

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHORS

Jodi Picoult

and SAMANTHA VAN LEER

Off the Page

This guide includes Discussion Questions, Creative Writing Connections that correlate to the Common Core, and a special section for Mother-Daughter Book Clubs!

THE COMPANION TO *BETWEEN THE LINES*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INCLUDES COMMON CORE STANDARD CORRELATIONS

ABOUT THE BOOK

From #1 *New York Times* best-selling authors Jodi Picoult and her daughter and coauthor, Samantha van Leer, comes *OFF THE PAGE*, a tender and appealing romantic YA novel filled with humor, adventure, and magical relationships.

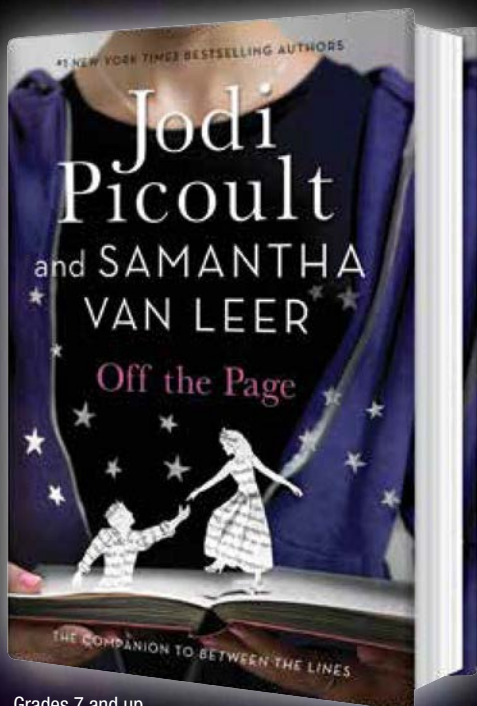
Meet Oliver, a prince literally taken from the pages of a fairy tale and transported into the real world. Meet Delilah, the girl who wished Oliver into being. It's a miracle that seems perfect at first—but there are complications. To exist in Delilah's world, Oliver must take the place of a regular boy. Enter Edgar, who agrees to play Oliver's role in the pages of Delilah's favorite book. But just when it seems that the plan will work, everything gets turned upside down.

Full of humor and witty commentary about life, *OFF THE PAGE* is a stand-alone novel as well as the companion to the authors' bestseller, *Between the Lines*, and is perfect for readers looking for a fairy-tale ending. Fans of Sarah Dessen and Meg Cabot are sure to appreciate this novel about love, romance, and relationships.



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Jodi and Samantha have four dogs: Alvin, Harvey, Dudley, and Oliver, for whom the prince in this story is named.



Grades 7 and up

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JODI PICOULT is the author of twenty-three novels, including the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers *Leaving Time*, *The Storyteller*, *Lone Wolf*, *Sing You Home*, *House Rules*, *Handle with Care*, *Change of Heart*, *Nineteen Minutes*, and *My Sister's Keeper*. She also cowrote the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Between the Lines*, the companion to *Off the Page*, with her daughter, Samantha van Leer. Jodi lives in New Hampshire with her husband and three children. Visit her online at jodipicoult.com.

SAMANTHA VAN LEER is a sophomore at Vassar College majoring in psychology with a minor in human development. She cowrote the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Between the Lines*, the companion to *Off the Page*, with her mother, Jodi Picoult.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Read. Think about a book that you have read and enjoyed. What made this book particularly appealing to you? What specific elements of the plot, characters, setting, or language affected you? What role does your imagination play when you read a book?

Friendship. Think about the people in your life who are your friends. How did you get to know these people, and how did your friendships develop? What makes these friendships positive or negative? What are some ways people show you friendship, and how do you respond? What would you do if you were separated from your friends?

Escape. How do books or movies provide an escape from the real world? Have you ever wanted to escape into the universe of a book or a movie? What do you imagine life would be like there, and how would it be similar or different from your real life? Would you want to stay there forever? Why or why not?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

IDENTITY

When Oliver poses as Jessamyn's son, Edgar, she notices slight changes in him and warns, "It might be fun to change it up, Edgar, but don't forget who you are" (p. 31). Later, James also suggests to Oliver, "Maybe instead of pretending to be someone you're not, you should just be yourself" (p. 82).

- 1) Why do you think Jessamyn and James both offer Oliver (posing as Edgar) similar advice? What do they mean? What examples from the text support your thinking?
- 2) How does Oliver's situation lend irony to their words of advice?
- 3) How might you apply their suggestions to your own life?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4,
CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

CLIIQUES

As he begins to understand high school cliques, Oliver wonders: "When you have so many people, each one inevitably fascinating, why would you limit yourself to only those like you?" (p. 62).

- 1) How would you answer Oliver's question?
- 2) Why do you think that people tend to be friends with others who are like them?
- 3) How are you and your friends similar to or different from each other?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED . . .

APPEARANCE

Consider the role that physical appearance plays in the lives of each of the characters. For example, Delilah worries that she's not as pretty as Allie McAndrews (p. 86); Jules experiments with edgy style (p. 7); Oliver exchanges his princely hose for "classic jeans, solid T-shirt, leather satchel" (p. 85); Frump wants to appear more attractive to Seraphima (p. 73); and Seraphima wears jeans underneath her princess gown (p. 292).

- 1) What is the significance of physical appearance in Delilah's world versus the world of Oliver's fairy tale?
- 2) What do the characters' physical appearances reveal about them?
- 3) How does the author use changes in each character's physical appearance to illustrate his or her development?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

FATE

Oliver tries to escape the fate written for him in his fairy tale, in search of "a life that didn't have such a rigid plotline" (p. 9). But the narrator asks, "Reader, do you believe in Fate? Do you believe that somewhere, there's a grand plan for each of us?" (p. 155).

- 1) How would you answer the narrator's question?
- 2) What role does Fate play in the novel, for the characters in Oliver's fairy tale and the characters in Delilah's world?
- 3) What role do you believe Fate plays in your own life, and in the lives of those around you?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

ACTING

Throughout the book, Oliver struggles with his role as an actor—first in the fairy tale, and again when he impersonates Edgar: "I wasn't expecting to be released from a book in which I spent every moment pretending to be a person I'm not only to wind up doing it all over again" (p. 29).

- 1) How does Oliver feel about acting the various roles he must play—prince, son, boyfriend, drama club performer, hero?
- 2) What are some of the roles that other characters in the novel play, and for what reasons? If "all the world's a stage" (p. 294), is it better to be an actor or to be genuine?
- 3) In your own life, what roles do you play, and how do they affect you?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

LOVE

At various points in the novel, each of the main characters struggles to understand the nature of love. For example, Delilah asks, "Is love really this hard?" (p. 92) and later wonders, "How come love is never simple?" (p. 179).

- 1) What are some times when Delilah, Oliver, and Edgar question the true nature of love?
- 2) How do their questions reveal their character development?
- 3) How would you answer their questions about what love is? How do you think each character would define love by the end of the novel? Do you agree with one of their definitions of love more than the others?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

FAMILY

Near the end of the novel, Oliver asks Queen Maureen, “I don’t think family has to be related by blood, do you? Don’t you think family is the people who love you the most?” (p. 323).

- 1) Based on his interactions with other characters, who would Oliver consider to be his family?
- 2) How does your own definition of “family” compare to Oliver’s? What are the different shapes that a family might take?
- 3) Who are the people you consider to be your family, and why?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

FREEDOM

Oliver leaves the fairy tale world in order to be free to do what he wishes, while Edgar takes his place in the fairy tale for the same reason: to escape his own reality in search of a new adventure (pp. 35–37).

- 1) How does each character’s situation shape his or her view of freedom?
- 2) Does the fairy tale represent freedom and escape, or does it trap the characters inside it?
- 3) Do you think Oliver, Edgar, and Delilah find the freedom they are searching for?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

DISAPPOINTMENT

After a fight with Oliver, Delilah asks, “Who would have thought that having your dreams come true would suck so much?” (p. 84).

- 1) Why does Delilah feel disappointed even though her dreams have come true?
- 2) What is the difference between her expectations and the reality of having Oliver in her world?
- 3) Why does she remember the warning “Be careful what you wish for” (p. 64)?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4

READER

While inside the fairy tale, Edgar realizes, “Without a reader, a story is only half complete. . . . Without a reader, the words just sit on the page, waiting to come alive in someone’s imagination” (p. 38).

- 1) What do the novel’s authors believe about the reader’s participation in creating and shaping a story? What elements of the text reveal the authors’ beliefs?
- 2) What is the relationship between an author, the characters, and the reader?
- 3) What is the role of imagination in storytelling?
- 4) Do you agree with the authors’ ideas about how each reader participates in the story?

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.4



CREATIVE WRITING CONNECTIONS

HOPE

Just before Edgar and Oliver attempt to switch places for the last time to save Jessamyn's life, the narrator interjects with a brief digression on hope: "Hope is what makes you look outside the window to see if it's stopped raining. . . . Hope is what makes us believe that things can only get better. Hope is what keeps us going" (p. 327). Another famous description of hope appears in the poetry of Emily Dickinson: "Hope is the thing with feathers." (complete poem available online from the Poetry Foundation). Compare and contrast these two understandings of the word "hope." Then create your own definition of the word, in either poetry or prose, by completing the idea "Hope is . . ."

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.4, CCRA.R.6, CCRA.W.3,
CCRA.W.4, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.3, CCRA.L.5

DIARY

The narrator writes, "A fairy tale is a snapshot too. You never know what goes on post-happily-ever-after" (p. 249). At the end of the novel, Delilah gives Oliver a diary so he can write his own story. Choose the perspective of any character from the novel and write his or her first few diary entries "post-happily-ever-after." Use the entries to chronicle that character's thoughts, feelings, and experiences, starting the day after the novel ends.

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.3, CCRA.W.3, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.9,
CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2

MEETING

Delilah fell in love with Oliver when he was simply a character on the page, long before he escaped from the fairy tale into her world. Think about your favorite character from any story—literature, graphic novel, drama, film—and what it would be like to meet him or her in the real world. Write the dramatic scene in which you meet for the first time. Then share it with a small group of peers. Revise your scene, incorporating feedback from the group as well as your own edits.

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.3, CCRA.W.3, CCRA.W.4., CCRA.W.5,
CCRA.W.9, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2

IMAGINATION

Inside the fairy tale, Edgar and Jessamyn find a portal on the copyright page that leads to the room of her imagination—filled with bookshelves and cluttered with various artifacts representing all of the ideas and abandoned stories in Jessamyn's writing mind. Consider your own creative mind: If your imagination is a room, what does it look like? What objects or people are inside it, and what might they represent? Where is this room located, and how do you enter it? Write a descriptive scene in which you enter the room of your imagination, using specific details to create a symbolic representation of your own mind.

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.5, CCRA.W.3, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2,
CCRA.L.3

PHOTOGRAPHS

Oliver loves Mrs. McPhee's photo albums because they tell the story of Delilah growing up. Choose a selection of images from your childhood, and use it to write your own narrative of growing up. Use a combination of images and text to tell the story of how you became the person you are today.

● Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.W.3, CCRA.W.4., CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.2, CCRA.L.3



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This guide was created by Laura Schick,
a librarian at Jesuit High School in Portland, Oregon.