



## El Deafo

### Discussion Guide

GRADES 3 - 7

**Before Reading:** to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Use [RIF's El Deafo Anticipation Guide](#) as a pre- and post-reading activity.
- Get to know the author, Cece Bell, by reading her blog post, ["Ask the Author: A Conversation with Cece Bell."](#)
- The setting of this book is during the 1970s. To build excitement and background knowledge, explore the internet to look at fashion, music, and other trends.
- This book is a memoir that is written as a graphic novel. Use [RIF's How to Read a Graphic Novel: Anchor Chart](#) to teach text features.

**During Reading:** to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- The captions on pages 4–6 are shaded gray. Why do you think the author chose to do this? What do the gray captions help the reader understand?
- How do Cece and her mother realize that Cece cannot hear? How does each of them react?
- Why do you think the author included a diagram of the phonic ear on page 39? How does it help the reader understand how the phonic ear works?
- Do you think Ginny is a good friend to Cece? Use examples from the story to explain your answer.
- Why does Cece imagine herself as El Deafo? How does becoming El Deafo change how she feels about herself?
- How does Cece feel about taking sign language classes? How does her mom feel about them? Why might they feel differently?
- Is Martha a good friend to Cece? What actions or traits show that she is a good friend?
- Why do you think Martha runs away when Cece shows her the new glasses? What might Martha be feeling?
- How does Cece feel about Mike Miller? What clues from the text or illustrations show her feelings?
- Do you think Mike is a true friend to Cece? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence.
- How does Cece become a hero in her class? What makes her actions heroic?
- How do Cece and Martha become friends again at the end of the story? What does this show about friendship?



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**After Reading:** to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Why do you think Cece Bell wrote *El Deafo*? What message or experience do you think she wanted to share with readers?
- Why do you think she chose to tell her story as a graphic novel instead of a traditional chapter book? How does the format help tell her story?
- Has reading *El Deafo* changed how you think about graphic novels? Explain your thinking.
- Extension: Write your own personal narrative or memoir in a graphic-novel format. Use pictures, captions, and speech bubbles to tell a true story from your life. Use [RIF's Design Your Own Graphic Novel template](#) to plan and create your work.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Check out [RIF's Disability Pride Collection](#) for more books featuring people and characters with differing abilities.