

GRADES
2-5

DISCUSSION GUIDE

UPSIDE ★ DOWN MAGIC



A Guide to Including the Series Across Curriculum:

**Science Technology Engineering Math, English Language Arts, Social Emotional Learning,
Art, Movement, and More!**



It's never easy when your magic goes wonky!

FIVE TYPES OF MAGICAL ABILITIES

- FLARES** Can make heat and fire
- FLICKERS** Can make things invisible
- FLUXERS** Can change into animals
- FLYERS** Can fly
- FUZZYS** Can easily tame animals

Nory, Elliott, Andres, and Bax are just four of the students in Dunwiddle Magic School's Upside-Down Magic class. In their classroom, lessons are unconventional, students are unpredictable, and magic has a tendency to turn wonky at the worst possible moments.

Set the Stage for a Reading Adventure

Try incorporating the Upside-Down Magic series into your classroom and keeping track of the story as you read:

Story String Timeline Run a string or a long piece of blue painter's tape along a wall in the classroom to create a timeline. Divide the timeline into segments, one for each chapter in the Upside-Down Magic book your class is reading. As you read, invite students to add drawings and short summaries to the timeline.

Our Reading Scrapbook Working individually or in small groups, have students create a scrapbook page for each chapter of the book that combines words and images to capture the main events and characters. Reading scrapbooks can be made individually so students can take their work home or the class can work together to create a single book.

Mix Things Up at Reading Time

If quiet reading time is feeling repetitive, give one of these alternatives a try when reading the Upside-Down Magic series:

Story Sketchers Divide students into pairs and give each pair two sheets of paper and drawing supplies. While one student reads, the other draws what's happening in the story, paying close attention to any details mentioned in the text. Halfway through the reading period, have students swap roles.

Reading Radio Using a smartphone or other recording device, invite students to take turns reading a few lines of the text they have practiced ahead of time as you record it. Encourage students to read with enthusiasm and experiment with pacing and even voices. When time allows, playback the recording to hear everyone's voice!

Classroom Activities

Get even more out of your reading adventure with engaging activities that bring the Upside-Down Magic Series to life and encourage students to make connections across the curriculum.

ART Animal Mashup

Nory's magic always goes a bit "wonky," causing her to turn into mixed-up animal creatures like a "bitten" (a combination of a beaver and a kitten) or a "skunkephant" (a combination of a skunk and an elephant). Using nature magazines or printed images of animals, invite students to create their own unique mixed-up animals.

SEL Positivity Portrait

Ms. Starr wants the students in her Upside-Down Magic class to appreciate their differences and realize that they each have valuable skills to share with the world. Ask students to consider their own unique talents and gifts: Can you make people laugh? Are you good at solving math problems? Do you speak a second language? Are you kind?

Have students paste a self-portrait photo in the middle of a piece of paper and write down as many unique talents and best qualities as they can around their photo. Invite students to add to each other's positivity portraits.

STEM Super Solar Nachos

Students with Flare magical talents can warm foods with their bare hands. For the rest of us, we can use the power of science to make nachos using energy from the sun. Have an adult cut a large flap in the lid of the pizza box leaving one side connected and about 1 inch of cardboard between the sides of the flap and the edges of the lid. Cover the flap with aluminum foil to create a panel that reflects rays from the sun into the box. Try to keep the foil as smooth as possible. Cover the hole in the box lid with plastic wrap and tape around all four edges to create a sealed window. Next, open the box and cover the inside with foil. Set up your solar oven outside in a sunny spot while the sun is high in the sky (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.). Put some corn chips on a pie plate inside your oven and sprinkle on some shredded cheese. Place the thermometer in a visible spot and close the lid. Use a stick to prop up the flap so that sunlight is reflected into the window in the box lid. Track the temperature inside the oven. Solar ovens can take a little while to warm up, so be patient. When the cheese is melted, your snack is ready! Be careful when taking hot food out of your solar oven. Extend the activity by making other snacks or tinkering with the oven's design to improve its cooking capabilities.

ELA / SEL Best Friends Mini Magazine

The students in the Upside-Down Magic class at Dunwiddle School are often teased because of their differences, but just like any kid at any school, they want to feel included and find friends. As a class or individually, create a mini magazine about friendship that includes tips for being a good friend, advice for cheering someone up on a hard day and games to play with friends. Add photos and drawings to make the magazine colorful.

MOVEMENT You Might Like Yoga

Kids in the Upside-Down Magic class do math and geography, but they also do interpretive dance and yoga. Yoga can be a great way to relax and “center” yourself when you're feeling stressed. Invite students to try some simple poses such as: child's pose, downward dog, and tree pose. Have students notice their breath as they breathe in and out calmly while holding each pose for three breaths. Remind students to always listen to their body and stop what they're doing if something doesn't feel right.

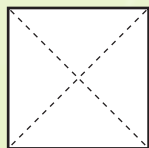
STEM City View

Nory's Aunt Margo is a Flyer who can even take passengers with her as she flies high above the town of Dunwiddle. Visit www.GoogleMaps.com and use the satellite view mode to take your students on an aerial journey of their city. Challenge students to locate their school, nearby destinations like parks, recreation centers, libraries, and shops, as well local landmarks. What do they notice about their city? How does an aerial view change the way they think about where they live?

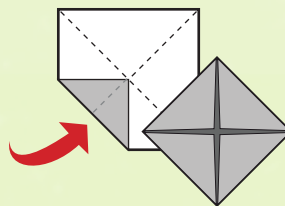
ELA Suggest-a-Book Cootie Catcher

What would a Fuzzy, Flare, Flicker, Flyer, or Fluxer like to read? Guide students in brainstorming which books they would recommend to the characters they have met so far in Upside-Down Magic. Encourage students to provide reasons for their choices. Next, give each student a cootie catcher template, scissors and colored pencils. After filling in the cootie catcher with eight of their favorite books, have students follow the instructions on the template to cut out and fold their cootie catcher. Allow students time to use their cootie catcher to recommend a good book to a friend.

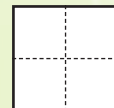
1. Fold the paper into fourths diagonally and unfold the paper.



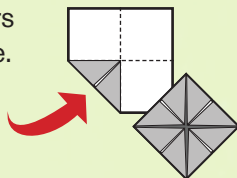
2. With front side face down, fold all four corners evenly into the middle.



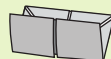
3. Flip the folded paper over.



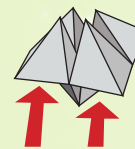
4. Fold all four corners evenly into the middle.



5. Fold in half in each direction.



6. Fit your fingers into the slits under the color panels—you're ready to go!

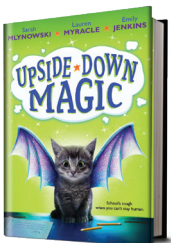


UPSIDE-DOWN MAGIC

Let's Discuss!

Get the most out of *Upside-Down Magic*, book one by engaging in either large or small group discussions.

1. Nory makes up a new word for a Beaver-Kitten by combining the two words. She calls it a "bitten." Words that are created by combining the sounds and meanings of two words are called portmanteaus. Can you think of other examples of a portmanteau?
2. In chapter 5, Aunt Margo comes to pick up Nory as Nory's father has arranged for her to attend a special class for kids who "struggle with magic." How does Nory feel about leaving her home to live with Aunt Margo? How does she feel about attending the upside-down magic class?
3. One of the themes of this book is "being different." As we read the book, we'll look for examples that connect to this theme. We'll talk about what the characters think about being different and what our own personal experience tells us too. Thinking about what we've read so far, what connections do you see between the story and the theme of "being different?"
4. In chapter 7, Nory arrives at Dunwiddle Magic School. Using examples from the text, discuss the ways your school is similar to Dunwiddle and how it is different. How is Ms. Starr's classroom like your classroom? How is it different?
5. Recall what Elliott tells Nory about Pepper while they are walking to school. Does it remind you of the girl Nory meets in the supply closet? Why or why not? How would you describe Pepper based on what you have read? What do you think this might tell us about rumors?
6. Ms. Starr explains that the class will not use the words "wrong" or "wonky" to describe themselves. What words does she say are okay? How do you feel about these words? Why do you think it's important to be careful about which words we use to describe people?
7. When Bax doesn't want to share his magical talent, Ms. Starr says, "we will all support you, and we will help you become your best self. The spirit of the UDM classroom is trust". Do you think you might be more willing to try something new when you can trust your classmates? Why or why not? What are ways you can support your classmates?
8. Nory's father "always told his children they had to help themselves. He couldn't do things for them or make things easier. Helping themselves was the way they would learn." What do you think of this advice? What do you notice helps you learn new skills?
9. How does Nory's father think students should train their magic? How does Ms. Starr think students should train their magic? Discuss the pros and cons of each approach.
10. What do you think of Elliott and Nory's decision to "box themselves in" and get rid of their unique magical powers in order to become normal? Does it seem like a good trade to you? Why or why not?
11. How would you describe the connection between the characters' feelings and their magic? What happens when characters are scared? What examples can you find in the text?
12. In chapter 16, Lacey says, "Changing the label doesn't change the facts... You guys are as wonky as, oh, as wonky as a skunk with an elephant trunk". How do you think Nory and the UDM students could have gotten out of this icky situation before things got even worse? What can you do when someone is being mean?
13. Compare and contrast Nory's father and her Aunt Margo. Think about their homes, their magical talents, their personalities, and the way they relate to Nory.
14. Principal Gonzalez says that he "will not tolerate unkindness about race, gender, orientation, family background, religion, weight, magical abilities, favorite candy, or anything else that distinguishes one person from another". Is there anything you would add to or change about this statement? Do you have a similar policy at your school? Is it always easy to treat everyone the same or is it sometimes harder than we might like? What can you share from your own experience?
15. How would you describe Nory's feelings about her UDM classmates on the first day of school? How would you describe them at the end of the book? Why do you think there was a change?



UPSIDE-DOWN MAGIC

Let's Write!

Respond to events and characters from *Upside-Down Magic*, book one with these writing prompts.

CHAPTER 1: Make a short comic strip that includes the word “zamboozle.”

CHAPTER 4: If you could have any one of the five magic types (Flyer, Flicker, Fluxer, Fuzzy or Flare), which would you choose? Why?

CHAPTER 7: On the wall in Ms. Starr’s room, there’s a poster that reads: “Remember the kid who gave up? Neither does anyone else.” Write about a time when you wanted to give up but didn’t. What helped you keep going?

CHAPTER 10: Imagine you’re one of the Sparkies. Write a short journal entry about what happened in the lunchroom during this chapter. How might the Sparkies tell the story differently?

CHAPTER 13: What do you think Nory and Elliott said to Aunt Margo after their magical accidents destroyed the plants and laundry in her yard? Write a letter from Elliott and Nory explaining what happened and what they plan to do to fix it. Make sure to include an apology too!

CHAPTER 15: Write an acrostic poem describing your favorite character. An acrostic poem is the kind where you write each letter of a word on a separate line and then think of a word or phrase that begins with each letter. For example:

Not your average 4th grader
Often turns into kittens
Reads books
Yearns to attend Sage Academy.

CHAPTER 18: Write a review of *Upside-Down Magic*. Include a short summary of what happens in the story without giving away too many surprises, as well as the reasons why you did or didn’t like the book. If possible, have your teacher or parent post your review at an online bookseller or at a local bookstore.

Do You Know Portmanteau? A portmanteau is a word that’s created by combining the sounds and meanings of two words. For example, “brunch” comes from combining “breakfast” and “lunch” to describe a meal that’s eaten between breakfast time and lunchtime. Challenge students to find portmanteau words as they read *Upside-Down Magic* and then make up some of their own!

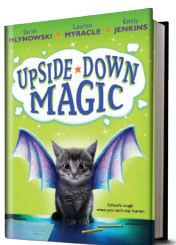


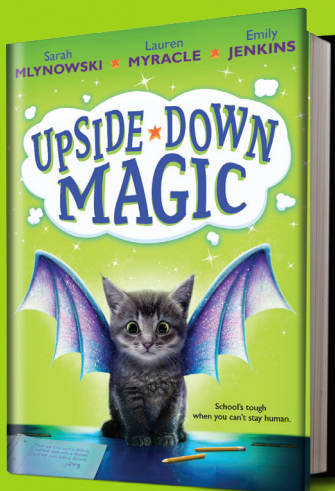


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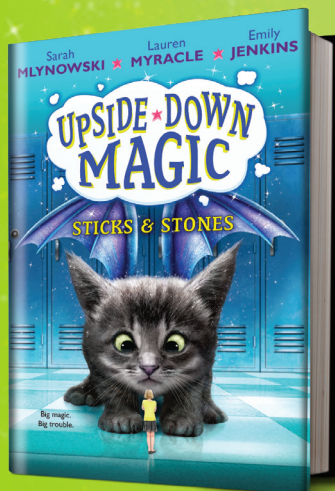
Emily Jenkins is the author of many chapter books, including the Toys Trilogy (which begins with *Toys Go Out*) and the Invisible Inkling series. Her picture books include *Lemonade in Winter*, *Toys Meet Snow*, and *The Fun Book of Scary Stuff*. She would like to be a Flare and work as a pastry chef.

Sarah Mlynowski is the author of many books for tweens, teens, and adults including, the *New York Times* bestselling Whatever After series, The Magic in Manhattan series, and *Give a Call*. She would like to be a Flicker so she could make the mess in her room invisible.

Lauren Myracle is the *New York Times* bestselling author of many books for young readers, including The Winnie Years (which begins with *Ten*), the Flower Power series (which begins with *Luv Ya Bunches*), and the Life of Ty series. She would like to be a Fuzzy so she could talk to unicorns and feed them berries.



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This discussion guide was written by Tara Bardeen. Tara is passionate about helping students develop the skills and curiosity they'll need to thrive as adults in the 21st century world. With a background in education, a degree in Chinese from the University of Colorado and an infectious love of learning, Tara brings a unique perspective and set of skills to her work creating curriculum for use in classrooms across the country. When not writing, she can be found collecting books to donate to schools in need. **Find a complete chapter-by-chapter guide for Upside-Down Magic including, chapter summaries, discussion questions, writing prompts, teaching strategies, and activities that bring the book to life across the curriculum at tarabardeen.com/guides.**