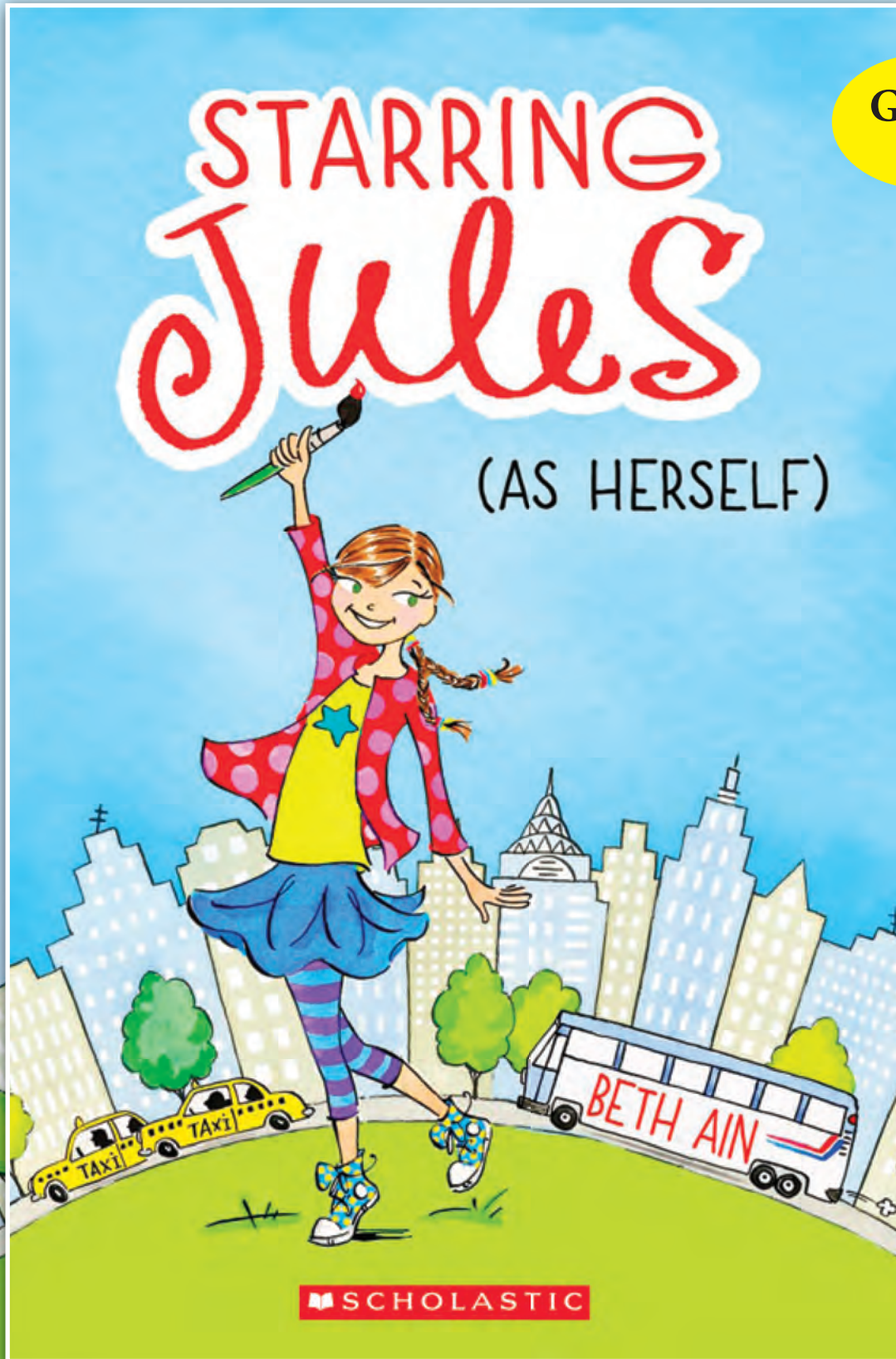


TEACHING AND
DISCUSSION GUIDE

Grades
2-5

STARRING
Jules

(AS HERSELF)





Hi teachers! I'm **Jules Bloom**, the star of this book. I'm so excited that you've decided to introduce my fabulous story to your students.

Here is a list of **Things You Need to Know About Me**:

1. I love to make lists!
2. I am a scrambled-eggs-and-chocolate-milk type person.
3. I have an audition for a real live TV commercial (which would be great if I were a tall-icy-drink type person, but all I can think about is how to get through it without throwing up).
4. I am in between best friends right now. It's complicated.
5. I think it's way more fun to dig up worms after a rainstorm than it is to put on lip-gloss. That's just me.

Here is a list of **Things You Can Do with My Awesome Book Series**:

1. Enrich your language arts curriculum.
2. Spruce up your social studies lessons.
3. Coax some fab vocab out of your students.
4. Spark classroom dialog about real-kid life stuff, like kindness and friendship.
5. Get your students excited to read, read, read.

Best of all, this educator's guide (besides having a TON of pizzazz) aligns with the **Common Core State Standards**, so while your students are having a blast discussing my book, you'll be SNEAKILY strengthening their skills! Through these exercises and questions, you will find fun ways to get them:

- Inferencing
- Predicting
- Writing with a purpose
- Dealing with cause and effect, and more!

Let's get started!

Classroom Exercises—Starring Me, Jules!— to Get Your Students Thinking and Writing

Part I

Wacky, Wonderful Words

Here are some of my signature words: *Pizzazz*. *Primo*. *Snazzy*. Aren't they fantastic? Have your students come up with a list of five signature words of their own, and challenge them to use each of them in conversation throughout the day.

Creative Associations

When I read the word *minty* in my *Swish Mouthwash for Kids* script, I immediately pictured myself wrapped in a winter scarf, wearing mittens and sledding all the way down the hill into Riverside Park in New York City (that's where I live!) on a massive snow slope. This is what mint reminds me of—sledding. (And also chocolate mint candies, which are the best candies ever invented.) Isn't it amazing how one little word sparks so many mental images?

Write the word *minty* in big fancy letters on the chalkboard, and pass out small mint chocolate candies for your students to taste. Have them taste the candies with their eyes closed. Then

pass out art supplies, scissors, and old magazines. Invite your students to make a collage of images they associate with the word *minty*. Make sure they know that anything goes—that each person has a unique association with words, and it doesn't matter if their mental image is different from everyone else's! (For example, my association with the color orange is...well...you know...)

List-O-Mania

Even though my teacher likes us to do freewriting to clear our heads at the start of the school day, it's writing lists that *really* helps my brain. Throughout this book, I make lists for everything. A list of things to do before I turn eight, a list of things I would change about my room, a list of things you really need to know about my friend Teddy...you get the idea.

Have your students make a list of goals they want to accomplish before the school year is over. Have them tape the list to the back inside cover of their writing notebook to consult throughout the year. Or ask them to make a list of favorite foods; shuffle and



redistribute the lists and have students guess who wrote each list. Or you could have them make a list of things they would like to tell or ask me, if they could talk to me, Jules!

“That’s How You Make a Fizzy Ice-Cream Cone...”

I was in a diner singing a jingle I made up, when a casting director named Colby Kingston discovered me, and next thing you know—Hollywood, here I come! (Well, almost...) Writing jingles is a lot like writing poetry: you have to get your big idea across in only a few words, so you have to give those words rhythm and punch. Singing a jingle also takes guts: you have to put your shyness on the back burner and really belt out your idea.

Arrange your students in small groups and have them come up with a silly jingle to perform as a group in front of the class. Give everyone a common theme to write the jingle about, like a new ice cream flavor, or a new kind of dog treat, or even tomorrow’s weather forecast.

The Power of Brainstorming

My mom is the coolest. She is an artist, and watching her brainstorm can be even better than watching a movie. When she suddenly started painting restaurant name ideas on our living room wall in red paint, it made my list of absolutely favorite things my mom has ever, ever done!

Pretend your classroom chalkboard is a blank living room wall. Have your students come up and “paint” names for something—a restaurant, an imaginary class pet, a new sports team, or the plant on the windowsill, for example. Conduct a vote by secret ballot to decide which name is most creative, most hilarious, most realistic, etc.

Nix the Cliques

At the beginning of this book, I’m feeling pretty sorry for myself because Stinkytown (formerly known as my best friend

Charlotte) has turned into a pink, sparkly bully who only hangs out with Abby and Brynn. They all went on vacation together to some fancy-pants hotel, and now they think they’re the coolest. They call themselves the ABCs, and where does J-for-Jules fit in? I’ll give you a hint: “J” is a full seven letters away from “C.” I guess I’ll go eat worms.

Talk to your students about cliques. Get a conversation going about how it’s normal to want to feel included, accepted, and “cool,” but that cliques can cause kids to feel rejected, insecure, and sad. Create a classroom contract called Nix the Cliques, which each student will sign. Ask the kids to collaborate on listing the Rules of Kindness for this contract (another list—yippee!). Have a circle discussion about how to spread these rules outside of the classroom as well.

Time Travel

Don’t you wonder what on earth happens to me after this thrilling book ends? Aren’t you dying of curiosity to know how my great Hollywood movie debut turns out? And who wins the Great Toothbrush Challenge? And whether I manage to get Charlotte and Elinor to like each other and be my co-best friends? Have your students write a ninth chapter for this book. What’s the next thing that happens to *moi*? You could even ask them to fast-forward ten years and write a chapter about me as an—eek!—almost-eighteen-year-old. What kind of teenager do I turn out to be?

Pretty Please

I spend most of this story totally stressed out and worried about how I’m going to get through my TV commercial audition without throwing up or flipping out or hiding under a rug (or maybe all three). Ask your students to write a persuasive letter to Colby Kingston, explaining why she should hire me for the job, no matter what. Encourage them to use as many details and as much evidence as possible for why I’m a pretty great kid and why I’d be fun to work with.

Cha-cha-cha!

I messed up my audition big-time. But even though I had just totally embarrassed myself, I went ahead and belted out a song at the top of my lungs, did a little twirl, and even added a “cha-cha-cha” at the end just for a little more pizzazz.

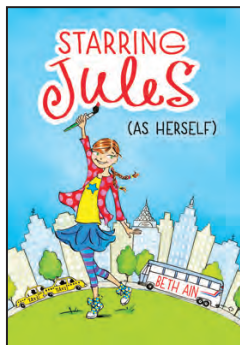
Talk to your students about the idea that “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” Ask them about the worst, most embarrassing thing they’ve ever done. Do a time-travel writing exercise: ask them to go back in time and fix the embarrassing situation. Have them perform small-group skits to illustrate making the best of a bad situation.

Questions for Discussion

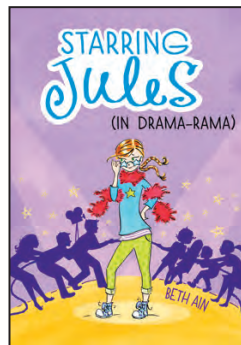
- Grandma Gilda is great at a lot of things. (For example, she knows how to keep even scary stuff in perspective.) What are some of the lessons Jules learns from her? Do you know any adults like Grandma Gilda?
Common Core Speaking and Listening Standard #4:
 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
- Why does Jules cry in the car on her way home from the audition?
Common Core Reading for Literature Standard #3:
 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- Why does Charlotte hold Jules's hand while they wait to hear what Colby is calling about? Do you think Jules and Charlotte can repair their friendship after everything that has happened? Have you ever had a fight with a close friend? Did you make up afterward? If so, how?
Common Core Reading for Literature Standard #3:
 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- Why is Jules so excited to meet Elinor? What kind of a friend does Elinor turn out to be? Would you want to be friends with her?
Common Core Reading for Literature Standard #3:
 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- Charlotte tells Jules that she should smile more and dress more like a girl. What do you think of this? If you were Jules, how would you react?
Common Core Reading for Literature Standard #6:
 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- How does Jules save her audition, even though it starts out as a disaster?
Common Core Reading for Literature Standard #1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

About the Author

A Pennsylvania girl at heart, Beth Ain fell in love with life in New York City, and she loves trying to capture the essence of family life there. Thankfully, she now has the benefits of both city and small town life, having settled in Port Washington, NY, where she lives very happily with her husband and their two kids.



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