

NCTE Standards for Using Books by

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Critical Reading

(NCTE Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.)

1. With which character in Marcia's books do most readers identify? Survey students and teachers to find out. Show your results on a bar graph. What conclusions can you make based on your results?
2. Compare/contrast characters between different books by Marcia by making a chart. Label each section with a character trait (such as honest, sarcastic, funny, etc.) and then place the names or pictures of the characters on the section with the trait that best describes them.
3. Make a cause and effect chart for each chapter showing what happened because of a character's actions, words, or decisions. Under the cause column list the character's behavior. Under the effect column list what happened because of the character's behavior.
4. Plot is what the story is about. Theme is what the story is REALLY about. What themes appear in Marcia's books? Friendship? Competition? Working together? Are there others you can identify?
5. Do you think one of her books would make a good movie, television show, or cartoon? Write a letter to the publisher explaining your opinion.
6. Write predictions at the end of a chapter to show what you think will happen in the next chapter.
7. What would've happened if the main character made a totally different decision? Write a script showing how the story would change.
8. Count the number of words in each sentence on a page. Make a bar graph showing your results. Then modify the page so that each sentence has about the same number of words. Read your revised page out loud. How does it sound compared with the way the Marcia wrote it? Now do the same thing with a paragraph or page in a piece of your own writing!

Vocabulary

(NCTE Standard 6: Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.)

1. Illustrate your three favorite words in each chapter.
2. Decorate your room with a paper chain made of links listing the 'colorful' descriptive words in the story.
3. List five unusual words in a chapter or on a page. Use the words in a short story of your own.
4. Make an illustrated glossary of words that are new or interesting.
5. Make a concentration card game using index cards by writing interesting or new words on separate cards and making matching definition cards.
6. Use your cards to play the games of Password and Charades.
7. Rewrite a paragraph with antonyms so that the paragraph has the opposite meaning.
8. Rewrite a passage using a different verb tense.

Comprehension

(NCTE Standard 3: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.)

1. Make a picture book of the novel by converting each chapter into a picture book page. Highlight each page with a detailed illustration.
2. Work with friends to rewrite the story into a script showing what happened at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story.
3. Choose a character that you identify with the most and complete a compare/contrast chart showing how you and the character are alike and different.
4. List all the obstacles keeping the main character from solving his/her problem. What would you suggest the character do? Write a letter to the character giving you advice!
5. Problems help make a story plot more suspenseful. What problems do the characters in Marcia's books face? Make a chart with columns for the title, character, problem, and how each character solved his/her problem.
6. Draw a detailed map of the setting. Include a symbol in the map key to show where the main events in the story occurred.

For more information and fun activities visit

www.MarciaTJones.com

