and readers—learn that once information is out, it's very difficult, if not impossible, to rein in. I recommend The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts to young mystery enthusiasts who will learn about news literacy through the cast of diverse, well-developed characters."*

— PAMELA BRUNSKILL, SENIOR MANAGER OF EDUCATION AND CONTENT AT THE NEWS LITERACY PROJECT,  
AND CO-AUTHOR OF *INFORMATION LITERACY: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION*

*"Once again, Judy Bradbury takes readers on a multifaceted adventure in The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts... research, fact-finding, thinking, problem-solving, fractions, community service, random acts of kindness, local history/geography, and using multiple modes of gathering information are all contained within one fantastic mystery! I love how Bradbury infused social-emotional elements ... All of these threads are interspersed with extremely important digital and media literacy. Checking facts across sources, being skeptical of what one reads, and vetting sources are imperative skills for young learners today. ..Finally, Gabriella Vagnoli's illustrations help the reader conceptualize the characters, setting, and plot, and make the story come to life! If I were in any elementary or intermediate classroom, I would run to this series for great read-aloud experiences."*

— KIRSTEN BURKE SMITH, 2021-2022 PRESIDENT, NEW YORK STATE READING ASSOCIATION;  
2019 NYSRA LITERACY EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



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# Directed Reading Activity

## Pre-Reading

### /Examine the Book Cover

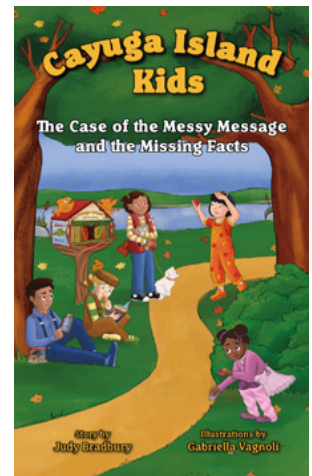
Ask children what they notice about the cover. Details include: the title, the *characters*, the *setting*, the season of the year, and the names of the *author* and *illustrator* of the book. Draw attention to the Little Free Library. (Its details recall Books 1 and 2 in the Cayuga Island Kids series!) What is each character doing? Consider what these details might have to do with the story. What other details on the cover offer clues about the story?

### /Read the Series Title

What does Cayuga Island Kids reveal about the setting?

### /Read the Book Title

Discuss: What is a *case*? What are the two things mentioned in the title that most likely will be part of the story? What do you think the *messy message* might be? What might missing facts have to do with the story? What do you wonder about? What do you think this story might be about? Record students' responses to return to after reading the book.



### /Consider the Cast of Characters



Look closely at the Cayuga Island Kids on the cover. Note clothing, personal items, and the various activities in which the characters are engaged. What do the details tell us about the characters? Reflect on how the cover offers the reader information about the characters' interests and personalities. What do you want to find out about each character? Which Cayuga Island Kid seems most interesting to you? Why?

Open to the double-spread illustration of the cast of characters at the front of the book. Note the Cayuga Island Kids' names. Begin a Cast of Characters chart. Log information about the Cayuga Island Kids characters as you progress through the book. For more ideas, see **The Cast of Characters** later in this guide. See also the [Character Sketch](#) activity available to download for free.

### /Study the Map

Open to the map at the front of the book. Note the details. Determine where on the map the front cover illustration is located. Read the street names. Notice the labeled homes. What do you wonder about? What questions does the map raise that you hope will be answered in the story? Note questions to return to later.

Read the introduction, "Cayuga Island." Return to the map. Discuss information learned from the introduction that relates to the map.

### /Read the Back Cover

*Text from the back cover:*

*It's fall now, and the Cayuga Island Kids are busy with homework, projects, and after-school activities. But there's still plenty of time for mystery and adventure!*

*The five friends set off on a quest for the perfect chocolate chip cookie, the truth about explorers, and the culprit in the Make-and-Take-Club mystery. From flour bugs and glitter pens to wonky websites and kindness rocks, these fact detectives search for all the information instead of settling for a fraction of the truth, stand up for each other, and sample a few cookies along the way.*

*A messy mystery, a lot of laughs, and a real cookie recipe!*

### /View the Book Trailer

View the [book trailer](#) for the The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts.

Ask: What do you notice? What are you curious about? Does viewing the trailer make you interested in reading the book? Why?

### /Read to Find Out

Review questions students have generated about the story. Let's read to find out!

*Pre-reading questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL 1.1; 1.5; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 2.1; 2.7; 3.1. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6.*



## While Reading

### Discussion Questions

#### / Chapter 1 "The Cayuga Island Kids"

*The Cayuga Island Kids are introduced.*

Following the reading of this chapter, add favorite objects, interests, and other details about each of the Cayuga Island Kids to the Cast of Characters chart generated in the Pre-Reading Activity.

#### / Chapter 2 "Practice"

*The Cayuga Island Kids board the bus after school.*

Review Yoko's facial expressions and gestures. Imitate them! What conclusions do Yoko's friends draw based on what they observe? What other facial expressions and gestures are mentioned in this chapter?

Ask students to notice when facial expressions and gestures are used throughout the story. Keep a list, or after completing the book, close read to gather examples.

What details about each of the characters do we find out in this chapter? Add to the Cast of Characters chart.

At the end of the chapter, the kids have made plans to meet in the park. What do you think they will do there? Where do you like to meet your friends?

#### / Chapter 3 "Missing"

*Maya tells Lacey about the missing glitter pens.*

Make a list of the details Maya shares with Lacey.

Lacey questions Maya about certain details she is wondering about. What questions would you ask Maya? Note student responses to return to later.

Which details do you think are most important to figuring out what happened to the glitter pens? Note responses to return to later.

What do you think might have happened to the glitter pens? Note responses to return to later.

#### / Chapter 4 "Cookie Research"

*Julian and his dad bake chocolate chip cookies.*

In this chapter Julian and his dad are baking cookies. They call it "cookie research." Why?

Julian is interested in food science. We learn what a *variable* is. Discuss. See **Science** for related activities.

#### / Chapter 5 "Specks"

*Classmate Maddie jumps to conclusions about Julian's cookies.*

Ask students what they were feeling as this chapter unfolded.

Maddie is a new character in the story. Describe her. Add Maddie to the Cast of Characters chart.

How is Julian feeling? How do you know?

Yoko watches Maddie as she walks away and as she talks to Minh. Yoko notices gestures and facial expressions (body language). What does she observe? What do you think Maddie is telling Minh?

What do you think Minh is thinking?

What do you think will happen next?

#### / Chapter 6 "An Idea to Share"

*The Cayuga Island Kids meet at Julian's home to inspect the flour.*

The Cayuga Island Kids stick together. They are good friends. They try to determine if the conclusion Maddie has drawn are correct. Review the steps they take and how they seek out facts.

Maddie jumped to conclusions, but so did the Cayuga Island Kids. Discuss how jumping to conclusions happens. Elicit personal experiences. See **Writing Prompts** for a related writing activity.

What do you think will happen next?

### / Chapter 7 "Messy Message"

*Lacey and Maya visit the Little Free Library and discover a messy message in the sharing notebook.*

Have you ever seen a Little Free Library? Visited one? Discuss what Little Free Libraries are, their purpose, how they are used, and why they are important to a community. Show photographs of Little Free Libraries (Find a collection of Judy's favorites in the [FAQ](#) under the About Judy tab on her website.). See **The Arts** and **Research** for related activities.

Add Mr. Esposito to the Cast of Characters chart.

### / Chapter 8 "Research Explorers"

*The kids are assigned research projects about explorers.*

Mrs. Schieber leads a class discussion on how to conduct research. Review and discuss.

Key concepts are introduced in this chapter. Mrs. Schieber's students learn about misinformation and disinformation. Discuss. (See **Writing Prompts** for a related activity.)

Mrs. Schieber reveals that part of the information she has given the students about Hennepin is false. What do you think might be untrue?

How do you think Julian feels about having to partner with Maddie on the explorers project?

Add Mrs. Schieber to the Cast of Characters chart.

What do you think might happen next?

### / Chapter 9 "Clues"

*Maya and Lacey visit Ms. Choi.*

Have you heard of kindness rocks? (See **The Arts** for a related activity.)

List the clues Maya and Lacey share with Ms. Choi.

How does Ms. Choi respond to the girls? What do you think she is thinking or feeling? What makes you think that? (Note her facial expressions and gestures.)

Maya and Lacey realize they have jumped to conclusions about the messy message in the sharing notebook. Discuss.

Ms. Choi says, "Let me think about this before our next club meeting." What does she want to think about? What do you think she might do?

Add Ms. Choi to the Cast of Characters chart.

### / Chapter 10 "Plans"

*The Cayuga Island Kids make plans to visit the library to work on their explorer projects.*

How do Julian's friends try to lighten his mood? What does this tell you about the Cayuga Island Kids?

Julian pats the pocket in his backpack that holds his tablet and says to his friends, "Remember when Mrs. Schieber told us to be wise research explorers as we research our explorers? When we get to the library, I want to show you something." What do you think Julian has to show his friends?

Even though Maddie hurt Julian's feelings in the cafeteria, he plans on inviting her to join them at the library. Discuss.

What do you think will happen next?



## / Chapter 11 "Mis- Dis- Information"

*The Cayuga Island Kids make discoveries while researching explorers at the library.*

Review the examples of misinformation and disinformation the kids uncover in their research at the library. Further discuss these terms and their similarities and differences as well as their ramifications.

At the end of the chapter, the Cayuga Island Kids grow silent. They are looking at Julian. What do you think they are thinking about?

What do you think will happen next?

## / Chapter 12 "Fact Detectives"

*Maddie realizes her error. The Cayuga Island Kids realize theirs.*

What words would you use to describe how Maddie is feeling? How do you know?

The Cayuga Island Kids treat Maddie with kindness even though she didn't treat Julian fairly in the cafeteria. Discuss.

## / Chapter 13 "Suspect"

*Lacey and Maya stop by the community room.*

Review what happens in this chapter.

What clues do Lacey and Maya collect in the community room?

Why do you think this chapter is titled "Suspect"?

Add Miss Lynne and Taishi to the Cast of Characters chart.

What do you think will happen next?

## / Chapter 14 "Meet at the Scene"

*The Cayuga Island Kids plan to meet at the park.*

Take a few moments to study Yoko's gestures poster pictured at the end of the chapter.

Review the clues Lacey and Maya have gathered.

What do you think will happen next?

## / Chapter 15 "Feeling Good"

*Mac figures out a fraction.*

Find the examples of "math all around us" peppered throughout the chapter. (See Math for related activities.)

What school subject is hardest for you? Discuss.

Why is Mac feeling good at the end of the chapter?

## / Chapter 16 "Clue Review"

*The Cayuga Island Kids consider the clues Lacey and Maya have gathered.*

Discuss how the Cayuga Island Kids work together to sort through the clues.

Review the clues and discuss. Are all the clues important? Do the Cayuga Island Kids jump to conclusions about anything?

At the end of the chapter Maya is quiet. What do you think she is thinking?

## / Chapter 17 "Important?"

*Mr. Esposito gives a headband he has found in the park to Maya. The Cayuga Island Kids consider if they are jumping to conclusions.*

At the beginning of the chapter, what is Maya concerned about?

Mr. Esposito has found a purple headband. How does this affect the mystery the Cayuga Island Kids are trying to solve?

Add details about Mr. Esposito to the Cast of Characters chart.

Lacey pages through her notebook. She says, “We have clues. We have evidence. It all points to Taishi. But maybe we don’t have all the facts.” Discuss. (See **Writing Prompts** for a related activity.)

Maya tells her friends about the Make-and-Take Club craft aprons. Do you think this is important?

What do you think will happen next?

## / Chapter 18 "Fraction of the Truth"

*Supper Share at Mac’s house with Miss Lynne.*

At dinner, Miss Lynne says, “Gathering all the facts—instead of just a fraction of the truth—is smart. And it’s the right thing to do.” Mac thinks back to Maddie’s fraction of the truth about flour bugs and Mrs. Schieber’s fraction of the truth about Hennepin being the first to see Niagara Falls. Both had blurred the truth.

What is a “fraction of the truth” and how does a fraction of the truth blur the facts? Discuss.

## / Chapter 19 "Mystery Solved"

*The Make-and-Take Club gathers.*

What were you thinking at the beginning of the chapter when the girls are talking with Taishi?

How did your thinking change by the end of the chapter?

Did you jump to conclusions that Taishi had taken the glitter pens?

## / Chapter 20 "Kindness Rocks"

*The Cayuga Island Kids meet in the park.*

Discuss the details in this chapter.

Recall each of the characters’ actions. Add to the Cast of Characters chart.

How do the Cayuga Island Kids feel? How do you know?

Mrs. Schieber finds a kindness rock nestled in the grass beside the Little Free Library. Who do you think placed it there? Use clues from the story to make a guess.

What does “Do your best. Forget the rest.” mean? (See **Writing Prompts** for a related activity.)

Twice in the story Mrs. Schieber uses a play on words to make a point and to make the kids laugh. Find them both and discuss why they are humorous and clever.

*While Reading questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 1.10; 2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.10; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.9; 3.10. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6. LS: 1.1; 2.1; 3.1. FS: 1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 2.3; 2.4; 3.3; 3.4. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.*





## Vocabulary

Demonstrate how readers can employ context clues found in text and details in illustrations to determine the meanings of unknown or challenging words. On page 2, readers can figure out the meaning of the word *essentials* from the context. Likewise, *specks* (pg. 38) and *uneasy* (pg. 76) are defined in context. *Hypothesis* is directly defined on page 7 as are the words *gestures* and *facial expressions* on page 10.

To help increase retention of unknown or challenging words, discuss personal experiences and common connections to the words.

Have students keep a list of unfamiliar words they encounter in the story.

Words may include: reusable (pg. 3) hypothesis (pg. 7) auditorium (pg. 8) comparisons (pg. 9) gestures, facial expressions (pg. 10) groundskeeper (pg. 24) canister (pg. 28) inspected (pg. 30) variables (pg. 30) shuddered (pg. 35) specks (pg. 38) brainstorm (pg. 44) squinted (pg. 44) curtsied (pg. 47) compass (pg. 48) source (pg. 49) misinformation (pg. 52) disinformation (pg. 53) misspelled (pg. 59) hovered (pg. 65) disbelief (pg. 65) confirmed (pg. 66) explorations (pg. 67) grimaced (pg. 71) emblem (pg. 75) allergic (pg. 76) uneasy (pg. 76) wrung (pg. 77) scene (pg. 80) assured (pg. 81) memorize (pg. 83) amplifiers (pg. 83) agony (pg. 86) clarified (pg. 99) hesitated (pg. 110) stupendous (pg. 116) nestled (pg. 116) marveled (pg. 116)

Use context clues.

Check definitions in a dictionary.

Consider synonyms for new words.

*Vocabulary questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4. LS: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4.*

## After Reading

### Cross-Curricular Connections, Extension Activities, and Additional Learning Experiences

#### English Language Arts

##### /The Cast of Characters

Readers get to know characters through their actions, words, and thoughts. As you read *The Case of the Messy Message* and *the Missing Facts*, encourage students to employ close reading techniques to uncover details about the Cayuga Island Kids' personalities, interests, favorite activities, treasured items, and even the foods they enjoy. Log details on the Cast of Characters chart (See **Pre-Reading Activities**).

Read the following to students:

This is a message from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*"The characters in the Cayuga Island Kids series are fictional, or made up. They come from my imagination. They are not real children or adults, but some of their characteristics are based on real people. The characters' personalities, interests and activities, what they say, think, treasure, and even the foods they enjoy, are based on people I know, things I have observed, or conversations I have had or overheard. See the photos in the Author's Note for proof of this!"*

*I created character sketches, or notes, on the characters as I began developing the Cayuga Island Kids series, and I added to them throughout the writing of the three books. The illustrator of the series, Gabriella Vagnoli, also added details in the pictures to help readers identify and get to know the Cayuga Island Kids and the other characters in the books."*

After reading the book, review and discuss the Cast of Characters chart. Here are suggestions for additional prompts:

- What does the character look like?
- What is something the character often says?



- What does the character do?
- What item does the character treasure and/or what activity does the character enjoy?
- What do other characters say and/or think about this character?

### Thinking Deeper:

Ask students to respond to the following questions in writing, in a group discussion, or with reading partners. Remind students to be specific and include details from the story.

- Which Cayuga Island Kid do you like best? Why?
- Which character do you think is the funniest? Most creative? Most serious? Kindest? Why? Offer details from the story to support your opinion.
- Which character is most like you? Explain.
- Which character is least like you? Explain.
- With which character would you most like to be friends? Why? What would you enjoy doing together?
- Which adult character do you like best? Explain.
- Compare and contrast two of the characters in the story. How are they alike? How are they different?



### Story Craft:

- How do both the author and illustrator help the reader get to know the characters?
- Which aspects of the characters' personalities are best shown in the pictures? Which are best shown with the author's words?

### Thinking Beyond:

Ask students to imagine what each of the characters in the story would do or choose in the following situations. Remind students to provide evidence from the story to support their opinion.

- How would the character choose to spend a fall weekend day?
- What kind of book would the character donate to the Little Free Library?
- What would the character do if he or she lost a Little Free Library book?
- What might make the character laugh? Become angry? Excited? Unhappy?
- What is one thing you could count on this character to do?
- What is something this character most likely would never do?
- What do you imagine might be this character's favorite animal? Snack? Movie? Type of book? Activity, hobby, or sport?
- What might this character buy with allowance or birthday money?
- What would this character write on a kindness rock? What colors would the character use to decorate the kindness rock?



**Game Time!** Have students place answers for each question on small squares of paper below the character's name. Place squares in a basket or hat. Pull out squares and read the answers. Students guess which character is being described.

What question would you like to ask one of the characters? What do you imagine the character's answer would be?

### Thinking Creatively:

Ask students to create a new character to join the Cayuga Island Kids.

- Develop a **character sketch**. Include details that help readers get to know the character's personality and interests.
- Choose one of the following. Include plenty of detail.
  - Write a scene involving the new character.
  - Draw an illustration of the character doing something.

A [Character Sketch Activity](#) is available free for download on Judy's website.

### / Point of View

In *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* readers are able to “get inside the heads” of each of the Cayuga Island Kids. They know their thoughts and feelings. Ask students to write a paragraph from the point of view of one of the minor characters in the story that will help the reader understand their thoughts and feelings.

Which character in the story thinks most like you? Explain. Give examples to support your statement.

Choose a character from the story. Using details from the story, explain how his or her point of view changes as the story unfolds.

Character-related questions and activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.1, 1.3, 1.7; 2.1, 2.3, 2.7. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.

### / How Do You Say That?

Readers often wonder how to pronounce names.

**Mrs. Schieber** is the school librarian and a neighbor of the Cayuga Island Kids. Her name is pronounced (SHE-ber)

The illustrator of the book, **Gabriella Vagnoli**, was born in Italy. Her last name is pronounced (von NYO lee) Do not pronounce the g. Spend a little extra time on the n.

### / The Setting of the Story

Read the following to students:

This message is from the author of the book, Judy Bradbury:

*“Cayuga Island, the **setting** of *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*, is real. It is located exactly where it says in the introduction. I’ve modified the island a bit to fit the story, but overall, it is pretty much the way it’s described. I grew up on Cayuga Island. My father built the house I lived in on Griffon Avenue. On the map at the beginning of the book, my house would be located very near Yoko’s house. I think we would have been good friends!”*

*“An author might alter a real place in some ways to help tell an imaginary or **fictional** story in a clearer way. Since I changed Cayuga Island—even though it’s just a bit—the setting of my series is **BASED** on a real place.”*

See the activities listed under **Maps** for further study of the setting of the Cayuga Island Kids series.

### / The Plot

View the [book trailer](#) for *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*. Discuss what the creators chose to highlight. Does viewing the trailer generate interest in reading the book? Explain. What do you learn about the story from this short clip? Use the trailer to help write a brief summary of the book.

What happens at the beginning of the story that leads to the mystery the kids focus on?

What happens at school?

How does that event lead the kids to action?





How do the Cayuga Island Kids work together to solve the various problems they encounter in the story?

What happens at the end of the story?

Do you think the Cayuga Island Kids' experiences will impact how they approach drawing conclusions in the future?

### / Sequence of Events

In Chapter 3 "Missing" Maya explains to Lacey what happened in Make-and-Take Club. Ask students to place the events in the order in which they occurred.

### / Dedication

Explain the purpose of a book dedication. Read the dedication aloud. Tell why you think the author dedicated *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* to "Cayuga Island Kids past, present, and future."

### / Author's Note: The Story Behind the Story

*Getting Ideas—and Working on Ideas—to Create Stories*

Explain that the Author's Note at the end of the book is a message from Judy Bradbury, the author of the book. Read it aloud to students.

Share the author's photos. Visit Judy's website to view her collection of favorite Little Free Libraries in the [FAQ](#) under the About Judy tab.

Which piece of information the author provides is most interesting to you? What makes you curious to learn more? If you had a chance to interview the author, what would you ask her?

### / Writing Prompts

In Chapter 1 we meet the Cayuga Island Kids. We learn of their interests, their thoughts, and other details. Which character appeals to you most? Why?

Write a paragraph describing one of your friends through their actions, words, or an activity they enjoy. Use descriptions that appeal to the senses to help your readers form images of your friend in their minds.

Cayuga Island Park is the setting of *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* and a favorite location for the Cayuga Island Kids to gather and spend time together. Where do you like to spend time with your friends? Write a description. Be specific and give details. Illustrate and write a caption.

In Chapter 5 "Specks" Julian thinks, *Maddie wasn't the friendliest kid in school. She could be bossy, and she liked things her way. But she wasn't mean. He didn't think she would say something just to hurt someone's feelings.* (pg. 35) Do you know someone like Maddie? Write about a time when someone hurt your feelings even though they didn't mean to, or write about a time when you hurt someone's feelings because of something you did or said even though you didn't intend to be mean.

In Chapter 5, Maddie jumps to conclusions about the specks in Julian's cookies. In Chapter 6 "Flour Facts" the Cayuga Island Kids realize that they jumped to conclusions, too. In the cafeteria, they didn't eat their cookies because they believed what Maddie said. Write about a time when you jumped to conclusions and later found out that what you assumed was not true.

In Chapter 8 "Research Explorers" Julian chooses to sit near the front in library class because Mrs. Schieber like facts, just like he does. Also, he thinks she is kind and funny. Write about a teacher or another adult that you especially like and tell why.

In Chapter 12 "Fact Detectives" the Cayuga Island Kids are kind and helpful. They care about Maddie's feelings just like they care about Julian's feelings. They explain to Maddie how she jumped to conclusions, but they do so gently and with kindness. Despite the way she behaved, they are considerate of her feelings. Write about a person you know who acts with kindness even when treated unfairly. Be specific and use details. Or, tell about a time when someone treated you unjustly and you forgave them. Or, tell about a time when someone was mean to you and you reacted by being mean to them. How could you have treated that person differently, showing compassion the way the Cayuga Island Kids treated Maddie?

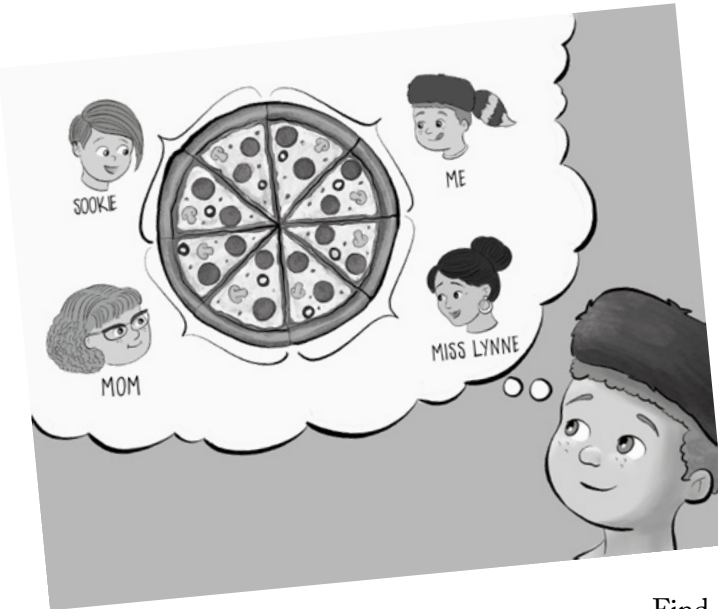
In Chapter 13 "Suspect" Miss Lynne's troop is learning how to handle a kitten. Choose an animal and give step-by-step guidelines on how to handle this new pet. Be specific.



In Chapter 15 “Feeling Good” Mac recalls Ms. Spritski saying, “Math is all around us!” Some of the examples she offered come to mind. List other examples.

In Chapter 17 “Important” Lacey pages through her notes. She says, “We have clues. We have evidence. It all points to Taishi. But maybe we don’t have all the facts.” Write about a time when clues pointed to a conclusion but you realized you didn’t have all the facts.

In Chapter 20, Mrs. Schieber discovers a kindness rock beside the Little Free Library with *Do your best. Forget the rest.* written on it. What does this mean? Describe a time when you did your best and put aside mistakes or errors you made.



### / Poetry

As the school year begins, math equals fractions in Mac and Julian’s class. And though Mac is trying to be friends with math, he has decided math is not friendly.

Using the letters that make up the word math, he thinks the math all around him is **M**ental **A**gony **T**orturing **H**umans.

In an **acrostic poem**, the first letter of each line spells out a word when read vertically. Mac’s acrostic poem would look like this:

**M**ental

**A**gony

**T**orturing

**H**umans

Find acrostic poems in these books:

- *A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms* selected by Paul B. Janeczko, illustrated by Chris Raschka; pp. 36-37.
- *Catch Your Breath: Writing Poignant Poetry* by Laura Purdie Salas; pp. 18-20
- “My Story” pg. 21, *Write! Write! Write!* by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater, illustrated by Ryan O’Rourke
- *Poetry from A to Z: A Guide for Young Writers* compiled by Paul B. Janeczko, pp.8-9
- *Silver Seeds: A Book of Nature Poems* by Paul Paolilli and Dan Brewer, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher
- “Top Secret” in *Book Speak! Poems About Books* by Laura Purdie Salas, illustrated by Josée Bisaillon

Find information about acrostic poems, teaching ideas, and [acrostic poems by Lewis Carroll and Edgar Allan Poe](#) online. See also [Kenn Nesbitt’s Poetry4Kids](#). Other resources including YouTube videos are also available.

Create an acrostic poem describing your least favorite school subject. Write another one describing your favorite subject or activity. Note: You are not limited to one word on each line.

The following poetry books celebrate math:

- *Edgar Allan Poe’s Pie: Math Puzzlers in Classic Poems* by J. Patrick Lewis, illustrated by Michael Slack
- *Marvelous Math: A Book of Poems* by Lee Bennett Hopkins, illustrated by Karen Barbour.
- *Mathematickles! Poems* by Betsy Franco, illustrations by Steven Salerno
- *Math-terpieces: The Art of Problem-Solving* by Greg Tang, illustrated by Greg Paprocki

- *Snowman – Cold = Puddle: Spring Equations* by Laura Purdie Salas, illustrated by Micha Archer (See [Laura's National Poetry Month 2021 equation poems](#) and her other [poetry resources for educators](#))
- *This Plus That: Life's Little Equations* by Amy Krause Rosenthal, illustrated by Jen Corace

## /Imagery

In the first book in the Cayuga Island Kids series, *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*, we learn that Yoko loves to rhyme. In the second book, *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*, she is inspired to think up creative comparisons. Close read to find examples in *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* where Yoko rhymes and makes comparisons. Make a list. Which rhyme or comparison is your favorite? Why?

## Reading Journal

If students will be offered *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* as an independent reading choice, consider discussing the story via journaling. Journal discussions, or dialogue journals, motivate developing readers: feedback keeps interest high and bolsters confidence in independent reading skills. Students can engage in journal discussions with their teacher, librarian, reading partners, older students who act as reading mentors, or family members. Journals can be physical paper journals or online files. Entries may be written and/or visual. Endeavor for responses to occur regularly and frequently. Encourage students to share their reading journals at home. Family members can be encouraged to journal about their independent reading. Journal discussions also offer a dynamic opportunity for young independent readers to connect with extended family members, especially those they may not see or interact with frequently.

Read more about [Dialogue Journals](#).

## Author/Illustrator Study

Author/Illustrator studies broaden students' interests in books and support their growth as readers, writers, and artists. These studies also strengthen research skills by encouraging students to learn more about the work of book creators, their writing or illustration process, and their personal interests. As a result of author/illustrator studies, book creators become dimensional and dynamic: they become real to the reader.

Have students generate a list of questions. Visit author/illustrator websites. Guide students to notice connections in the author/illustrator's various works. Glean an author/illustrator's interests. What do they value? What are they passionate about? Is this reflected in their writing? Learn about the author/illustrator's creative process. How and where do they work? What are their habits or methods? Visit [Judy Bradbury's website](#) to learn about the author's background. Find photos of Judy's writing space and more information about her writing process under the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) tab. Visit [Gabriella Vagnoli's website](#) to learn more about the illustrator of the Cayuga Island Kids series and her creative process.

Find more information about Author/Illustrator Studies in this [Reading Rockets article](#).

*Writing questions and activities are aligned with CCSS W:1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.7; 2.8; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.8; 3.10. SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6; LS 1.2; 2.2; 3.2*

## Literature Circles

Literature circles, or student-led book discussion groups in which participants engage in conversations about a shared reading experience, offer many benefits. Though a variety of methods exist for conducting literature circles, they share common skill sets: forming, asking, responding to, and reflecting on questions related to text; group discussion centered on various aspects of literature; engaging in respectful and meaningful conversation; setting agendas; and participating in peer-driven, collaborative reading and learning experiences.

Begin by introducing the literature circle components and features as they will be conducted in your setting. Form small groups. Guide students in collaborating to create a schedule to read chapters of *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* and meet to discuss aspects of the story. Set objectives and expectations; model acceptable group discussion behavior. Monitor and assess. Provide feedback and guidance as needed.

See the resources listed below for more information on Literature Circles.

Overview of Literature Circles: [Lit Circles Resource Center](#)

ReadWriteThink article: [Literature Circles With Primary Students](#)



## Reader's Theater

Students can actively participate in a story by orally reading from a script developed from the text. Research on the use of reader's theater confirms its positive effect on reading fluency. It's important to allow students sufficient time to become familiar with the text and to practice. This will ensure the most benefit for improving fluency and will provide a gratifying literacy experience.

Dialogue is best suited for reader's theater scripts. Several scenes in *The Case of the Messy Message* and *the Missing Facts* lend themselves to reader's theater scripts. Suggestions include:

- Chapter 8
- Chapter 12
- Chapter 16
- Chapter 17
- Chapter 20, pp. 113-119



Students can perform reader's theater in person or via a video conferencing platform. Reader's theater is also an excellent family activity. Encourage immediate family members to participate or suggest students connect by means of a video platform with extended family out of town.

For more information on reader's theater, go to [Reading Rockets](#).

*Reader's theater activities are aligned with CCSS FS: 1.4; 2.4; 3.4.*

## / Gestures and Facial Expressions (Body Language)

In *The Case of the Messy Message* and *the Missing Facts*, Yoko is practicing facial expressions and gestures in anticipation of the school play tryouts. Gestures and facial expressions, or body language, help us know how others are feeling. Close read the book to find where Yoko and other characters use gestures and facial expressions (Examples: pp. 14, 16, 35, 39, 50, 61, 63, 71, 72, 76, 82, 98). Study the illustration on page 84. Create a poster illustrating the gestures and facial expressions found in the book (You are encouraged to add others!). Label the feelings associated with them. Display.

**Game Time!** Provide an opportunity for students to practice the gestures and facial expressions on the poster. Next, place each gesture and facial expression on an index card. Shuffle the cards and place face down. Students take turns choosing an index card and performing the gestures and facial expressions. Classmates guess what feeling is being conveyed. (Think Charades.)

## Science

In Chapter 2 "Practice" Julian observes the fall leaves and wonders: *Do all leaves change color in the fall? Why are some leaves more colorful than others? Are the first trees to bud in the spring the first to lose their leaves in the fall? Or the last?* Research to find the answers to these questions. Do you have other questions about leaves? Read to find answers.

In Chapter 20, Julian reads on his tablet to find answers to his questions and shares information with Mac. Compare Julian's information to what students have learned.

In Chapter 4 "Cookie Research" Julian and his dad are working together to test chocolate chip cookie recipes. *Julian knew from reading on the internet that there are variables when baking cookies. Food science. Ingredients and methods make a difference. He clicked to the cookie chart he had saved on his tablet. Flat, crunchy edges and a chewy middle might mean they needed to adjust the amount of baking powder and baking soda.* (pg. 30) Delve into food science. Investigate cookie baking variables. Conduct cookie research!

NGSS: 1-Crosscutting Concept-Cause and Effect; 2-PS1-1; 2-PS1-2; 2-PS1-4

## Social Studies

### / Research

In Chapter 8 “Research Explorers” Mrs. Schieber’s students learn how to be good research explorers. Discuss.

Consider pairing student to research explorers and report to the class.

In Chapter 11 “Mis- Dis- Information” the kids realize that the internet site Mrs. Schieber gave them is not offering completely accurate information. Visit and explore educational sites designed to intentionally provide inaccurate information in order to demonstrate to students that not everything we read on the internet is true. Find more information [here](#).

In Chapter 8 “Research Explorers” and in Chapter 11 “Mis- Dis- Information” the Cayuga Island Kids learn about misinformation and disinformation as they research explorers. Learn more about both of these terms. A reliable source of information is the [News Literacy Project](#).

Learn more about [Little Free Libraries](#).

### / Facts

Like Julian, many students are curious; they enjoy learning facts and take pleasure in reading nonfiction. Other students may benefit from being introduced to compelling age-appropriate informational books.

Several nonfiction topics are touched on in *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*. For example, food science, flour bugs, leaves changing color in the fall, fractions, explorers, and cookie recipes. The Cayuga Island Kids experience gathering facts firsthand.

**Learn more!** Delve deeper into nonfiction topics introduced in the book just as the Cayuga Island Kids do. Students can conduct research in their school or public library and online. Remind students of Julian’s advice: Always check more than one source to make sure facts are accurate. And be certain online sources are safe to visit and reliable.

### / Maps

Find Cayuga Island on a map of Western New York.

- Compare the map in *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* with the real map of Cayuga Island.
- What is the same on each map? What is different?

Using the map in the book, write clear directions for the best way to get from one of the character’s homes to one of the following:

- Cayuga Island Park
- The Public Library
- Cayuga Drive School
- Another character’s home: shortest route, or the path to follow if stopping at another friend’s home along the way. Draw a map of your neighborhood.

### / Math

Throughout the story, Mac is having fraction troubles. In Chapter 15 “Feeling Good” he recalls Ms. Spritski telling the class that math is all around us. He notices examples of this as he sets off to Julian’s house, and that’s when fractions begin to make sense.

Find [Fraction of the Truth Character Pizza](#) activity available for free download.

A selection of fun books about math (several focusing on fractions) that Mac might enjoy are listed below. Your students might enjoy them, too!

- *Apple Fractions* by Jerry Pallotta, illustrated by Rob Bolster
- *Do Not Open This Math Book* by Danica McKellar
- *Fraction Action* by Loreen Leedy
- *fraction fun* by David A. Adler, illustrated by Nancy Tobin
- *Fractions, Decimals, and Percents* by David A. Adler, illustrated by Edward Miller



- *Full House: An Invitation to Fractions* by Dayle Ann Dodds, illustrated by Abby Carter
- *The Grapes of Math: Mind-Stretching Math Riddles* by Greg Tang, illustrated by Harry Briggs
- *The Lion's Share: A Tale of Halving Cake and Eating It, Too* by Matthew McElligott
- *Math Curse* by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith
- *Math for All Season: Mind-Stretching Math Riddles* by Greg Tang, illustrated by Harry Briggs
- *Math Potatoes: Mind-Stretching Brain Food* by Greg Tang, illustrated by Harry Briggs
- *Mesmerizing Math* by Jonathan Litton, illustrated by Thomas Flintham
- *Molly and the Mathematical Mysteries: Ten Interactive Adventures in Mathematical Wonderland* by Eugenia Cheng, illustrated by Aleksandra Artymowska
- *Riddle-iculous Math* by Joan Holub, illustrated by Regan Dunnick
- *The Wishing Club: A Story About Fractions* by Donna Jo Napoli, illustrated by Anna Currey
- *Working with Fractions* by David A. Adler, illustrated by Edward Miller

Food and food science are woven throughout *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*, from chocolate chip cookies to carrots, to tomato sauce (with shredded carrots), to pizza. Enjoy the following books that link food with math:

- *Doggone Lemonade Stand!* by Judy Bradbury, illustrated by Cathy Trachok
- *Eating Fractions* by Bruce McMillan
- *Eat Your Math Homework: Recipes for Hungry Minds* by Ann McCallum, illustrated by Leeza Hernandez

## **The Arts**

Which is your favorite illustration in *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts*? Why?

Draw a scene from *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* that is not illustrated. Write a caption for your illustration.

Illustrate a scene in *The Case of the Messy Message and the Missing Facts* that takes place immediately before or after an existing illustration. What action will you show? How is the illustration different from the one in the book? What is the same?

Look at the illustration on page 43 of the Little Free Library that Gram built for Cayuga Island Park. Design a Little Free Library that reflects your neighborhood or your school.

Consider building and installing a Little Free Library. Find [plans and installation tips](#) on the Little Free Library website.

Create a diorama of Cayuga Island Park. Include the Little Free Library!

Choose a scene from the story. Make sock puppets and write dialogue. Reenact the scene.

Form teams. Choose a scene from the story to silently act out, or mime. Exaggerate gestures and use facial expressions. Perform for classmates. Can the class identify the scene? Suggestions: Chapters 2, 12, 18, 20

The Cayuga Island Kids are fact detectives who do research online and in their school and public libraries. Draw a picture of your school or public library.

In Chapter 9 “Clues” Maya and Lacey visit Ms. Choi and discuss kindness rocks. Research how to make a kindness rock. Gather supplies and create kindness rocks. Place them strategically around the school, on the school grounds, or in the neighborhood.

*After Reading questions and Activities are aligned with CCSS RL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.9; 1.10; 2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.10; 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.9; 3.10. W: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.7; 2.8 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.8; 3.10; SL: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.6. LS: 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; IT: 1.5; 1.6; 1.7; 2.3; 2.5; 2.7; 2.9; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.7. FS: 1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 2.3; 2.4; 3.3; 3.4. SL: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6.*

## **/ Outside the Classroom**

Visit a park in your neighborhood or area.

Bake a batch of chocolate chip cookies! Use the recipe found at the back of the book.



## / Social-Emotional Themes

Acceptance, commitment, community, compassion, concern, connection, creativity, decision-making skills, curiosity, dedication, diligence, diversity, effort, empathy, empowerment, encouragement, fortitude, friendship, generosity of spirit, gentleness, gratitude, honesty, hope, interpersonal relationships, inspiration, helpfulness, integrity, kindness, loyalty, patience, perseverance, persistence, perspective, resilience, resourcefulness, respect, self-management, self-assurance, self-awareness, self-reliance, tenacity, trustworthiness, understanding.

**Additional activity sheets and bonus material can be found at [www.judybradbury.com](http://www.judybradbury.com) and [www.cityoflightpublishing.com](http://www.cityoflightpublishing.com).**

*The questions and activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades 1–3. Standards for other grades may also apply. For more information on the Common Core State Standards and to learn more about the individual standards listed in this guide, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>. For more information on Next Generation Science Standards, go to: <https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/AllIDCL.pdf>.*

*This guide was created by Judy Bradbury, the author of the Cayuga Island Kids series. Judy is permanently certified by New York State in N–6; 7–9 English; and Reading. She holds a MSEd degree in Reading Specialization, and is the author of several professional resources for educators focusing on literacy. This guide was designed by Ana Cristina Ochoa.*

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