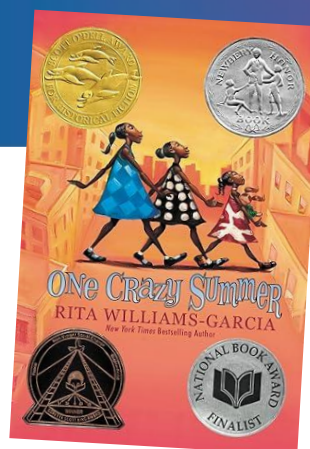


One Crazy Summer Discussion Guide

Author: Rita Williams-Garcia
Themes: Family, Social Justice,
Black History



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

- What do you know about the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s? How did people work to challenge racial discrimination and advocate for change?
- Introduce the Black Panther Party and its role in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, including its community programs and efforts to address inequality.
- What responsibilities do family members have toward one another? How might these responsibilities look different across families?
- How can our experiences and relationships shape our sense of identity and belonging?
- Introduce key vocabulary from the novel (see vocabulary guide).

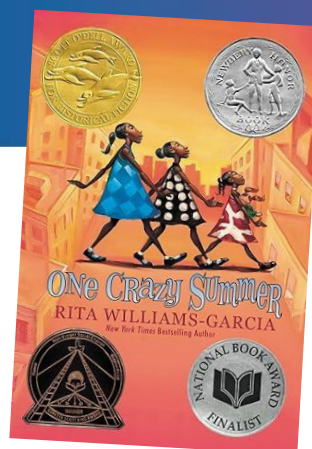
During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

Reading Strategy — Shrink-a-Text: After reading each chapter, invite students to summarize its main idea in one sentence. Discuss how the chapter title connects to its events and why the author may have chosen that title.

- What does Big Ma mean when she tells the girls to "act right"? What does this reveal about her expectations and concerns? (Ch. 1)
- Why does Delphine hide the money in her shoe? What does this decision reveal about her personality and sense of responsibility? (Ch. 1)
- How would you describe Cecile's relationship with her daughters? What do her words and actions reveal about her character? (Ch. 2)
- How do Big Ma and Cecile approach their roles as caregivers differently? How might their experiences influence their relationships with the girls? (Ch. 2)
- How does the stewardess treat the two women on the airplane? What does this interaction reveal about racial attitudes during this time? (Ch. 3)
- How does Delphine feel about spending the summer with Cecile? What details from the text help you understand her feelings? (Ch. 4)

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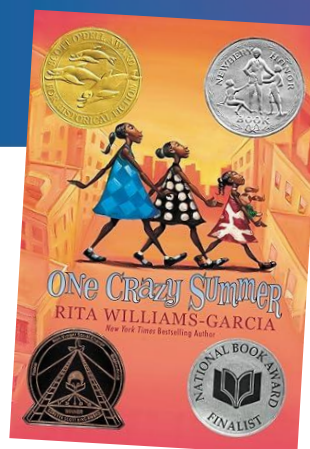
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- What do the girls' living conditions reveal about Cecile's priorities and lifestyle? How do these conditions compare with what the girls are accustomed to? (Ch. 4)
- How does Cecile respond to her daughters' arrival? What might explain the differences between the girls' expectations and Cecile's behavior? (Ch. 4)
- Why is Cecile so protective of her kitchen? What predictions can you make about what she might be hiding? (Ch. 5)
- What do the girls discover about Cecile's activities in the kitchen? How does this discovery contribute to your understanding of her character? (Ch. 6)
- What do we learn about the Black Panther Party and Cecile's involvement with the organization? How does this information contribute to the novel's historical setting? (Ch. 7)
- How would you describe Delphine's personality? How do her actions demonstrate her strengths and the responsibilities she carries? (Ch. 7)
- Why does Cecile refuse to call Fern by her name? What might this suggest about Cecile's feelings or experiences? (Ch. 8)
- How does Cecile's treatment of the girls during breakfast reveal the challenges in their relationship? (Ch. 9)
- What do the girls experience when they go to the center for breakfast? How does this setting differ from Cecile's home? (Ch. 9)
- Why does Cecile use a different name among members of the Black Panther Party? What might this name represent about her identity? (Ch. 10)
- How does Delphine feel about her name? What does her understanding of its meaning reveal about her sense of identity? (Ch. 11)
- How does the girls' daily routine change while living with Cecile? What responsibilities does Delphine take on? (Ch. 12)
- Why does Vonetta color on Miss Patty Cake? What might her actions suggest about identity, representation, and the messages children receive about beauty? (Ch. 12)
- Why does Delphine decide to take her sisters to the grocery store instead of Ming's? What does this decision reveal about her growing independence? (Ch. 13)
- How does Delphine apply what she learns at the center to make changes at home? What does this reveal about her development? (Ch. 14)

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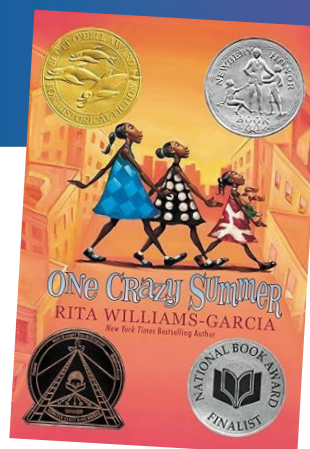
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- How does Cecile respond when the girls ask for a television? What does her reaction reveal about her values and priorities? (Ch. 19)
- Who was Bobby Hutton, and why is his story significant to the people at the center? How does his story connect to the historical events surrounding the novel? (Ch. 20)
- What are the children at the center preparing for? How does Delphine feel about participating, and what might explain her reaction? (Ch. 20)
- What does the expression "eating crow" mean? Why does Delphine feel she must do this, and what does the experience teach her? (Ch. 21)
- How does Delphine compare Vonetta's actions with Cecile's behavior? What does this comparison reveal about Delphine's understanding of her family? (Ch. 23)
- Why might the family in Chinatown want to take a photograph of the girls? What does this interaction reveal about how others perceive them? (Ch. 24)
- What happens when the girls return to Cecile's house? How does this event change their understanding of their mother and her involvement with the Black Panther Party? (Ch. 25)
- Who supports the girls after Cecile's arrest? What does this reveal about the importance of community and relationships? (Ch. 26)
- What message does Fern communicate through her poem? How does her poem reflect the novel's larger themes of identity, voice, and justice? (Ch. 29)
- How does Delphine begin to stand up for herself? What do we learn about Cecile's past, and how does this information change Delphine's understanding of her mother? (Ch. 31)

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After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- **Character Development:** How does Delphine change throughout the novel? What experiences influence her understanding of herself, her family, and the world around her? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.
- **Family and Relationships:** How does the relationship between Delphine, Vonetta, Fern, and Cecile develop throughout the summer? What does the novel suggest about the complexities of family relationships?
- **Historical Context:** How do the events of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements influence the characters' experiences? How does the historical setting help readers understand their choices and challenges?
- **Identity and Belonging:** How do different characters express their identities throughout the novel? What role do family, culture, and community play in shaping their sense of belonging?
- **Figurative Language:** Identify examples of figurative language throughout the novel. How does Rita Williams-Garcia use these expressions to communicate emotions, develop characters, or strengthen the story's themes?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- **Explore History Through Literature:** Invite students to research an event, individual, or community program connected to the Civil Rights or Black Power movements. Encourage them to make connections between their research and events in the novel.
- **Continue the Conversation:** Encourage students to revisit themes of identity, family, responsibility, and social justice. Connect these ideas to other texts, classroom discussions, and historical events.
- **Keep Reading:** Invite students to explore other historical fiction novels featuring strong characters, family relationships, and important moments in history. Encourage them to compare how different authors bring historical events and perspectives to life.