

A GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB GUIDE



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START A GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB AT YOUR SCHOOL OR LIBRARY

Interested in starting a graphic novel book club at your library but not sure where to begin? This guide includes general tips for getting started plus title-specific discussion questions to help make your first book club meeting a success!

This guide was created by Tina Lerno. Tina is a librarian for the city of Los Angeles and part of the library's digital content team. Before becoming a librarian, Tina earned a degree in art from UCLA and worked in the world of television animation doing color design on shows such as *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Jackie Chan Adventures*, and *The Boondocks*. Tina is the past chair of the Great Graphic Novels for Teens committee for YALSA and past co-chair of the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table conference and conventions planning committee. She has advocated for comics at San Diego Comic-Con, New York Comic Con, and Los Angeles Comic Con, where she spoke about the need for comics advocacy in libraries.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

- **Think of your goals for the discussions and be prepared to scale back if the kids aren't as engaged as you would like.**
- **Set ground rules for the discussion. Does everyone get a turn to answer each question?**
- **Be prepared to answer all the questions yourself.**
- **Always keep the sessions short—an hour or less.**
- **Jot down notes as you read to help remember the story.**
- **Have a portion of the time dedicated to a more physical activity such as drawing or acting out a scene from the story.**

**NEED HELP
PICKING YOUR
FIRST BOOK?
READ ON FOR
SOME IDEAS!**



HARPER SHARP: KID DETECTIVE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Harper Sharp is like most fifth graders—he’s juggling homework, friendships, video games, and . . . oh yeah, he’s busy solving major mysteries!

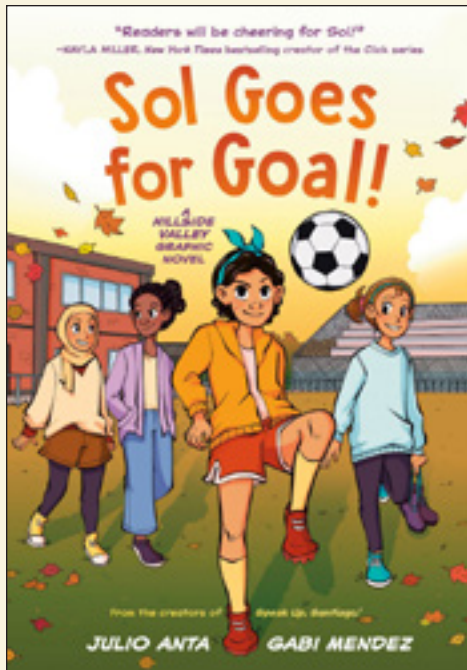
When Starview Elementary announces their annual Young Inventor’s Fair, everyone’s mind starts whirring. What will they make? A new trading card game? Collectible slugs?

Suddenly, ominous fliers appear all over school, warning kids and teachers to “BEWARE THE FAIR!” Can Harper figure out who’s behind this terrifying threat and foil their nefarious plans? Or will these young inventors’ sparks be extinguished forever?! Find out in the start to the next great graphic novel series sensation!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Harper hopes to be a detective himself one day. Who is someone you follow who has inspired you?
2. Harper says to be a good detective, you must be very observant. What are some ways you can do that?
3. Do you think Harper is a good detective? Why?
4. What do you think about how the author adds extra puzzles to solve in the book? Does it make the story more interesting or too complicated?
5. Harper relies on the help of his friends and family to solve mysteries. Does this make it easier? Why or why not?
6. In addition to detecting, Harper also enjoys drawing. How does he use that skill to help him solve mysteries?
7. Harper knows what he wants to be when he grows up. What would you like to be?
8. Do you have an idea of how to make those grown-up goals come true?
9. The drawings in the book are very colorful and detailed. How does this style of art help you with the mystery?
10. Do you like the art style? Does that change how you read the book?
11. What are some things that adults underestimate about what kids are capable of?
12. Harper has a big assignment due. He has been given two weeks to complete it. Is that fair? Why or why not?
13. Do kids in general have too much homework? Do you?
14. In the end, Harper solves the mystery in the story. Did you guess who it was? Did you need more clues?

SOL GOES FOR THE GOAL



ABOUT THE BOOK

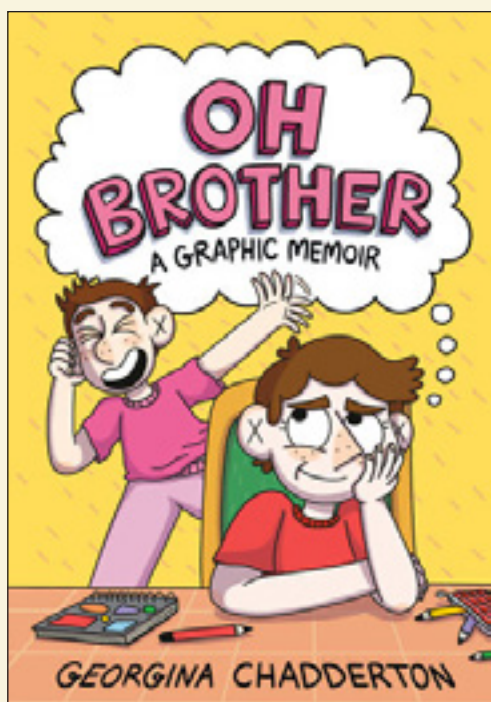
Twelve-year-old Sol is a great friend, a model student, a beloved daughter and a star soccer player. At least that's what everyone always expects of her. But whenever the soccer captain Lily walks by, Sol starts to lose focus. What's with this heart fluttering feeling she has around Lily?! And how can she stay the star player—the star everything— if she can barely remember her name (much less how to play soccer) around Lily?

Is Sol destined to let everyone down, including herself? Or can she figure out how to be the Sol she wants to be . . . on and off the field? Settle back into the cozy community of Hillside Valley in this second irresistible graphic novel! And don't miss the first Hillside Valley Graphic Novel, *Speak Up, Santiago!*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In *Sol Goes for Goal!*, Sol tries to be perfect. Is that possible? Why or why not?
2. What advice would you give a friend who thinks they need to be perfect all the time?
3. Sol is worried that her crush on Lily will affect her ability to concentrate on the team. What could she do to help her nerves?
4. When Sol is daydreaming, how do we know? What does the artist do to make it easy to recognize? What could they do differently?
5. Sol and her sister constantly bicker. Does the way their mom compares them to each other help or hurt their relationship?
6. Have you ever tried out for a team sport? Does the book accurately portray this?
7. Sol has two different friend groups. Does she do a good job interacting with both? What could she do differently?
8. Do you think Sol's non-soccer friends are too hard on her when she oversleeps? Why or why not?
9. What is the lesson Sol learns after this incident?
10. This graphic novel has a writer and an illustrator. How does this change the story and its presentation? Would it be different if there were only one creator?
11. Are there pages where the art and the text tell a different story about a character or situation?
12. What have you learned from Sol and her peers about friendship?

OH BROTHER



ABOUT THE BOOK

So much is changing in Gina Chadderton's life. Her family is moving, she's about to start middle school, and her brother Rob has just escaped out a playroom window and ended up over at the new neighbor's house!

This coming-of-age memoir explores Gina and Rob's lives. As a nonverbal autistic boy with an intellectual disability, Rob doesn't communicate his thoughts and feelings like most people do. Despite the difficulties that come with that, the Chadderton family has never failed to show each other kindness and love. But as Gina begins to grapple with her own growing body and whether or not to shave her legs, she struggles with how hard it is to take care of her brother while also taking care of herself. Compassionate, informative, and emotionally nuanced, *Oh Brother* is a heartfelt story about the good days and bad days that come with growing up with someone who will always need help. But more than that, it's about how you can fill even the most challenging days with joy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Oh Brother* is a memoir. That means it's about the person who wrote and drew the book. Would you want to write about yourself? Why or why not?
2. Gina's brother Rob is autistic and has an intellectual disability. At the beginning of the book, we learn about what this means before diving into the story. How did this help you understand the Chadderton family better?
3. Gina is writing about her whole family, but the book is from her perspective. Why do you think that's important when writing a memoir?
4. If you were to write something about your own family, where would you start? What would you include?
5. Is a graphic novel the best way to document your life, or can you think of other ways?
6. Even though your own family experiences may be totally different, what are some similarities you see between your family and the family in the book?
7. How does reading a memoir affect you? Is it very different from reading fiction?
8. How do the drawings and drawing style help you understand Gina's relationship with Rob?
9. What are some ideas you learned from Gina's story that you can use in your own life?
10. What are some ways to communicate that don't involve words?
11. What did you learn from the book? What did you learn about dealing with a family member with a disability?
12. What did you think Gina wanted readers to understand about her family and about autism?

LAST DAY POOL PARTY



ABOUT THE BOOK

Six very different kids' stories collide at an unforgettable last day pool party in this hilarious and relatable story about friendship, popularity, and the messiness of growing up.

When her name gets skipped at the eighth-grade graduation ceremony, Rose decides she is done being invisible. She's determined to finally stand out and make her unfulfilled middle school dreams come true at the upcoming pool party. But she's not the only one who wants to make a splash . . . BFFs Liv and Juhi are on the verge of a friend breakup when Juhi reveals her family is moving, and Liv uses the party as a chance to scout for a new bestie. Queen bee Maya was forced by her mom to come to unpopular Dustin's party to be "nice." And meanwhile, her not-so-social cousin Paul is just trying to avoid all the pool party pandemonium. By the time the sun sets, unexpected twists and ridiculous mishaps will make this the weirdest, wildest last day of school ever. Get ready, because this party is about to go off the deep end.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Last Day Pool Party* takes place in one day. Can you think of a single day or time you had when so many changes happened?
2. Do you think some of the characters have unrealistic expectations of their relationships. Why? What could they do differently?
3. What do you think about Paul's advice to not remember someone too well from the past?
4. Paul talks about having online friends and how they are as meaningful to him as IRL friends. Do you think this is true or not true?
5. Paul enjoys spending time alone and appears to be happy. Is it important to always have friends around? Why or why not?
6. Liv and Juhi are best friends, but we find out Juhi is moving far away. How would you handle that news?
7. Liv interviews kids at the party, looking for a new best friend. Obviously not the best idea. What would you do to see if someone is compatible with you?
8. What does it mean to have a "best friend"?
9. Through the story, we explore different kinds of friendships. Do you think it's better to have one best friend or a group of friends? Why?
10. We see that Dustin has been bullied online. How has social media changed what it means to be bullied?
11. Do you think the adults in the story help the kids or make things worse?
12. At first, we see Maya as the bully in the story, but as we read, we see a different side of her, such as her childhood friendship with Dustin. How does that relationship change how you see Maya?
13. Maya is also pictured as the not-so-cool friend amongst the "knot." Does that change how you see her? Why?
14. Rose is looking to complete a list she made when she was younger. Is there a better way to set goals for yourself?