

SARA PENNYPACKER

# Waylon!

One Awesome Thing



PICTURES BY  
*Marla Frazee*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS

## About the Book

Waylon loves thinking of new science inventions and sharing interesting facts with his friends. But Waylon's fourth-grade year proves to be challenging when his classmate Arlo decides that the boys need to divide into opposing teams. Waylon wants to be friends with everyone and finds it disheartening to choose a side. He turns to his sister for advice, but it's difficult to talk to her, since she's pulling away from the family and acting like a teenager. When it seems that matters can't get any worse, the arrival of new, scary classmate Baxter Boylen changes everything. The transformation of Waylon's class, friendships, and family ties keep the reader engaged in this exciting tale.

## Common Core Alignment

This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Reading (Informational Text), Writing, and Language. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level–specific Common Core State Standards. Each question and activity in this guide includes a reference for the CCR strand, domain, and standard that is addressed. To support instruction, also reference your grade level–specific Common Core State Standards to scaffold the questions for your students.

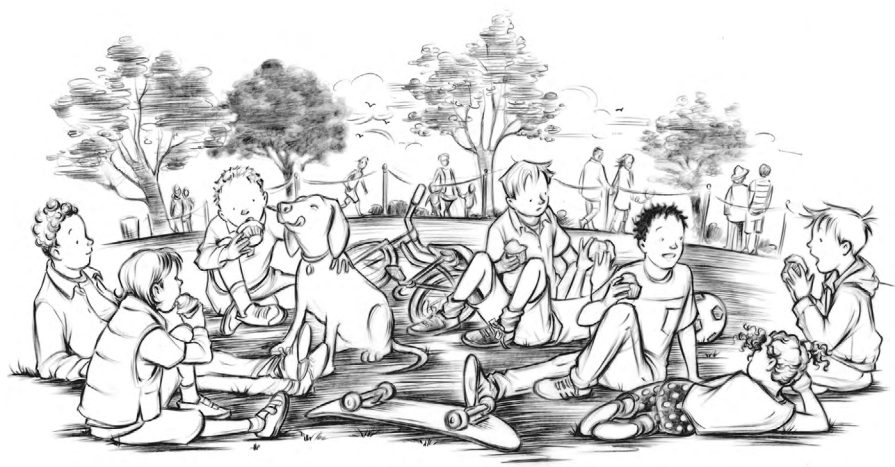
**INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE:** For each of the guiding questions, please encourage students to support their claims with textual evidence. Active student engagement and text interaction are critical to success with Common Core State Standards.



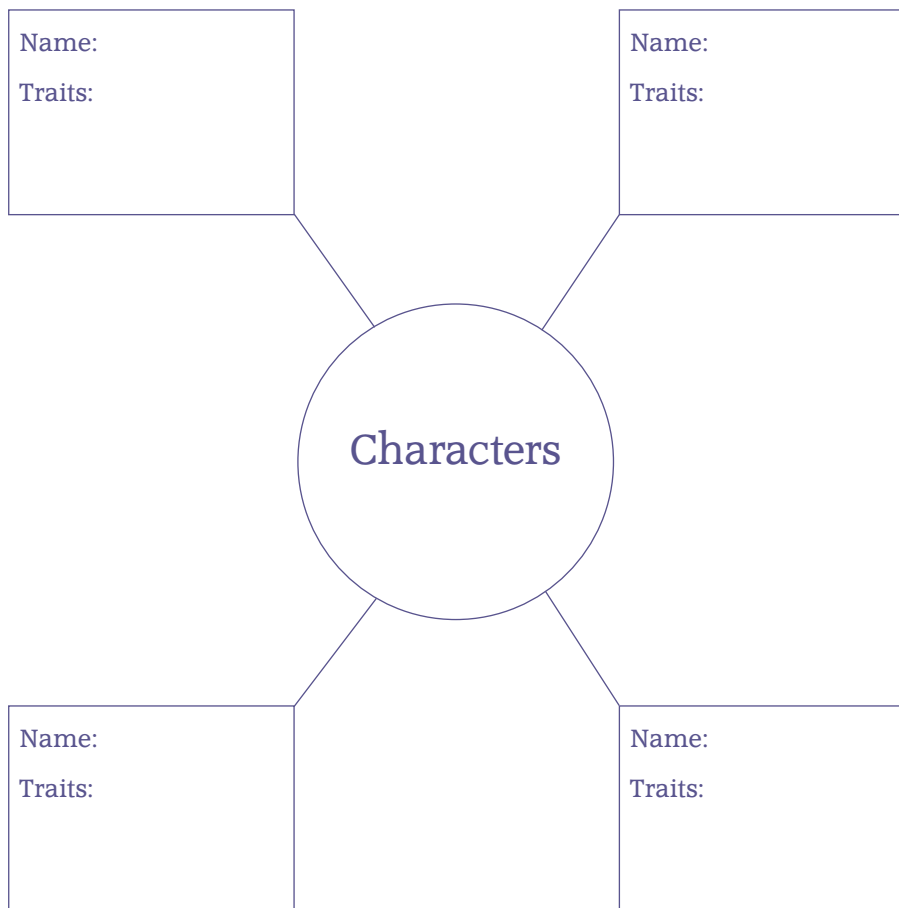
# Pre-reading

## ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- 1 What does it mean to be on a team? Was there ever a time that you joined a team? Why did you join? How did you feel as a member? What are reasons kids should or shouldn't join a team? Write a three-paragraph essay that explains why you believe being part of a team is or isn't important. Support your opinion with clear examples. (*Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.3.1*)
- 2 Look at the illustrations in the story before you begin reading. Select a few pictures that you believe are the best or that you find most interesting. Based on the drawings, make a prediction about something that will occur in the story. Think about why the author and illustrator have included these the pictures. (*Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.3.7*)
  - a Place a note on each page that has an illustration you selected. Then, as you read the story, check whether your prediction was accurate. Explain how the pictures help you understand more about the characters, setting, mood, or plot.



- 3 During the story many new characters will be introduced. As you read, analyze each character's actions, consequences, and traits. Keep track of your ideas by placing the character names and traits in the graphic organizer below. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.3*)



# Discussion Questions

- 1 At the beginning of the story, Arlo approaches Waylon about joining the Shark-Punchers. After Arlo walks away, Waylon feels “a terrible collapsing sensation in his chest, as if a black hole had just swallowed his heart.” Is he speaking literally or figuratively? What does this sentence tell us about how Waylon feels about the teams? What do you think Waylon will do? Make a prediction and support it with evidence from the text. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.4*)
- a In chapter 6, how do Waylon’s friends react to the possibility of his joining the Shark-Punchers? Is it positive or negative for Waylon? Why?
- b In chapter 10, Arlo ignores Waylon when he waves at him. How does Waylon respond? Why do you believe that Waylon feels the way he does? How does Waylon try to impress Arlo?
- 2 Throughout the story, Waylon shares inventions that he thinks will change the world: an *internal movie projector*, *Teflon fingerskins*, *atom history tracking*, etc. As you read the story, use the graphic organizer below to write down the things Waylon wants to invent. Are the inventions helpful? Why or why not? Support your response with examples from the story. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.1*)
- a In your opinion, what is the best invention that you use every day? Think about things that make activities such as traveling, cooking, and studying more convenient.

Waylon’s Invention	Purpose	How It Will Help Others

- 3 Waylon says that his sister has experienced a complete metamorphosis. Is this a literal or figurative metamorphosis? What has happened to Charlotte (Neon) that supports this statement? How has she changed? Be sure to reference memories that Waylon shares throughout the story as evidence. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.4*)
- a Do any other characters experience a metamorphosis in the story? Who? Be specific and include examples from the text.
- b In chapter 2, Waylon talks about missing his sister. How can he miss his sister if he still lives with her? Provide evidence from the text.
- 4 At the end of chapter 3, all the students in the class are nervous about Baxter Boylen's possible return. Why? What memories do the kids have of Baxter? What do they believe might occur if Baxter returns? Support your response with examples from the story. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.5*)
- a We learn more about Baxter in every chapter of the book after he returns to school. Which events give the reader more information about Baxter? How does each event either confirm student beliefs about Baxter being "bad" or help the reader form a new opinion?
- 5 Waylon's father says, "Monotony is the enemy of creativity." What does this saying mean? How does it relate to Waylon? Do you agree with this opinion? Why or why not? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.6*)
- 6 Throughout the story, Waylon talks a lot about gravity. Why is gravity so important to him? How could his gravity control help others or society? Include examples from the story in your response. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.1*)
- a When Waylon presents his *community safety contribution*, the *gravity-counteracting hat*, the police officer refers to it as science fiction. Why might someone say that to Waylon? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 7 At several points in the book, Waylon sees himself "from the outside." How does Waylon feel in those moments? Which types of events prompt him to look at himself from the outside? How does Waylon react after he has an "outside" moment? Use examples from the story to support your answers. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.3*)

- 8 Why is One Awesome Thing (OAT) important to both Waylon and his sister? What types of things do they share with each other? Why do you believe the author included *One Awesome Thing* in the book's title? How is OAT related to the theme of the story and the events that occur? Provide details from the text. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.1*)
- a Think about your own day. What is One Awesome Thing that happened? For one week, record OAT in your journal and share it with a parent or sibling.
- 9 What is Clementine's relationship with Waylon? Think about a book you've read in the Clementine series. How are Clementine and Waylon's characters similar or different in this book? Compare their class in this book to their class in the Clementine series. How are they similar or different? Include evidence from the stories in your response. (*Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.3.7*)
- 10 What does the term *Batesian mimicry* mean? How does it relate to characters in the story? What are similarities and differences between Baxter and Charlotte (Neon)? Give examples from the text. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.5*)
- 11 Baxter and Waylon devise a plan to save Dumpster Eddy. Do you believe the plan will work? Why or why not? How does the plan unite students in their class? What does each classmate contribute at the police station? Include examples to support your response. (*Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.3.1*)
- 12 In the end, how is Waylon an "isthmus" for both his classmates and family? How do his actions cause the class and his family to change? Think about Waylon's actions and the events that occurred as a result (cause and effect) throughout the story. Support your answer with details from the text. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.3*)



# Classroom Connections

## RESEARCH AND WRITING

- 1 When Arlo divides the boys into opposing teams, they both try to figure out logos. Design a logo that you believe would be best for the Shark-Punchers or the Others. In a paragraph, explain how your logo is aligned with character traits of the members of that team. (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.3; Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.3.1*)
  - a Extension Activity: After reading the book, design a logo that Waylon’s entire class could use as one team and a logo that highlights the theme of the story.
- 2 Throughout the story Waylon mentions many famous scientists, including Archimedes, Madame Curie, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Galileo Galilei, and Eratosthenes. Research one of the scientists using online resources (with an adult). Complete a report about the scientist’s accomplishments that includes an introduction, facts about his or her life, linking words and phrases, illustrations, and a conclusion. (*Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.3.7*)
- 3 Baxter tells Waylon that he studies criminal behavior with his father. As a result he knows numerous facts about outlaws. Research one of the individuals Baxter mentions—Dutch Henry Borne, Jesse James, and Pretty Boy Floyd—using online resources (with an adult). Create a ten-minute oral report that highlights what made the individual an “outlaw.” You should share relevant facts and important details and speak clearly at an appropriate pace. (*Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: SL.3.4; Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.3.7*)
- 4 Waylon journals and tells friends his ideas for several new inventions in the story. If you had to invent a *community safety contribution*, what would you make? In two or three paragraphs, describe your invention, highlight how it would make a difference in people’s lives, and provide an illustration. (*Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.3.3*)

# Classroom Connections

## VOCABULARY ENHANCEMENT

Waylon knows a lot about science! In the story, he shares many science terms with his family and friends. Look at the words below and find the sentences where they are used in the story. Then research any words you can't figure out by using dictionaries, science books, or the Internet (with an adult). (*Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.3.4; Foundational Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition: FS.3.4*)

Science Vocabulary	
astrophysics	phenomenon
gravity	singularity
hydrodynamic	teleportation
metamorphosis	transmogrify

## WORD SEARCH DIRECTIONS

After you figure out the meaning of each science vocabulary word, find it in the word search puzzle on the next page. As you search for the words, be sure to pronounce the word parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) correctly. (*Reading: Foundational Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition: FS.3.3*)



# Waylon! One Awesome Thing

## Word Search Puzzle

### FIND THESE WORDS

ASTROPHYSICS • GRAVITY • HYDRODYNAMIC • METAMORPHOSIS  
PHENOMENON • SINGULARITY • TELEPORTATION • TRANSMOGRIFY

S	N	O	I	T	A	T	R	O	P	E	L	E	T	R
G	I	S	P	H	Y	K	V	I	K	H	U	B	H	F
S	T	S	H	Q	R	O	H	D	O	M	S	C	Y	Z
I	U	R	O	V	A	Y	P	V	W	N	A	Y	D	R
N	G	B	A	H	Y	G	S	I	R	S	I	U	R	N
G	J	Y	E	N	P	Q	Q	E	T	A	P	L	O	O
U	W	A	U	G	S	R	M	R	H	C	B	B	D	N
L	C	A	C	V	B	M	O	T	A	Z	M	R	Y	E
A	Z	I	E	Z	Y	P	O	M	X	S	L	V	N	M
R	C	Y	Y	F	H	E	S	G	A	X	D	D	A	O
I	C	T	L	Y	U	E	V	C	R	T	O	P	M	N
T	Z	S	S	X	V	D	J	A	K	I	E	D	I	E
Y	A	I	W	Y	T	I	V	A	R	G	F	M	C	H
S	C	G	U	S	F	A	K	A	C	I	N	Y	E	P
S	T	Y	R	X	U	Y	V	W	Y	E	C	P	F	Q

## About the Author

**Sara Pennypacker** splits her time between Florida and Massachusetts, where she feels lucky to be able to write every day. She is the author of many children's books, including seven in the *New York Times* best-selling Clementine series, two in the Stuart series, *Pax*, *Meet the Dullards*, *Summer of the Gypsy Moths*, and *Sparrow Girl*. Her books have won numerous accolades, including a Golden Kite Award, a Christopher Award, and several children's choice state awards, and they have appeared on many Best Books of the Year lists. For more information, visit [www.sarapennypacker.com](http://www.sarapennypacker.com).



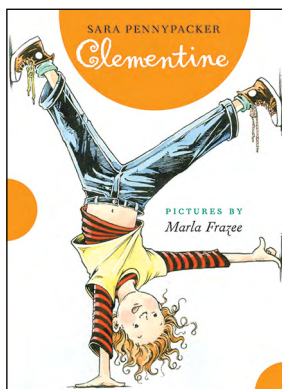
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## About the Illustrator

**Marla Frazee** illustrated all of the books in the Clementine series. She has been awarded a Caldecott Honor on two occasions: for *All the World* by Liz Garton Scanlon, and for her own *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*. She is also the author-illustrator of *Roller Coaster*, *Walk On!*, *Santa Claus: The World's Number One Toy Expert*, *The Boss Baby*, *Boot & Shoe*, and *The Farmer and the Clown*. Marla lives in Pasadena, California, has three grown sons, and works in a small backyard cabin under an avocado tree. Visit her at [www.marlafrazee.com](http://www.marlafrazee.com).



## Books by Sara Pennypacker and Marla Frazee



### Clementine

*Hardcover*

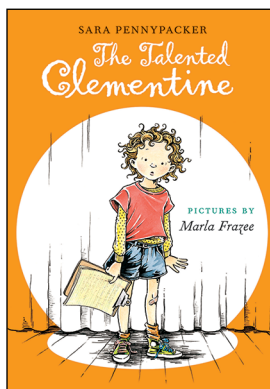
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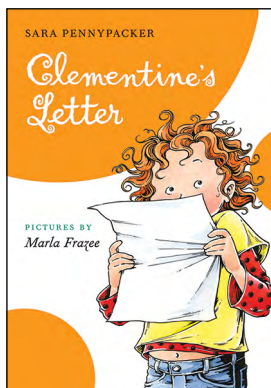
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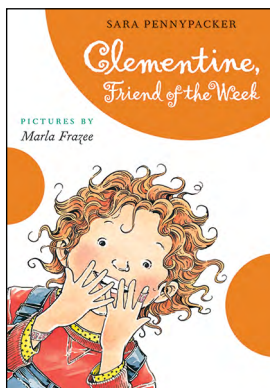
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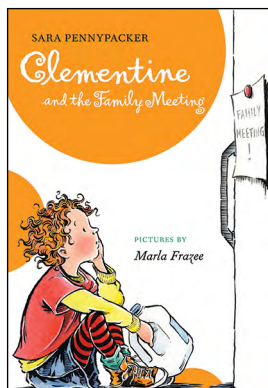
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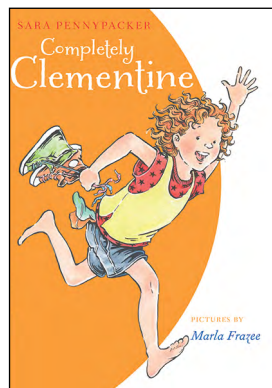
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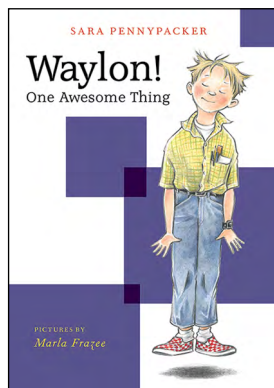
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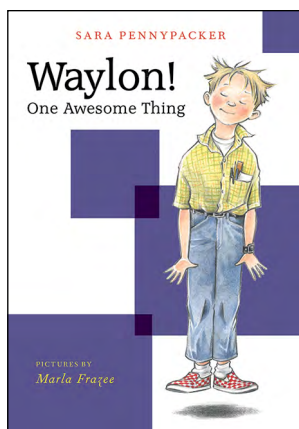
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This guide was created by Dawn Jacobs, who has a doctorate in special education with a concentration in learning disabilities and works to improve academic outcomes for all students through teacher development, instructional design, and research in the areas of response to intervention, social support, and parent involvement.

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