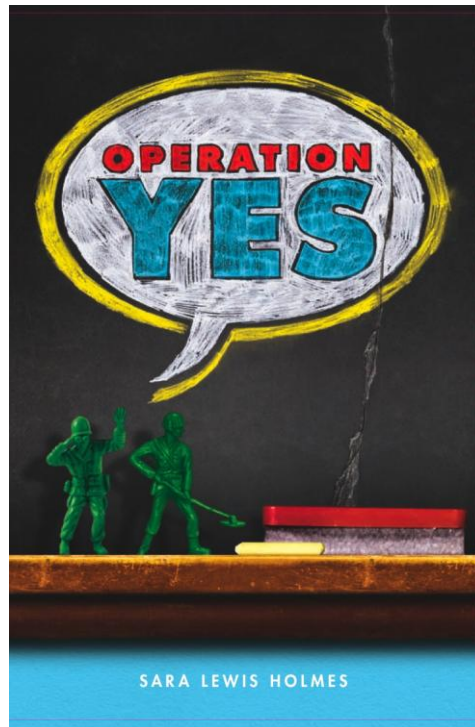


A Teacher's Guide to
OPERATION YES

Written By Sara Lewis Holmes



Text copyright 2009 by Sara Lewis Holmes; Book Design by Phil Falco;
Published by Arthur A. Levine Books, An Imprint of Scholastic, Inc.
ISBN 13: 978-0-545-10795-2; 256 pages; Interest Level: Grades 4-8; Reading Level: 4.5.

KUDOS FOR OPERATION YES!

“[T]he most buoyant example of ensemble work since E. L. Konigsburg’s *The View from Saturday* (1996) and the best of Gregory Maguire’s *Hamlet Chronicles*...the entire tale is purest stagecraft: quick, funny, sad, full of heart, and irresistibly absorbing.” –*Booklist, starred review*

“[T]his story of middle-school classmates who come together to honor their teacher and her war-injured brother entertains. . . . Miss Loupe is the kind of teacher every kid dreams about, and the “all for one, one for all” mentality that comes through as the students band together is inspiring.” -- *Publishers Weekly*

“In this lively, often funny novel, an enthusiastic teacher brings improv to restless sixth graders at a rundown school on a North Carolina Air Force base. . . . Pitched to readers in both military and civilian families, this engaging story avoids larger questions of war and peace, focusing instead on how they affect the lives of American kids who deal with the consequences every day.” -- *Kirkus Reviews*

STORY SUMMARY

(from the Arthur A. Levine Fall 2009 Catalog):

“Be kind, for everyone you know
is fighting a great battle.”

It’s just a rectangle of tape on a plain linoleum floor. Ten feet long, four feet deep, at the front of a sixth-grade classroom near an Air Force base in North Carolina. But when Miss Loupe steps into the space, it becomes a putting green. A prison cell. A stage. And she teaches her students how to make that magic—theatre—happen as well.

Bo loves the improvisation exercises: They focus his restless energies and distract him from his father’s impending deployment overseas. But Gari has more important things to worry about—like getting her mom home safe from Iraq. When Miss Loupe’s brother goes missing in Afghanistan and Miss Loupe herself breaks down, Gari, Bo, and the rest of the class have to improvise their way through their own “great battles” . . . and find a way to help their teacher fight hers.

The first middle-grade novel about the home front during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, *Operation Yes* is a poignant, funny, and generous book about an amazing teacher and the students she inspires.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



In her own Plan A, Sara Lewis Holmes intended to become an actress, a diplomat, or a physicist. But then she met and married an air force pilot, and that launched Plan B: writing...and a lot of moving! She has lived in Alabama, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Mississippi, North Carolina, Germany and Japan, scribbling poems and stories at every stop. Her first novel, *Letters From Rapunzel*, won the Ursula Nordstrom Fiction Contest. Sara now lives with her family in northern Virginia, where she looks forward to whatever Plan C might bring. Please visit her websites at www.saralewishomes.com and www.operationyesbook.com.

TEACHER'S GUIDE CONTENTS

1. PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Activities and discussion starters to activate students' prior knowledge.

2. CHAPTER GUIDES

Chapter guides may be used to encourage whole class discussions, lead teacher-guided reading groups, or to provide structure for students working either in cooperative small groups or independently. **The guide is not meant to be assigned to students in its entirety.**

Each chapter guide includes:

- ▶ **Vocabulary** that might be new for your students. Choose a few words from each list and guide students in using context clues to infer meanings.
- ▶ **Discussion Starters** inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy that lead students from basic comprehension to higher level thinking skills.
- ▶ **Predicting** where students are invited to make predictions based on their analysis of the characters' traits in the story.
- ▶ **Yes, and...** In the spirit of Miss Loupe's Taped Space (aka Theatrical Space, or Temporary Stage), there is a suggested improv activity related to chapter events. Activities were inspired by Sara Lewis Holmes and *The Improv Encyclopedia*.

3. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

Following the chapter guides, you'll find suggested culminating projects that address the eight multiple intelligences identified by Dr. Howard Gardner: Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Naturalistic, Verbal-linguistic and Visual-spatial. Consider having students choose a culminating activity that best matches their learning styles.

4. MILITARY SPEAK

A glossary of military terms found throughout the story.

5. AUTHOR INTERVIEW WITH SARA LEWIS HOLMES

PRE-READING

1. Look at the title and cover. What do you notice?
2. Read the book's cover blurb. What is this story about? Make a t-chart with the background knowledge you'll bring to the story and questions you have before reading (see below):

<i>What I already know about military life, moving and theater:</i>	<i>Questions and predictions I have about the story:</i>

3. Have you ever moved to a new home and school? What were the positives and negatives? If you had to do it again, would you? Why or why not?
4. Do you know anyone in the military? What is military life like for soldiers and families?
5. Tell about a time when you were separated from someone you love. How did you cope?

CHAPTER 1: DAY ONE

WORD STUDY

unspooled	gawked	virtual	nape	gesture
rustled	mimic	ventured	poised	putting
huddled	pantomiming	substantial	spruce	marveling

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. How does Miss Loupe surprise the students of Room 208? (*knowledge*)
2. When Bo suggests that Miss Loupe is “going for a birdie” in golf, why does she thank him for his vote of confidence? (*comprehension*)
3. If you were in Miss Loupe’s class, how would you answer the roll on the first day of school? (*application*)
4. Bo infers that “...a brand new teacher with a belly ring would not have a rule about raising your hand before speaking...”. Make a list of Miss Loupe’s physical attributes. What might you infer about her character from this list? Now make a list of your own physical attributes. What might Miss Loupe infer about you? (*analysis*)
5. Miss Loupe writes the following statements on the board:

Art Needs a Frame

Art is Arranging Objects to Create Beauty

Theater is the Art of Saying Yes

Do you agree with each statement (yes, no, unsure)? Explain your answers. Which three statements would you write on the board on your first day in a new school? What if you could write the statements anonymously? Explain your answers. (*synthesis*)

6. What kind of student is Bo? How does he feel about school? Use evidence from the text to support your opinions. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What does Miss Loupe mean when she tells the students “...we’ll see what happens when we say yes”? What will the students agree to do?

YES, AND...

Welcome to the Taped Space! Tape off a section of the classroom like Miss Loupe did in Room 208 to play WHERE AM I? Ask students to:

1. Think of a place where they usually feel happy. How do they act in this place? What do they do?
2. Act out an activity that they do in this place (no words—just actions!).
3. Can the other students guess “where” the actors are?

CHAPTER 2: THAT NIGHT, ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IN SEATTLE

WORD STUDY

billboard	scrawled	protest
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who did Gari's mom call? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Gari feel about the call? (*comprehension*)
3. What would you do if you had to stay with relatives for a year? With whom would you stay? How would you feel? Make a list of reasons that might convince your parents/guardians to let you stay. (*application*)
4. How well does Gari know her relatives? Give evidence from the text to support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. Gari imagines her protests written on a bulletin board. Design a bulletin board with thoughts about something you want to protest. (*synthesis*)
6. Gari's protests are all in her head. Why doesn't she say what she's thinking? Is it a good idea to keep her thoughts to herself? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Gari's aunt and uncle say? How will they really feel about Gari staying with them? How will Gari react when her mother gets off the phone?

YES, AND...

Each student writes a billboard slogan on a slip of paper. Put the slips in a container.

Student Instructions:

1. Choose a slip (no peeking!).
2. Pretend to drive a car. You pass by a billboard displaying the slogan on your slip of paper. How do you react?
3. Can your classmates guess the slogan's topic from your reaction? What mood does the slogan evoke?

CHAPTER 3: ...AND IN NORTH CAROLINA

WORD STUDY

motioned	pace	dangling	hummus
mouthed	tarp	savored	pruning
authentic	mishaps	shenanigans	Tomfoolery

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who agrees to let Gari come and stay? (*knowledge*)
2. What happened the last time Bo and Gari saw each other? (*comprehension*)
3. Bo's father plays on words when he says: "No Private Mishaps, Major Shenanigans or General Tomfoolery." What does he mean? How does he use double meanings? (*application*)
4. How does Bo feel about Gari staying with his family? Give at least two examples from the text that support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. Bo says it's hard to be "...as good as everyone thinks the commander's son should be without seeming like you're better than everyone else." What does he mean? Tell or write about a time when you felt caught in the middle of two sets of expectations. (*synthesis*)
6. Bo says school is "all toast and no pickles." What does he mean? Do you agree with him? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Gari fit in at Bo's school? Will the two get along? Brainstorm a list of potential conflicts that might crop up.

YES, AND...

At the start of Chapter 3, we hear Bo's mother's talking on the phone with Paula, Gari's mother, but we only hear one side of the conversation.

Have one student pretend to talk on the phone, while the other students guess the topic of the conversation. The first student to guess correctly goes and "picks up" the other extension and joins in the conversation as a third party. The first student hangs up and the second person continues, changing topics. The game continues until everyone has had a turn.

CHAPTER 4: ...AND BACK IN SEATTLE

WORD STUDY

pattering

phosphorescent

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who is Tandi? (*knowledge*)
2. What has Gari promised to help Tandi do? How does she plan to help Tandi? (*comprehension*)
3. Gari's tone goes from critical ("stupid army") to defensive ("Well, YOU don't know one thing about the army..."). Think of a time when you changed sides on an issue, or imagine a situation in which you might shift points of view. Draw a self-portrait then fold it down the middle vertically. On one side, draw a thought bubble with one point of view, then do the same on the other side with the opposite point of view. Share your portraits in small groups or with the whole class. (*application*)
4. Reread Gari's side of the conversation with Tandi. What do you think Tandi said that made Gari angry? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think is Tandi's biggest concern at the moment—Gari's feelings about moving away, or her own campaign? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*synthesis*)
6. Explain the line: "Her mom might have to jump for the army, but Gari didn't have to." Must Gari's life be affected by the army's decisions? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: How will Gari try and convince her mother to let her stay in Seattle? How will her mother react?

YES, AND...

Although Gari is Tandi's campaign manager, Gari's biggest campaign will be to try and convince her mother to let her stay in Seattle.

Choose two students—one to play Gari and one to play the mother. Have other students choose a character from a hat (Tandi, Bo, or the commanding officer in charge of Gari's mother's deployment). Cue Gari to begin convincing her mother to let her stay in Seattle. During the discussion, send in the other characters, one at a time. Set a 60-second time limit for each character to chime in on the subject.

How did "Gari" and her "mother" react to the others? Debrief by discussing how the actors felt during each step of the process. Wrap it up by having the class vote whether Gari should stay in Seattle or go to North Carolina.

CHAPTER 5: THE QUAGMIRE OF INNOCENCE

WORD STUDY

quagmire	ignorance	temporary	evaluating
encased	tanks treads	firing turret	management issues
prohibited modes	cesspool	preceded	deliberately
stealthy	regarding	loll	aced

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why did Mrs. Heard enter room 208? (*knowledge*)
2. Why was Bo reluctant to raise his hand? What finally prompted him to participate? (*comprehension*)
3. Miss Loupe played the “Yes, and...” game with the class. Play the game in your class using Mark Loupe’s starting line. (*Note: Try this before students read the chapter, then compare Room 208’s version of the story with your class’ version.*) (*application*)
4. How does Bo feel when Mrs. Heard is in Room 208? Why? What might Mrs. Heard be thinking when she looks at Bo? (*analysis*)
5. Bo and his classmates study the immigrant experience and “what it was like to adapt to new customs and rules.” What do Bo and his classmates have in common with immigrants? If you have ever moved, describe how you adapted to your new environment. What was different or difficult? If you’ve never moved, what advice would you give to a new student who has just arrived at your school? (*synthesis*)
6. Melissa says: “I don’t know how we’re supposed to learn anything if [Miss Loupe] keeps making us *guess* the answers.” What do you think of Miss Loupe’s teaching style? Would you like to be in her class? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: As Bo leaves the room, what possibilities is he imagining?

YES, AND...

Bo wonders if his classmates would guess that he was “eating at Hog Heaven” if he were to act it out in the Taped Space. Miss Loupe (with Bo’s help) shows the class how the Ugly, Ugly couch can transform within the Taped Space.

Place a chair and table (or desk) in your Taped Space. Choose a type of restaurant and see if your classmates can guess where you are by the way you act and what you order. Do you treat the furniture any differently at a fancy restaurant than you do at a fast food joint? How would you sit at a beat-up picnic table? A steak-house booth? A padded, velvet chair and linen-covered table at a French restaurant?

CHAPTER 6: ALL THE TIME

WORD STUDY

trailed	dangling
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What happened to Gari's dad? (*knowledge*)
2. What does "All the time" mean to Gari and her mom? Why do you think they say this instead of "I love you"? (*comprehension*)
3. Gari wasn't able to change her mother's mind. If you were Gari, what would you have said? (*application*)
4. "Gari trailed her mom down the hallway, talking steadily to her mom's back, as if it weren't moving away from her." How does this image parallel Gari's and her mom's situation? (*analysis*)
5. Gari says that although she loves her mother all the time, she doesn't love her "so much at this exact moment." Think of a time when you were angry with someone you love. (*synthesis*)
6. Write the dialogue from this chapter in two columns, with Gari's words on one side and her mother's words on the other. Compare. What does this exchange say about Gari's relationship with her mother? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: At the end of the chapter, Gari thinks that there must be a better plan. Will Gari come up with another plan to stay in Seattle? What will she do?

YES, AND...

Gari's mom goes into the attic and finds her old trumpet, among other things.

Brainstorm a list of things that might be found in an attic. Encourage students to be specific (instead of "hat," you might say "black satin top hat with a rat-nibbled rim.") Write the items on individual strips of paper. Have students choose two at random and pretend to reminisce about an event that involved both items. Once they've had some practice, try 3 or more items at a time.

CHAPTER 7: FOLLOW ME

WORD STUDY

pitted	faltering	listed	righted
hustled	tandem	riff	donned
refereed	maneuverable	pivoted	hovered
choreography	ensures	exaggerated	finale

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why did Bo come early to class? (*knowledge*)
2. What did the class learn about Miss Loupe? Why is it surprising? (*comprehension*)
3. The one thing that Bo has kept as he moved from house to house is his red key chain. Write or tell about something you have kept since you were small. Why is this object special? (*application*)
4. How did Miss Loupe use the ripped sweatshirt to teach about theatre? (*analysis*)
5. The class joins Miss Loupe in singing a jody call as they row upon the Ugly, Ugly couch. Jody calls are motivational cadences sung by troops as they march or exercise. Think of something that is challenging (memorizing math facts, etc.); write your own motivational jody call to help you to overcome your challenge. (*synthesis*)
6. When Miss Loupe cautions Bo not to teach other students to stage fight, he says: “You can trust me.” Can Miss Loupe trust Bo? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: When Bo asks about learning to stage fight, Miss Loupe says, “We might learn it if I get the gr—”. What do you think she’s talking about? Will she get whatever she needs to teach stage fighting to the class?

YES, AND...

Take a WHAT, a WHERE and a SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS and play the “Yes, and...” game. Begin by having someone suggest a WHAT, another person chooses a WHERE, and so on.

For variation, make a list of WHAT suggestions, WHERE suggestions and SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS suggestions. Write them on strips of paper and put them in three separate containers. Choose one from each and see if students can keep the game going.

CHAPTER 8: MEANWHILE

WORD STUDY

digitized camouflage	nonrefundable	guardianship	finances
fiddled	recruiter	will	swamped
clients	ambushes	rehab	anti-war rally

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who do Gari and her mother visit? Why do they visit these people? (*knowledge*)
2. Why doesn't Gari's mom have a new army uniform? (*comprehension*)
3. Gari wrote on her school application that she likes math and English, but art is her best talent. If you were applying to the Seattle Junior Academy, what would you write about yourself? (*application*)
4. Even as Gari's mom is talking with the school secretary about withdrawing her from school, Gari is still thinking about how she can help Tandi's campaign. Why do you think she is still focused on helping Tandi? (*analysis*)
5. Gari has a plan to get the other students to vote for Tandi in the school election. If you were running for school office, how would you run your campaign? What would your posters look like? How would you convince others to vote for you? (*synthesis*)
6. Gari thinks that you have "...to see something in your head before you [can] make it happen." Do you agree? Give an example of how picturing something in your mind can help you to make that thing happen. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Gari's mother be alright in Iraq?

YES, AND...

On index cards, write down each topic of conversation that occurred in this chapter (between Gari's mom and the lawyer, Gari's mom and the school secretary, and Gari and her mom).

Have students take turns playing Gari, her mom, the school secretary and the lawyer. For each conversation, pull a topic from the pile of index cards. Without words, imitate the body language each character might display during the conversation. How would Gari's posture look while the lawyer discusses Gari's mother's will? How would Gari's mother sit while she's asking for a refund of the non-refundable school application fee?

CHAPTER 9: THE CRACK IN EVERYTHING

WORD STUDY

debuted	mock astonishment	loupe	sedan
treads	friction	stunt plane	staggered
comatose	recoiled	alma mater	muffle

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What makes Miss Loupe different from the rest of her family? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Miss Loupe's brother, Marc, send her a cracked photograph? (*comprehension*)
3. The students of Room 208 find cracks everywhere, and decide that some are good, and some are not. Miss Loupe's brother says that "...cracks are painful, but they can bring good things, too." Make a list of the cracks you see around you. Are most of them a sign of something positive or negative? (*application*)
4. Reread the way Bo and his classmates view the cracks in their school. How are their views reflected in the items they donate to the Afghan people? What would you put into the box? Why? (*analysis*)
5. Allison and Martina both found the crack in the bathroom mirror, but viewed it in different way. Draw your own face separated by a crack. What does each side represent? (*synthesis*)
6. Miss Loupe says, "...the things that make someone imperfect are also the things that make them who they are." Do you agree? Give an example of why this is true or untrue. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will anyone notice the crack Bo made in the Taped Space? If so, will they approve? Why or why not?

YES, AND...

Share the picture book *Eggbert, The Slightly Cracked Egg* by Tom Ross, Illustrated by Rex Barron (Putnam, 1997). Act out the story. Now try it again, but this time introduce Miss Loupe and Bo into the storyline. How would they interact with Eggbert? How would Gari react?

CHAPTER 10: NOT READY

WORD STUDY

interlocking	mobility	bulging	oblong
cammo	encased	clenched	strewing

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What are some of the items that Gari's mom packs in her bag? (*knowledge*)
2. Why isn't Gari helping her mother pack at first? (*comprehension*)
3. If you were to go away for a year and could only take one bag, what would you pack, and why? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Gari was folding stars as her mother packed? Are the stars for Tandi? Or are they for Gari? (*analysis*)
5. Gari's mother says, "Pick your battles, baby...or you'll lose them all." Draft a "battle plan" that Gari might carry out to keep her mom stateside. (*synthesis*)
6. Reread Gari's unspoken thoughts (in italics) from this chapter. Why do you think she doesn't say these lines aloud? Should she have voiced these thoughts to her mother? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Gari get on the plane like she's supposed to, or will she try and stop her mother from going to Iraq?

YES, AND...

Have students sit in a circle and pass an empty duffle bag around. Each student pretends to choose one special thing from the bag and says three things about the imaginary object without naming it. How many objects can the class guess?

CHAPTER 11: EVERYONE YOU KNOW

WORD STUDY

ecosystem	admittance	arrested	peered
hoisted	sacred	sputtering	petition
ammunition	hoisted	dingy	feigned
troupe	consent		

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What does Miss Loupe announce to the class? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Miss Loupe want to start a theater camp? (*comprehension*)
3. Write your favorite and least favorite things about school on index cards, and place them in a box along with your classmates' cards. Pull out the cards one at a time and play Miss/Won't Miss as a group. How does the majority of the class feel about your favorite and least favorite things? (*application*)
4. Miss Loupe quotes an ancient Greek philosopher when she says, "Be kind, for everyone you know is fighting a great battle." What does this mean? Do you think it's true? (*analysis*)
5. Brainstorm a list of clubs you would like to form at your school. Choose your top choice and make a list of what you would need to start such a club. Make a plan, and give it a try! (*synthesis*)
6. How does Miss Loupe feel about the theater grant? Give evidence from the text to support your inference. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Now that Bo knows he'll miss next summer's theater camp, will his attitude about school change? If so, how?

YES, AND...

The students in Room 208 tried to convince Miss Loupe not to enter the Taped Space. Have students take turns trying to convince a classmate not to enter the Taped Space. For every excuse, the student must come up with a solution (like Miss Loupe pretending to put on her shark-proof diving suit).

Switch gears: Have a student pretend to *not* want to enter the Taped Space. Can the others convince their classmate to say yes?

CHAPTER 12: LAST DAY IN SEATTLE

WORD STUDY

battered	civilian
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What does Gari's mom give her at the airport? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Gari's mom feel she needs to go to Iraq? (*comprehension*)
3. If you had to leave your family for a year, what object would you give them? Why would you choose that object? (*application*)
4. This chapter ends the first section of the novel. Why do you think the author called this section *Plan A*? (*analysis*)
5. In this chapter, Gari doesn't have any lines of dialogue, but we know what she is feeling. Give three examples from the text that show her emotions in this scene. (*synthesis*)
6. At the end of the chapter, Gari says to herself: "Mom, we have to have a Plan B." What do you think she means by this? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What do you think Gari's Plan B will entail? Will her plan succeed?

YES, AND...

An airline attendant took a photo of Gari and her mom "...arms around each other, as if nothing had happened."

Make a list of events that would inspire a range of emotions (attending a funeral, winning an award, reuniting with long-lost friends, etc.). Write the events on separate index cards. Have one student pretend to be a photographer and two other students will pose for photos. Give the index cards to the remaining students. When students call out the events one at a time, the two photo subjects pose for the "photo." Pick up the pace and allow only a few seconds per pose.

CHAPTER 13: IF ALARM SIGNAL SOUNDS

WORD STUDY

piercing	hodgepodge	legal guardianship	proof of vaccination
school physical	miscommunication	dismay	nonintersecting
dilapidated	giddy	limbs	exhaust
fissure	well executed	gesturing	fits and starts
frazzled	lumbering	lam	corral

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What object does Gari have that Bo and the rest of his family own? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Bo feel about Gari being at school? How do you know? (*comprehension*)
3. Bo is having a hard time explaining the Taped Space to Gari. Help him out by offering your own explanation (verbally or in writing). (*application*)
4. Why does Bo tell Gari that Miss Loupe's class is a waste of time? (*analysis*)
5. Make a list of everything that went wrong on Gari's first day. Could things get any worse? Look at each item on your list and think of a way each situation could have been worse. (*synthesis*)
6. Does Bo deserve to get in trouble with the principal? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Miss Loupe say about Bo being sent to the principal's office? What will Bo do now?

YES, AND...

As Bo walks into school with Gari on her first day, he points out the features of his school in a television announcer's voice. Why does he use this kind of voice?

Do the same with your school's features. Go around the school as a class and take photos of things a new student would need to know. Create a slide show and add television-announcer narration.

CHAPTER 14: DECEASED INSECTS

WORD STUDY

deceased	transom	insubordination	halfheartedly	mulligan
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What plans do Bo's parents have for next year? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Bo feel that his dad gave him another shot at going to see the Flying Farmer? (*comprehension*)
3. Bo's mom has unpacked boxes for her "forever house" that she keeps in the garage. Make a list of things you would tuck away in such a box. (*application*)
4. Bo claims that "His mom's WORK—even though she called it just talking—was worse than his dad's." Why does Bo think so? If you were in trouble, would you rather talk to a parent or clean dead bugs from windowsills? (*analysis*)
5. Bo claims he was "...seeing into his dad's head, which had never happened before." What clues did Bo have into his father's thoughts? Think of a time when you realized something about your parents without them telling you. How did you figure it out? What did you do with the information you discovered? (*synthesis*)
6. Bo blames himself for making Gari throw up her first day of school. Was it really his fault? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Bo earn the chance to see the Flying Farmer? Will Bo stay in Reform next year and join the Ugly Couch Players?

YES, AND...

Join Bo and his mother as they jump rope in the garage.

One person pretends to jump rope while the other person "instructs" him how to do it without using the word "jump."

Possible scenarios:

The jumper jumps...

... with a sore toe

...while his arch enemy is watching

...while his crush is watching

...with a can of soda on his head

...while she has to go to the bathroom

The instructor must join in the action once she gives the order. Then another instructor enters the scene, the first jumper sits down, and the game continues.

CHAPTER 15: NOTHING TO SHOW YOU

WORD STUDY

propped	neckerchiefs	thrumming	puncture
narrowly	fatal	fender bender	

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What does Gari photograph? (*knowledge*)
2. What was the first photo already on Gari's roll of film? (*comprehension*)
3. Why didn't Gari finish the email to her mother? Tell or write about a time when it was difficult to avoid telling the truth. (*application*)
4. Why did Gari pretend to talk on the phone with Tandi? Give at least two reasons. Why did Gari end her one-sided conversation mid-sentence? (*analysis*)
5. Make a list of some of the things that have happened to Gari since she arrived in Reform. Pretend to be Gari and compose an email that you might send to her mom. (*synthesis*)
6. "On the nightstand in her new room, the little green figure stood watch where she'd left him. What does the little green figure symbolize? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Gari plan to bring her mother home? Will it work?

YES, AND...

In the spirit of Gari's fake telephone conversation with Tandi, play the traditional Telephone game with a twist.

Form a straight line with everyone facing forward (no turning around to peek!). The last person in line (Person A) should tap the next person (Person B). Person A makes a gesture or movement that Person B copies. Person A then turns around so that she cannot see Person B. Person B taps the shoulder of the next person (Person C) and repeats the motion, and so on down the line. Once the last person in line repeats the movement, everyone forms a circle. Person A and the last person to do the movement should be standing next to each other. At the count of three, both people carry out the motion. Are the motions identical?

CHAPTER 16: STEP ONE

WORD STUDY

trace	hijacked	ample	compile
outvoted	indicated	briskly	seize
namesake	flourish	promo materials	recruit

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why is Bo finding it difficult to be nice to Gari? (*knowledge*)
2. Why didn't Bo sign up for the Ugly Couch Players? (*comprehension*)
3. Miss Loupe silenced Allison's teasing by listing the ways in which Humphrey Bogart was "cool." Research the meaning of your name. Which famous people share your name? (*application*)
4. Gari photographs her mom's plastic soldier surrounded by bits of paper. Why does she do this? (*analysis*)
5. Read the email from Gari's mom. Pretend to be Gari and write a reply. (*synthesis*)
6. What does Miss Loupe think of Bo and Gari in this chapter? Give evidence from the text to support your answers. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Gari's plan be? Will she get into trouble?

YES, AND...

Miss Loupe helped Bo feel better about his name. How well do your students know each other?

Have students play a name game by forming a circle. One student (A) calls another student's name (B) and begins walking toward that student. Before Student A reaches him, Student B must call out the name of another student (C). Student A freezes, then Student B moves toward Student C. The game continues until all names have been called.

CHAPTER 17: IN CIRCLES

WORD STUDY

probability	ricocheted	reluctantly	circumference	dramatic
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What does Gari do to keep her mind focused on her plan? (*knowledge*)
2. What was Miss Loupe trying to teach the class with the pinball game? (Hint: There's more than one answer!) (*comprehension*)
3. How did Kylie figure out the probability that a ball bouncing off of Bo or Gari would hit a boy? Refigure the probabilities using statistics from your class. (*application*)
4. After the girls won the pinball game, the author says: "Worse than that, Bo had fun." What does this mean? (*analysis*)
5. Miss Loupe announced she was mailing the care box to Marc the next day. Make your own class care box to send to a soldier. (*synthesis*)
6. Why did Bo say to Trey: "Who are you?" Have Bo and Trey changed? If so, how? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Gari's plan doesn't require her to say anything. What could it be? What other ways could she get her message across without words?

YES, AND...

Play the pinball game in your classroom. Like the students in Miss Loupe's class, begin with things you like.

Variations:

- things you don't like
- places you've visited
- somewhere you'd like to visit one day

CHAPTER 18: ARRANGING OBJECTS

WORD STUDY

sewage	stagnant	diligently	extensive
sideburns	gadget	baseboard	detached
infinitesimal	industrious	bristling	smug
skirmish	flunk	torrent	shepherded
shoed	deftly		

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What was Gari’s plan? (*knowledge*)
2. What news did Mrs. Heard deliver to Miss Loupe? (*comprehension*)
3. Sketch the display of Gari’s Plan B. Underneath, write captions from the following points of view: Gari, Mrs. Heard, Miss Loupe, Bo and Gari’s mother. (*application*)
4. Why did Bo finally decide to sign up for the Ugly Couch Players? Why did he sign Gari’s name, too? Tell what his actions say about his character. (*analysis*)
5. What conclusions did the Commission draw from Melissa’s notebook? Make a chart like the one below:

In her notebook, Melissa wrote _____ ,	...so the Commission assumed that Miss Loupe _____	...and Mrs. Heard _____.

How would your conclusions differ from those of the Commission? (*synthesis*)

6. Explain what Gari means at the end of the chapter when she thinks: “It will feel like this. When it happens to me, it will feel like this.”(*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will the Commission discover what Gari has done? If so, what will happen? Can her plan succeed?

YES, AND...

When the Commission continues to criticize Miss Loupe’s teaching methods, Bo jumps up and starts a “Yes, and...” improvisational activity to distract them. Pretend that the Commission has come to your classroom. Use Room 208’s “Yes, and...” technique to distract them. Challenge students to brainstorm a list of other situations in which they might want to distract someone, and then try them out!

CHAPTER 19: OUT OF THE PICTURE

WORD STUDY

prep	confidential	contacts	initial
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What did Bo think of as he listened to evening Taps? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Bo ask Gari to join him at the skate park with Trey? (*comprehension*)
3. Do you think Gari's plan is a good one? Why or why not? If you were Gari, what would your Plan C look like? (*application*)
4. Analyze the following excerpt: "She wasn't folding [the stars] for Tandi anymore. She was folding them because if she didn't, those awful paint splotches of words filled her head." (*analysis*)
5. How do the members of Bo's household (even Indy) deal with the recent turn of events? Think about how you deal with stressful situations and compare it with the methods used by the characters in the chapter. Whose method do you most identify with, and why? (*synthesis*)
6. How is Gari rethinking the outcome of her plan? Is she sorry that she carried out Plan B? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What happened to Miss Loupe's brother?

YES, AND...

The characters in this chapter are dealing with stress in a variety of ways.

Play Emotional Relay with a very simple scene, such as:

Actor A: You left.

Actor B: I know.

Both sit on the same bench and recite the lines with no emotion. Now repeat the scene, giving the actors a low-key emotion to convey, such as boredom. Then try something stronger, like amusement. Each time, up the emotional stress, seeing if you can bring confusion, surprise, relief, anger, grief, joy, or fear to the same scene.

CHAPTER 20: I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'VE BEEN TOLD...

WORD STUDY

postpone	wedged	concealed	edged
pelted	tolerate	voiceover	

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why didn't Bo like the substitute teacher? (*knowledge*)
2. Which expletives does Miss Candy utter when she is upset? (*comprehension*)
3. Mrs. Heard tells the food fighters to empty their pockets. Tell what the contents of their pockets say about each character. What do you have in your pocket? Do the contents (or lack of contents) say something about you? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Bo started the jody call at lunch? (*analysis*)
5. If Gari were to add a verse, what might it be? Add your own verse or two to the class jody call. (*synthesis*)
6. This chapter showcases many points of view. Why do you think the author chose to write it this way? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Miss Loupe find out about the cafeteria fight? If so, how will she react?

YES, AND...

This chapter has many points of view. Try recreating the cafeteria food fight with motions only (no words or sounds!). Make sure an actor is assigned to each character from this scene. Have one character at a time step out of the scene and narrate as it unfolds. How would Gari describe the scene? Bo? Allison? Mrs. Purdy?

CHAPTER 21: ONE OF YOU IS LEAVING

WORD STUDY

linoleum	disruption
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What excuse did Bo give his father about the food fight? (*knowledge*)
2. Bo's father says: "You've already lost sight of the good thing I gave to you to think about." What is the "good thing" to which he refers? (*comprehension*)
3. Bo says to his father: "How come you always get to say YES, and I always have to say NO?" Will Bo's words make his father rethink his decision to go to Afghanistan? Make a list of things your parents say "yes" to even though you wish they would say "no." Choose one thing from the list and brainstorm ways you might convince your parents to change their minds. Try it! Did it work? (*application*)
4. How do you think Gari is feeling during the exchange between Bo and his father? Give two examples from the text that support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. The author writes: "Bo's words broke out of the place where he'd tried to shut them in." What does this mean? What was the trigger that led to Bo's outburst? Tell or write about a time when you said something truthful that you'd planned to keep to yourself. What triggered your reaction? (*synthesis*)
6. Bo accused his father of *wanting* to go to Afghanistan. Why does Bo assume this? Do you think Bo's father does want to go? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: How will Bo's father react to Bo's outburst? Will Bo still be punished for the food fight? Will Gari?

YES, AND...

Have students stand in three lines. Recreate the scene from this chapter, having the first students at the front each line play Bo, his father, and Gari. Students may ad lib their lines. Every 10 seconds or so, give a signal. Students who have been playing Bo, Gari and Bo's father must now go to the ends of their lines, and the next three students pick up the scene from the last word that was said before the signal.

CHAPTER 22: FOREIGN OBJECT DAMAGE

WORD STUDY

VIP ticket	catered	shuddered	immaculate
plunged	hobbles	traumatized	incredulous
wincing	mutual	blotchy	careening

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why did Mrs. Purdy go into school on a Saturday? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Miss Loupe think she should have stayed in the Air Force? (*comprehension*)
3. Reread the description of Bo and Gari's walk home. Sketch a map of the area they walk through. What features of the base are similar/dissimilar to the area where you live? (*application*)
4. What do you think Bo's dream means? (*analysis*)
5. Gari's mother says in an email: "There's beauty everywhere. Use your camera to find it." Take photos of beauty that you find at school and at home. Compare your photos with your classmates' photos. Can you categorize the photos? Do you see any trends? (*synthesis*)
6. Evaluate the way Bo and Gari interact with each other. How are their attitudes changing? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Gari find beauty in North Carolina? Will the students of Room 208 see Miss Loupe again? Will she return as their teacher or join the Air Force?

YES, AND...

In the spirit of the Flying Farmer, set up an obstacle course with students, chairs, tables, and low objects (such as blocks) on the floor. One student is the Flying Farmer and must make it from one side of the stage to another while blindfolded. (You may use two X's formed with tape on the floor for starting and ending points.) An "air traffic controller" gives directions. If the pilot brushes or touches an object more than twice, the airplane goes down and the game starts over. You can set a time limit when the airplane will "run out of fuel."

CHAPTER 23: INSIDE THE TAPED SPACE

WORD STUDY

crevice	startled	amputate
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What happened to Miss Loupe's brother, Marc? (*knowledge*)
2. How did Marc's patch save his life? (*comprehension*)
3. Design a patch that will save Miss Loupe. (*application*)
4. When Miss Loupe mentioned the medical team who saved Marc's life, Gari says: "My mom does that! That's what she does!" The author says: "Gari spoke before she could stop herself." Why would Gari want to stop herself? Why did she blurt out her thoughts? (*analysis*)
5. List all of the cracks, seen and unseen, in this chapter. What does each one symbolize? (*synthesis*)
6. How has Gari been affected by Miss Loupe's story? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: How will the dynamics in Room 208 be different from now on?

YES, AND...

In the fire drill, everyone must follow the leader (even Miss Loupe).

Have one student stand in the middle of the room with eyes closed. The rest of the class silently decides on a leader. When the student opens his or her eyes, the whole group will follow the movements of the designated leader. The game is over when the student in the middle figures out who the leader is.

CHAPTER 24: EMERGENCY

WORD STUDY

dialogue

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What was going through Gari's mind during the fire drill? (*knowledge*)
2. What did Gari's mother yell out as she and Gari watched the film last November? (*comprehension*)
3. What connection does Gari make to the film? Write or talk about a film that connects with something in your life. (*application*)
4. At what point in the film did Gari's mother call out? What do you think she was feeling at the time? Why? (*analysis*)
5. If Gari were to write an email to her mother now, what might it say? (*synthesis*)
6. "[Gari] suddenly knew how her mom had felt, watching and being unable to do anything." How do Gari's feelings now parallel her mother's during the film? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: How will Gari's attitude change from now on? Will she intensify her efforts to bring her mom home, or will she offer her moral support?

YES, AND...

Play a warm up called "Foot Soldiers". Have everyone wander around the room, taking turns shouting out a body part. Students then must move as if being led around by that body part. Continue to play until each student has had a turn calling out.

CHAPTER 25: ORDINARY THINGS

WORD STUDY

retrace	intensity	paratroopers	dingy
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What did the class find that belonged to Miss Loupe? (*knowledge*)
2. How did Miss Loupe feel when the necklace was returned to her? How do you know? (*comprehension*)
3. Sanjay says: "Miss Loupe doesn't need money. She needs...I don't know. She needs..." What do you think Miss Loupe needs? Will she get it? If so, how? (*application*)
4. How does Mrs. Purdy feel about returning the Ugly Green Couch to Room 208? How do you know? (*analysis*)
5. How does Bo figure that Miss Loupe's sadness is like gravity? Do you agree? Why or why not? Brainstorm some other analogies where you compare emotions to something in the natural world. (*synthesis*)
6. How has Miss Loupe changed now that she has returned to school? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Gari's next plan be?

YES, AND...

Play Search and Rescue with any designated object in the room. Have one student close his or her eyes while another student hides the object somewhere in the room. When the first student opens his eyes, he moves around the room as the rest of the class claps their hands. If the student is far from the hidden object, the claps should be slow. As the student nears the hidden object, the claps become more frequent. When the student discovers the hiding place, the class officially breaks into applause and shouts "Bravo!"

CHAPTER 26: DO SOMETHING

WORD STUDY

midsentence	stench	snaking	dreading
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DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why has Gari's Plan B not yet been discovered? (*knowledge*)
2. What is Gari worried about if her plan is discovered? (*comprehension*)
3. Gari's inner struggle about whether or not she should continue her plan is an example of a type of conflict called *character vs. self*. Write or tell about a time when you struggled with yourself. What was the outcome? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Miss Loupe is avoiding the Taped Space? (*analysis*)
5. How would Miss Loupe react to Gari's art? Write or ad lib a scene in which Miss Loupe walks into the Kindergarten bathroom and sees Gari's display for the first time. Do the same for a second scene that shows Miss Loupe meeting with Gari afterwards. (*synthesis*)
6. Gari calls her Plan B "art." Do you agree? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Can the students of Room 208 help Miss Loupe? How?

YES, AND...

Recreate Gari's art display where half the students will be "sculptors" and half will be "clay." Sculptors will arrange the clay students by either moving them into position or explaining how to move. Once they're finished, the sculptors will go on a museum tour, each explaining their work of art to the group. Once a clay student has been viewed, he or she may come out of pose and join the tour group.

Switch roles, and this time let the sculptors create something that represents beauty with their "clay." Repeat the tour guide process. Discuss whether or not the students created art.

CHAPTER 27: WHICH BATTLE ARE YOU IN?

WORD STUDY

pace	amoebalike	dank
gestured	proposed	zeroed in

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. How does Gari claim to know what Miss Loupe is feeling? (*knowledge*)
2. How did the idea for Plan C form? (*comprehension*)
3. Bo, Gari, Trey and Melissa come up with some ways to get others involved in Plan C. What else could they do? Brainstorm a list of ideas you would contribute if you were in Room 208. (*application*)
4. Trey says of Miss Loupe and Marc: “If he’s getting better, than how come she’s not?” How would you answer Trey’s question? (*analysis*)
5. Miss Loupe said that art needs a frame. Gari disagrees, saying, “Art takes work. It takes planning.” Who is right? Gather a few objects that are meaningful to you. Decide on a frame—it could be a taped space on your desk, an actual wooden frame, etc. Close your eyes and gently toss the objects into the space. Open your eyes and take a photo. Now arrange the objects in whichever way you choose. Take another photo, and compare it with the first. Which do you like best? Why? Are they both works of art? (*synthesis*)
6. Gari thinks that her plan has one flaw: it doesn’t create anything beautiful. Do you agree? Does art always have to be beautiful? When (if ever) does art not have to be beautiful? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Miss Loupe catch on to Plan C? Will she get involved?

YES, AND...

In a variation of the above synthesis activity, have each student bring a non-breakable object from home. Create a taped space on the floor large enough to fit students’ objects in the space. Have students stand around the edge of the tape with their objects. At your signal, allow 10 seconds for all students at once to silently place their objects anywhere in the space, and then step out of the taped space.

Discuss the arrangement they created. Is it art? Is it beautiful? Do they notice any patterns, or is it completely random? Now have students retrieve their objects and start over. Let students place their objects in the space one at a time, allowing at least 20 seconds to do so. Analyze the finished product. Did planning this time make the second work better, worse, or no different from the first?

CHAPTER 28: EVERYONE SAID YES, BUT...

WORD STUDY

prior commitments	resume	rotary saw	deployed
hoist	observant	strategic	astonished
classified briefing	fudging	precise	deploy
meandering	waging	random	emerging

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What made Miss Loupe smile? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Mrs. Purdy suspect that something is up with the students of Room 208? (*comprehension*)
3. The article's headline in the Reform Chronicle reads:

STUDENTS AT YOUNG OAKS PLAN TO DEPLOY 100,000 TROOPS

Make up your own headline for the article, and include your own quote along with the quotes from Bo, Gari and Melissa. (*application*)

4. How many more LGM does the class need to meet their goal? Is their goal realistic? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. The students of Room 208 are planning a show. Write a synopsis of what you think the show might be about. (*synthesis*)
6. How has Gari changed? What has changed her? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Plan C work?

YES, AND...

The students in Room 208 are trying to sell Little Green Men for a dollar each.

Put students into groups of 3 or 4 and give them identical objects (such as new pencils, paper bags, chairs, etc.). Give the groups no more than 10-15 minutes to come up with a sales pitch for their object. Make sure they include the price, any special deals (two for the price of one, etc.) and why their potential customers need this object.

Give each group no more than 1 or 2 minutes to make their pitches (all group members must participate). Call a blind vote where students vote for the object that would most likely buy (they cannot vote for their own object). Discuss what made the winning salespeople effective—was it body language? Sales Pitch? Delivery?

CHAPTER 29: A LONG WAY FROM 100,000

WORD STUDY

circumference	pogo stick	staggered	wake
flailing	jags	lackluster	drilled

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What did Bo do to help Gari loosen up and agree to play the role of the New Recruit? (*knowledge*)
2. How did the students of Room 208 “make the circle bigger”? (*comprehension*)
3. What could you do to “make the circle bigger” with a public service project at your school? Brainstorm a list of possible publicity avenues you might explore. (*application*)
4. Bo notes the straight path taken by the fighter jets streaking across the sky. The author writes: “They flew so straight, thought Bo. They had a mission, a plan, and a flight path. He didn’t know how to move ahead that way. He was always up and down and around and around, like a pogo stick.” Does Bo’s way of thinking work for him? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. If you were faced with the same decision as Bo, would you choose to go to Korea for two years with your family, or have one parent go alone for a year? Write what you would say to your parent if you were Bo. (*synthesis*)
6. When her students asked if she would direct their show, “Miss Loupe put on her soft black slippers and said her loudest YES of the year.” What made her finally say yes? Will things be back to normal in Room 208? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: What will Bo decide about his dad’s assignment in Korea?

YES, AND...

The students of Room 208 decided to work as a group to meet their goal.

Have students work together to build a scene. Students stand outside a designated space. One student begins by entering the space, striking a pose, and announcing what he or she is (example: “I’m a skyscraper.”). The next student must run in and become an object that would be naturally found near the first object (window washer, busy street, King Kong, etc.). The game continues until all students are a part of the scene.

CHAPTER 30: THE UGLY COUCH PLAYERS PRESENT...

WORD STUDY

script	rustled	expectant	whitewash
pantomimed	bewildered	swagger	vigorously

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who watched the show? (*knowledge*)
2. How did Gari feel as she performed in front of the audience? (*comprehension*)
3. Look at Bo's speech when he first faces the LGM on the temporary stage. Read through it once without emphasizing the words in capital letters. Now read it a second time as Bo would, yelling out the words in capital letters. How does this change the tone of the speech? (*application*)
4. In the program for the show, it says:

“With many thanks to
Miss Loupe
for helping us row far from the shore.”

What does this mean? (*analysis*)

5. Read the lines under “Backstage (also known as the cafeteria kitchen)”. Now that you know the students in Room 208, can you identify who is speaking each line? Try this activity in small groups, then compare your answers with others. How many match? Can you justify your answers by citing some of the character traits of the students in Room 208? (*synthesis*)
6. Did Gari's plan to bring her mom home ultimately work? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: Will Bo be happy in Korea? Why or why not?

YES, AND...

Bo makes barking orders look like fun!

Stand in a circle so that everyone can be seen. Begin with one person giving an order to the group that involves some type of movement (lift your right knee, jump two times, etc.). Try to move as a group and keep the chain of command going at a quick pace—once one command is given and carried out, the next student gives a command until everyone has had a turn. Afterwards, discuss which commands were the most synchronized (most likely the ones that were the most specific).

CHAPTER 31: NEW RECRUITS

WORD STUDY

prompts

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Where did Gari and Bo end up? (*knowledge*)
2. What happened to Marc? (*comprehension*)
3. Max asks, “Who are Bo and Gari?” How would you answer this question? (*application*)
4. How has Gari and Bo’s relationship changed? Will they stay in touch? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Pretend you are Gari’s campaign manager. Come up with slogans, poster designs and a campaign speech that will help Gari win the race. (*synthesis*)
6. What has changed this year in Room 208? What has stayed the same? (*evaluation*)

PREDICT: How will you say YES?

YES, AND...

Miss Loupe’s new 6th grade students could use some advice from Bo, Gari, and the rest of the Ugly Couch Players.

Brainstorm a list of “school” words—school supplies, teachers, objects found in school etc. Write the names of each object on an index card, and put the cards in a bag. Students go to the front of the class in pairs and draw one card each from the bag. Each pair must offer a one-line pearl of wisdom for next year’s students.

Rules:

1. One student begins the sentence, using the word on the card he or she drew from the bag.
2. The second student must complete the sentence using the other word drawn from the bag. The advice may be wacky, but it must make grammatical sense.

Example: If the following words are drawn from the bag: *paper clip*, *water fountain*...

Student 1 might begin with: “Never use a paper clip...”
and Student 2 might finish: “...to fish your gum out of the drain in the water fountain.”

MILITARY SPEAK

A Glossary of Terms found in *Operation Yes*
Reviewed by Brigadier General Mike Holmes

airman—one of the three lowest ranking enlisted members of the United States Air Force. May also refer to any member of the U.S. Air Force; used as a broad term such as *soldier*, *sailor*, or *marine*.

base exchange (BX)—a department store on a military base for military personnel and their families.

base commander—the highest ranking officer on a military base, in charge of overseeing the day-to-day operations on the base.

base thrift shop—a shop on base where volunteers raise money for charity by selling second-hand goods.

classified call—a private call via technology that allows secret information to be discussed.

command post—headquarters of a military unit.

deployment—when a person in the military is sent to perform a mission away from the home base.

digitized army fatigues—army uniform made of cloth with a digitized camouflage pattern that blends into its surroundings.

ejection seat—a seat in some military planes which uses a rocket motor to eject the pilot and/or navigator in the event of an emergency.

enlisted housing—apartments on base where enlisted personnel and their families live.

Expeditionary Medical Group—a group of doctors, nurses and other medical personnel who provide medical care for deployed soldiers.

F-15E's in formation—a group of F-15 fighter jets flying closely together.

fatigues—work clothing worn by soldiers in the field.

flight line—the area where military planes are housed and maintained.

FOB (forward operating base)—a secured, temporary base that provides limited support between patrols. Usually limited to housing, food, a clinic, and a helicopter landing area.

FOD (foreign object damage)—damage caused by foreign objects in jet engines.

Green Zone— a 4-square mile area of Baghdad, Iraq where extra security measures are taken to provide safer living conditions.

grunts—a soldier or marine, most likely a member of the infantry.

hazardous-duty pay— extra pay (in addition to a regular salary) that a soldier earns when deployed to a potentially dangerous location.

hangars—a shelter where planes are kept.

ID card—a photo identification card carried by military personnel and members of their immediate families. Children are issued a military ID at the age of 10.

jody call—an amusing or motivational rhyme that is sung by a group of soldiers during physical training. Often the group leader calls out the first stanza, and the group sings the second stanza in unison.

NCO Club—a club and restaurant for non-commissioned officers and their families only.

Officer's Club—a club and restaurant for officers and their families only.

PCS (Permanent Change of Station)—a permanent move from one base to another.

POV privately owned vehicle— a personal car or truck not owned by the government.

PT (Physical Training)—training and physical exercises.

Public Affairs—the office in charge of keeping the public informed (usually via the press) about military affairs.

recruit—a soldier that has recently joined the military

remote assignment—an overseas tour of duty that a soldier must complete without family.

Retreat Ceremony—performed at the end of the official duty day; pays respect to the flag as it is lowered until the following morning.

Reveille—played at the start of the official duty day.

squadron—a unit of military planes and the personnel required to operate and maintain the planes.

standing in formation—a group of soldiers standing in rows ready to carry out commands from the officer in charge.

Taps—slow, melancholy song played on the bugle as a signal for lights out; also played at funerals.

TLF (Temporary Lodging Facility)—apartments where soldiers and their families stay while waiting for their base housing to be ready.

Wing Headquarters—the building where the wing commander and his or her staff work.

Culminating Activities

The following projects incorporate Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Consider having students choose a culminating project that best matches their learning styles.

I SAY, YOU SAY

Sara Lewis Holmes used multiple points of view in *Operation Yes*. Invent a character, setting, and problem. Write a scene where your character's problem is exposed. Share it with a friend, and ask the friend to write the same scene from another character's point of view. (The second character may or may not be sympathetic to the main character's problem.) Now combine the two versions into a single scene that includes both points of view.

Read your version aloud to a friend, then have your friend read his or her version aloud to you. Now read the third version together, each sticking to one point of view. How did the versions differ from one another? How were they the same? Which one do you prefer? Why?

Variation: Students who need more support may choose to retell a scene from an existing story. For example, have them retell a familiar fairy tale scene from both the protagonist and antagonist's points of view. Read John Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* as an introduction to point of view.
(*linguistic, interpersonal*)

MURAL OF BEAUTY

Gari's mother asked her to take photos wherever she finds beauty in North Carolina. Challenge students and teachers to submit photos of beautiful things (one photo per person). Analyze the subjects of the submitted photos. Is there a difference between photos submitted by younger students vs. older students? Boys vs. girls? Teachers vs. students? Graph the number of photos taken outdoors, at school, at home, etc. What percentage of photos include people? Animals? Plants? Inanimate objects? Create a mural of beauty in a central location for everyone in the school to enjoy. (*mathematical, naturalistic, visual-spatial*)

I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'VE BEEN TOLD...

Jody calls are chants that motivate soldiers, usually during physical training exercises. In Chapter 20, the students of Room 208 sing a jody call about a grandmother whose level of physical fitness improves as she ages.

Write a class jody call that reveals how you and your classmates have improved over time. Make a t-chart with increments of time on one side, and skills you've

acquired on the other (see example on following page). You can measure time in years, seasons, months, days of the week, grades in school, etc.

Age/Grade:	Activities We Did/Skills We Mastered:

Once you've completed your chart, analyze the rhythm and rhyme of the jody call in Chapter 20. Now write your class jody call either as a whole group, or assign one stanza per small group. Practice the words, then take it outside for a field test! Have one person call out the first line of a stanza, then the group answers with the second line. Now try it while running or doing jumping jacks to the rhythm of the jody call. What effect did the jody call have? Did it make exercise more fun? More work? How did the jody call affect the way you worked together as a group? (*bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, musical*)

SAY YES!

The students of Room 208 collected 100,000 plastic soldiers to raise money for troops serving overseas. How can your school help others? Make a list of worthy causes, then vote to help one of them. Challenge students at your school to collect 100,000 things—it might be pennies, nickels, minutes spent reading to younger children, laps for fitness, etc.

Plan ahead by using the Operation Yes! Planning Organizer on the following page. How much money would you earn by collecting 100,000 pennies? What about 100,000 nickels? How long would each student need to read this year to reach a school-wide goal of 100,000 reading minutes? How about 100,000 running or walking laps? Set a class or school goal, then map out your plans to reach your goal. (*intrapersonal, mathematical*)

OPERATION YES! GOAL PLANNER

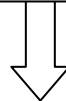
List of causes or organizations we would like to support:



Narrow it down to one:



100,000 things we could collect to support our cause:



Plan A: Guiding questions

1. How will we advertise our plan?
2. How will we collect, tally and keep track of 100,000 things?
3. How and when will we know if we need a Plan B?



Reflect:

1. Did we reach our goal? If not, how close did we come?
2. What was successful? What would we change next time?

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR SARA LEWIS HOLMES



Q: How did you get the idea for OPERATION YES?

Sara Lewis Holmes: (from her post on the Operation Yes website): I didn't grow up in a military family, so when I saw an Air Force base for the first time, I gaped at the planes. I tried to read signs that looked like a bunch of letters jumbled together. I wondered how anyone knew where home was, since all the housing looked exactly alike to me. And the noise! It was exciting but loud.

Twenty-five years later, I'm no longer such a new recruit, and my two children never were---they grew up playing with the sound of jets overhead. (My daughter's first sentence was "Daddy fly airplanes today.") For them, military life was normal. Still, they said "yes" to many, many moves and had to think fast as the ground under their feet kept changing. Their lives reminded me of a skill I'd learned in high school acting class: Improvisation. (Im-pro-vised: To make up things as you go along.)

That's when it hit me: Why not write a book about military kids and theater? About kids who say not just "yes," but in true improv spirit, "Yes, AND . . ."

Because the "AND" part is where things happen. Where lives get changed. Where plans take off and soar.

I invite you to read about the kind, creative, and courageous acts improvised by the military kids of Miss Loupe's Room 208. Then I hope you'll close the book and step into the role that makes you want to yell YES!

Q: Once the idea came to you, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?

Sara Lewis Holmes: The first scene I wrote wound up being one of the later scenes in the book---the one where Bo is marching up and down, pretending to be a drill sergeant. The first time I heard his voice, I wondered who he could possibly be talking to. I got a little stuck then, but all of a sudden another voice talked back to

Bo and she said NO, NO, NO. That was Gari. Between the two of them, and an image of a teacher taping a space to the floor, I had enough to imagine "where I was" and what could come next.

Q: What was the most challenging part of writing this book? The most rewarding?

Sara Lewis Holmes: I wanted to write a book about a whole community—teachers, kids, parents, librarians, cafeteria managers, principals, maintenance crews, brothers, cousins, mayors, even a little dog—and how they all pull together. But juggling that many characters was challenging and I made lots of notes to myself to keep things straight.

The most rewarding thing was finally getting to write a book that honored military children and that I could at last dedicate to my own two brave and kind children.

Q: How did your own life experiences influence the characters and plot in your novel?



Sara in a high school performance of *As You Like It*.

Sara Lewis Holmes: Of course, my being a "new recruit" to military life influenced the book, as I explained above, as did all our years of moving from base to base. I used so many real things in the plot—the Remove Before Flight key tags, the Flying Farmer, the way it feels to watch a jet land on a runway, the trials of starting over in a new school year after year.

I also drew upon my passion for theater in high school. I had a terrific teacher who let me act, stage manage and direct. Also, my parents took me to lots of plays at the Clarence Brown Theater in Knoxville, TN. I learned more about acting and the technical side of theater in college, even though I was really studying physics, and later, government. As a student, I worked for the Virginia Shakespeare Festival in their marketing department, and on weekends, I dressed up in a colonial costume and led tours at Colonial Williamsburg. After that, though, I mostly enjoyed theater as part of the audience. I think the magic of theater is that it's happening right in front of you with very few barriers. It's people creating



Performing as Queen Elizabeth in a reader's theater written by Sara's drama teacher.

art without a safety net for the joy of communicating something beyond themselves.

I'm sure the Taped Space came from the masking tape marks that we used on our high school stage to remind us of where to stand for certain scenes. But it also came from this Parker Palmer quote: "To teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practiced."

After the Taped Space was created, I needed a large object for Miss Loupe to place in it. For some reason, I had written in my notebook that she had "a pile of props in one corner of her classroom, including a very ugly couch." Maybe I was thinking of a horrible couch my husband owned when he was a bachelor lieutenant at pilot training! In any case, that couch took on a life of its own and insisted upon taking center stage. :)

Q: OPERATION YES is a very different story from your first novel, LETTERS FROM RAPUNZEL. Was your writing process any different for the two?

Sara Lewis Holmes: I always use a plain, spiral-bound notebook for each novel I begin. I work back and forth between that and my laptop computer. After awhile, most of the drafting happens on the computer, and the notebook becomes my sounding board, where I ask myself questions, jot down wild ideas, and track my progress. The only thing different between the two books was that with OPERATION YES, I had more confidence that I would make it to the end. But I had to look back in my LETTERS FROM RAPUNZEL notebook to remind myself how hard I had to work to get there!

Q: What's the best piece of writing advice you've ever received?

Sara Lewis Holmes: I have two:

"Writing is caring. You care about your characters and your story and the way you use language. Writing is love. Sometimes hate. This thing we do that actually removes us from life makes us experience life intensely. Writing is one of the ways I feel I'm alive." ---Brian Yansky

"Talent is simply the desire to practice." ---Malcolm Gladwell

Q: What advice do you have for young writers?

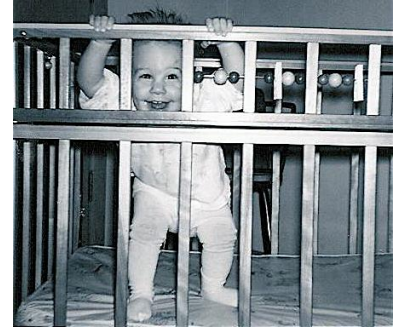
Sara Lewis Holmes: Make space for writing in your life by keeping a notebook. Fill it with anything that interests YOU, not someone else. For example, describe how you would look to an alien much bigger or smaller than you are, or re-write embarrassing conversations so you say the perfect thing this time. Make up names for rock bands.

Write 10 rules for taming a dragon. Imagine the best game in the universe and tell a friend how to play. Or make a list of questions---ones you are dying to know the answer to. Ask yourself: why do I want to know? How can I find out?

Writing stuff down makes you notice even more things to write down. Writing leads to more writing. Say yes to having fun with your writing and to trying hard things.

Q: When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?

Sara Lewis Holmes: I love staying fit (through yoga, hiking and golf), theater (particularly Shakespeare), poetry, reading, outdoor active travel, cupcakes, popcorn, and fairy tales.



Sara performing in her very first Theatrical Space!