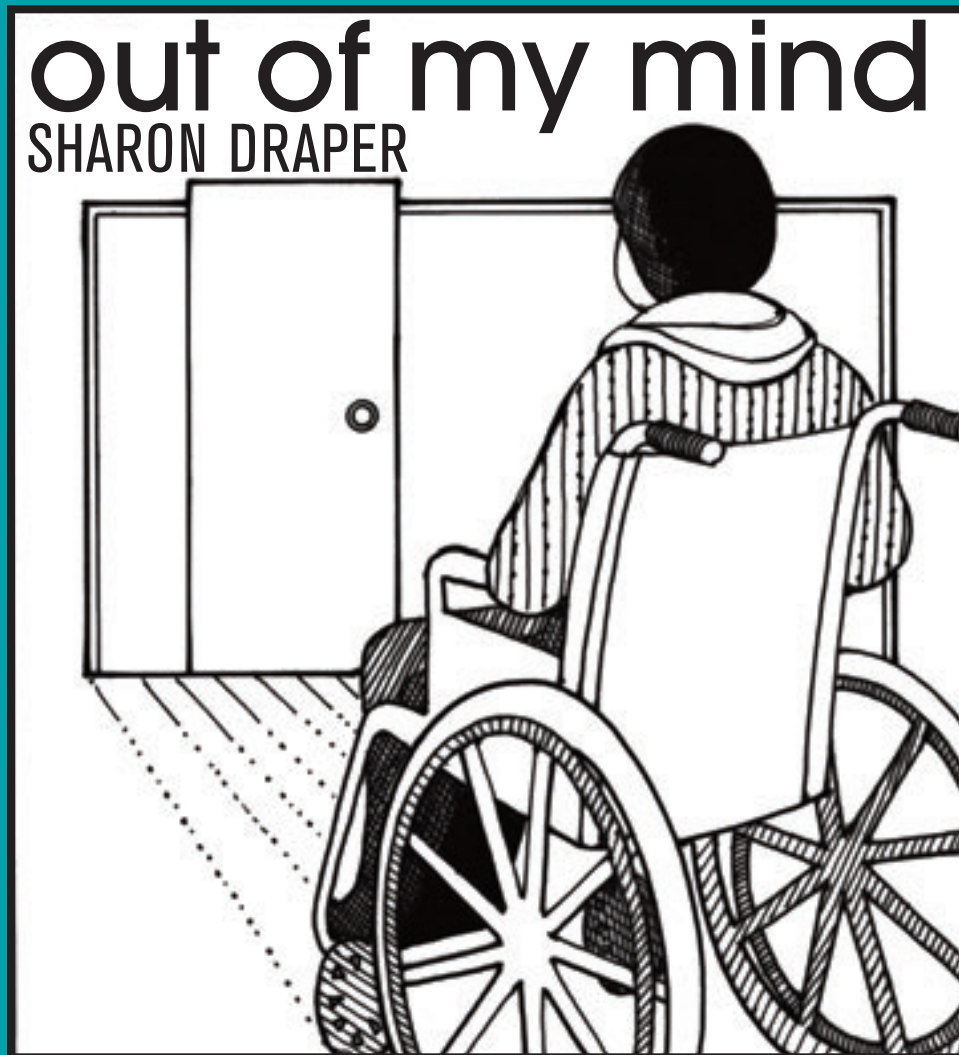


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

Written By Joyce Friedland

LEARNING LINKS

P.O. Box 326 • Cranbury • New Jersey 08512

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the novel *Out of My Mind*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for guided reading by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter or group of chapters; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the book by reading the title and author's name on the cover of the book. Look at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Do you think it will be mainly humorous or serious? Have you read any other books by Sharon Draper?
2. Skim through the book and notice that each chapter begins with a short paragraph in boldface type. Read several of these paragraphs and try to figure out why the author used this format. Then, as you read the book, test your theory to see if it holds up.
3. **Science Connection:** Read the Background Information on page three of this study guide and do some additional research to learn all you can about spastic quadriplegia, a form of cerebral palsy, a disease that affects the life of Melody, the main character in this book. As you read, assess whether the author has been true to the science that exists in the field of cerebral palsy.
4. How does your community and your school serve the needs of disabled children? Do you think enough is being done to satisfy their needs in the areas of transportation, schooling, and recreation? What areas could use improvement? What specific ways might your community add to the services for handicapped children?
5. In most schools there is some attention paid to the special needs of handicapped children. In some schools, children with handicaps are taught in separate classrooms with teachers and aides who have been trained to deal with special needs children. In other schools, handicapped children are mainstreamed to receive instruction in regular classrooms. Then, there are schools where there are separate classrooms as well as a policy of mainstreaming whenever possible. What is the case in your school? What do you think is the best way to educate children with special needs?
6. **Music Connection:** Play a short piece of classical symphonic music in your classroom. Ask your classmates to jot down the colors they "see" as the music plays and the tastes they imagine as the music plays. After the music ends, make a chart showing the colors and tastes that were selected. Were there any colors or tastes that were selected by several students? Was there any consensus on colors and tastes that the music evoked? As you read the book, notice how Melody links music to colors and tastes.
7. Are there any school-wide competitions in your school in areas other than sports? What is the nature of these competitions? Have you ever participated? What kind of person makes the best competitor? In your opinion, does high-powered competition make students strive to do better, or does it put so much pressure on students that they fail to perform well?
8. Before you read the book independently, share the first chapter with your classmates by reading it aloud. What do you learn about the character whose voice tells this story? Do you agree that "Thoughts need words" and that "Words need a voice"? Explain what you think this means.

Chapters 1 – 3 (cont.)

5. Why did Melody's father warn his daughter that her life would not be easy?
6. Why did Melody have a "tornado explosion" in the superstore?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you like the way Melody's mother and father treat their daughter? Do you think they should do anything differently?
2. Do you know anyone who claims to have a photographic memory? What are its advantages and disadvantages for Melody?
3. Do you think that anyone born with Melody's handicaps could learn to communicate? How might this be possible?

Literary Devices:

- I. *Simile*—A simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared using the words "like" or "as." For example:

Words have always swirled around me like snowflakes—each one delicate and different, each one melting untouched in my hands.

What is being compared?

Why is this better than just saying, "words are important to me"?

- II. *Point of View*—Point of view in literature refers to the voice telling the story. It could be one of the characters in the story or the author as narrator. From whose point of view is this story told?
-

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this point of view?
