

A Discussion Guide to *Allie Finkle's RULES for GIRLS* by MEG CABOT



Book One:

Moving Day

About the Book

When nine-year-old Allie Finkle finds out she's moving, she is convinced her life is over! She must leave behind her pink room, precious geode collection, and best friend. But with the help of Allie's unique set of rules, she handles it all in her own hilarious and spunky way.

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Discussion Questions

1. Allie Finkle likes rules. That's why she likes math and science so much, because "you know where you stand with them rulewise." Do you and Allie share some of the same rules?
2. What is your relationship with your best friend? If you learned that you had to move away from each other, how would you keep in touch?
3. One of Allie's rules of friendship is: "You should only say nice things to your friends, even if they're not true. This makes them feel better, and then they like you more." Do you think this makes for an honest friendship?
4. What changes do you see in Allie after she meets her new neighbor Erica and sees her room fixed up? Do you think Allie will adjust to her new school in the same way?
5. Allie is an animal lover. Do you love animals too? What responsibilities are involved in taking care of a pet?
6. Allie loves to play pretend with her new friends at Pine Heights Elementary. What games do you play with your friends?
7. Do you think you should pretend to be okay with something even if it is upsetting you? For example, Allie promises Uncle Jay she'll pretend she is happy about the move if he keeps the turtle from the Lung Chung Restaurant. Do you think Uncle Jay is being a responsible adult?
8. Allie is not happy when she is told she cannot take her geode collection with her when she moves. What is something you would be upset to leave behind?
9. Mary Kay and Brittany suddenly want to be friends with Allie again after she is featured in the local paper. What do you think of the way Allie handled their attempt at friendship? What would you have done?



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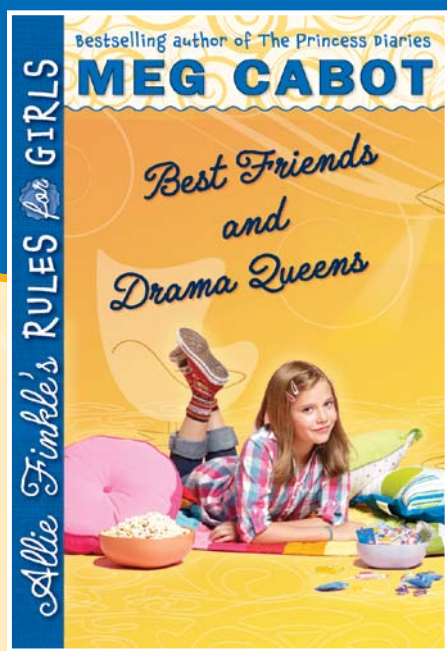
Book Two: *The New Girl*

About the Book

Allie Finkle is starting her first day of school at Pine Heights Elementary! But being the new girl is turning out to be scary, too, especially since one of the girls in Allie's new class—Rosemary—doesn't like her. In fact, Rosemary says she's going to beat Allie up after school.

Discussion Questions

1. Allie copes with having to go to a new school by becoming friends with her neighbor, Erica. How would you adjust to being the new girl/boy in town? Would you join a club, try to meet your new classmates before starting school, or introduce yourself to neighbors?
2. Allie expresses her individuality by wearing jeans under her skirt on her first day of school. After Rosemary makes fun of her outfit, Allie goes home at lunch to change. Do you think Allie should have stood up for herself and kept her outfit on? Why?
3. In chapter three, Allie is upset because she gets in trouble for talking in class and is made fun of on her first day of school. She wants to talk to her parents about it but her brothers keep interrupting. How do you work out a problem? Do you talk to someone special, write in a journal, or express yourself in another way?
4. Rosemary threatens to beat Allie up after school. Have you ever had to deal with a bully? Have you ever been the bully?
5. Allie receives mixed advice on how to deal with Rosemary's physical threat from her friends and family. The best advice comes from Mr. Elkhart, the school's janitor. He thinks Rosemary's anger comes from being left out. Have you ever felt left out? Have you ever made an effort to include someone?
6. Allie sees another side of Rosemary after inviting her over to meet Allie's new kitten, Mewsette. Rosemary admits she was jealous that Allie made friends so easily as the "new girl." Have you ever been jealous of someone?
7. In chapter ten, Allie is going to throw the spelling bee but Erica tells her that would be cheating. What kind of pep talk would you give Allie to encourage her to do her best in the spelling bee?
8. Allie is embarrassed to take her brother to school when he is dressed as a pirate. Have your friends or relatives ever embarrassed you? How?



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Book Three: *Best Friends and Drama Queens*

About the Book

Allie Finkle is excited when a new girl joins her class at Pine Heights Elementary. Now Allie won't be the new girl anymore! But her excitement turns to dismay when the new girl turns out to be a big bully.

Discussion Questions

1. Allie's second rule is "It's okay to lie if the lie makes someone else feel better." Have you ever lied to a friend because telling the truth would make him or her feel worse? Would you rather be told the truth (even though it might hurt) or a lie?
2. When Mrs. Hunter asks Allie to move to the back row to sit in-between a bunch of rowdy boys instead of with her best friends, Allie doesn't want to go. But instead of speaking up about her true feelings, she agrees to move without a word. Do you think it would've been better for Allie to share her concerns with Mrs. Hunter? Why or why not?
3. From the day Cheyenne arrives in Mrs. Hunter's class, she seems in control of herself. Confident. But she also acts pretty bossy, and sometimes a little mean. What was your first impression of Cheyenne? Did it change throughout the book?
4. Cheyenne is always calling Allie and her crew "immature" because she's outgrown their idea of fun. In your opinion, is it more or less mature to do something even though you might not want to, just because it's considered cool?
5. Allie and her crew have a blast at their slumber party, playing dress-up and Dance Party America, careening down the stairs while mattress surfing, and wolfing down gooey brownie soup and bites of homemade chocolate cake. If you could have the best slumber party ever, what kinds of activities would you plan? What tasty treats would you serve?
6. Allie adores the Boxcar Children series (and so does Joey Fields). What is your absolute, can't-live-without favorite book (or books) and why would you recommend them to others?
7. After Allie's mom finds Allie sulking in the closet, she offers to call Mrs. Hunter to discuss the Cheyenne situation. Allie doesn't let her. What do you think about the way she handles this situation?
8. At the end of the book, Mrs. Hunter steps in and gives everyone in Room 209 a talking to. Do you understand the message she is trying to get across? Do you agree or disagree with the point she is trying to make?



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Book Four: *Stage Fright*

About the Book

Room 209 is putting on a play, and Allie wants the role of Princess but is instead cast as the Evil Queen! Will she realize that not being the lead doesn't mean she has to give up the spotlight?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the opening line, "What's amazing is how you can be a normal kid one day, and then something happens that completely changes your life," of *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls: Stage Fright*? Does it grab your attention? Has your life ever changed overnight because of something that happened?
2. Allie's mom lands a job on a TV show in town, *Good News*! Can you imagine if a member of your family became a TV regular? Would you show off or try to hide it?
3. If your class were going to put on a play like Allie's does, what would you want the play to be? What role would you want to play: actor, lighting designer, set designer, director, producer, choreographer (if there is dancing), costume designer, or make-up artist?
4. Sophie and Allie both want the lead role in *Princess Penelope in the Realm of Recycling*. Although Allie doesn't want to step on Sophie's toes, she also doesn't want to sell herself short. Would you try out for a lead part even if your best friend wanted it too?
5. What if your best friend got the part you wanted, like Sophie did with Allie's part? Would you be supportive of your friend or would you need to distance yourself because of your disappointment?
6. Mrs. Hunter's play is about doing your part to help save the environment. Do you recycle? Do you shut the lights when you leave the room or unplug your appliances when you're not using them? What other kinds of things do you do to take care of the planet?
7. One of Allie's rules is "It's always better to have things out in the open than to let them fester." Do you tend to keep something inside when it's bothering you, or do you let it out?
8. Do you think Mrs. Hunter was right in taking away Sophie's part because Sophie was being ungrateful and lashed out at Allie, or do you think Mrs. Hunter overreacted?
9. What does the line "There are no small parts, only small actors" mean to you? How does it relate to what happened to Allie and her classmates?



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Book Five:

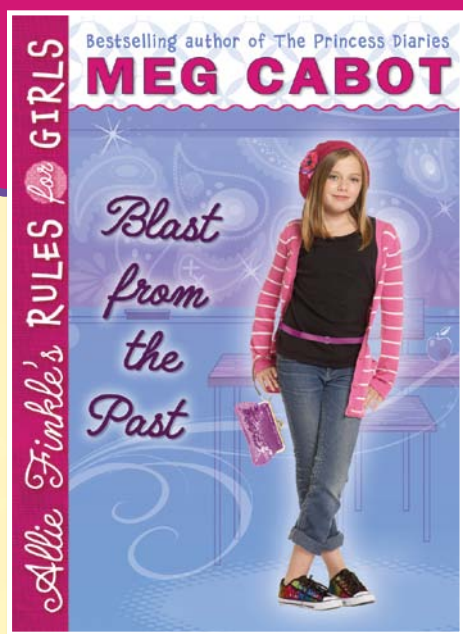
Glitter Girls and the Great Fake Out

About the Book

Allie has to make a decision: spend the day with her best friends at the amazing *Twirltacular* baton competition or go to snobby Brittany's birthday party at *Glitterati*, the best, glitteriest place ever! How will she choose?

Discussion Questions

1. Even though Allie's mom is an adult, do you think it was right for her to say Allie would go to Brittany's birthday without first asking Allie if she wanted to go? Would it bother you if your mom or dad did that?
2. At the beginning of the book, Allie's faced with a dilemma. Should she go to Missy's Little Miss Majorette Baton Twirling Twirltacular with her best friends? Or should she risk hurting her friend's feelings and go to Brittany Hauser's birthday extravaganza because it will probably be more glamorous? She chooses Brittany's. What would you have done?
3. Do you think it's OK to lie if no one finds out about it? Have you ever gotten away with a lie? How did it make you feel inside?
4. Brittany's birthday party is certainly packed with excitement. A stretch limo stocked with never-ending treats, a fashion shoot at Glitterati, room service in a fancy hotel . . . What more could you ask for? If you could have the perfect party for your next birthday, how would you choose to celebrate?
5. Even though Allie lied about "being forced" to go to Brittany's party, she still tries to make the best of it. But then Brittany and her friends start being mean to her. Do you think Allie deserves this treatment? Maybe it's karmic retribution for lying to her real best friends?
6. There's a lot of bullying at Brittany's birthday party—forcing Allie to wear a pirate costume when she doesn't want to, making fun of her distaste for tomatoes, bad mouthing her birthday gift. Eventually, Allie solves the problem by removing herself from the situation. Have you ever been bullied? If so, how did you handle it?
7. When Harmony comes to rescue Allie from Brittany's birthday disaster, she's pretty mad. Instead of comforting Allie and acting understanding, Harmony tells Allie that she "made some very bad choices." Do you think Harmony should've been so authoritative? Do you think what she said was right?
8. What lesson do you think Allie learns in the end?



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Book Six: *Blast from the Past*

About the Book

Allie's excited to go on a field trip with her class. But then Mrs. Hunter assigns everyone a "buddy"—and hers just happens to be her ex-best friend Mary Kay! Allie is definitely going to need some new rules this time.

Discussion Questions

- Which of the *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls* main characters do you relate to most: Allie, Caroline, Erica, Sophie, Rosemary, Cheyenne, Brittany, or Mary Kay? Whom do you think you are most like?
- Allie isn't allowed to own a cell phone until 6th grade. Some of her friends have one now. Do your parents allow you to own your own cell phone? If not, what are the top three reasons you think you should be allowed to get one?
- What did you think about Mrs. Hunter's "silly, old friend" throwing rocks at Room 209's window? Do you think it was romantic or dumb for an adult to be acting like that?
- Have you ever gone on any field trips with your class? If so, what is your all-time favorite place to visit? Which one was the worst?
- Before Room 209 goes to visit Honeypot Prairie, Mrs. Hunter entices them to dress up as someone from the 1850s to get a feel for the time period. If you could travel back to any time period, when and where would it be? What would your costume look like?
- Uncle Jay says Mewsie has gone on a "walkabout" when Mewsie slips into the wall for some alone time. Have you ever gone on a walkabout? If so, where did you go? If not, where would you like to explore if you could go on one?
- When Allie gets stuck on Team Shawnee with all of her enemies, Rosemary says she'll trade with her so Allie doesn't have to deal with being picked on. But in the end, Allie chooses to stay on the team. Why do you think she does that? Do you think it was a good idea?
- When Mary Kay gets stung in the face by a bee, all of her friends from Walnut Knolls desert her. But Allie stays to make sure Mary Kay is OK. What does this say about Allie as a friend? Do you think you would've had the courage to stay with Mary Kay, even though she'd been mean to you?
- Allie's translation of George Washington's 82nd rule—"Don't start what you can't finish. Always keep your promises"—is an important one. What does it mean to you?

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