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Before Reading the Book

SUMMARY
Mrs. Olinski chooses four sixth-grade students to compete in the Academic Bowl. As the team moves from one success to another, finally winning the state championship in Albany, New York, many people ask how she chose the team. At first, even Mrs. Olinski isn’t sure. As the book unfolds, readers come to know the story of each team member—Noah, Nadia, Ethan, and Julian—and the connections that bind them. The students call themselves The Souls and meet for tea each Saturday at Sillington House, the bed and breakfast inn that Julian’s father is about to open for business. Readers also find out how the characters from upstate New York are linked to the inhabitants of a Florida retirement village. By the book’s end, Mrs. Olinski, who is a paraplegic because of an automobile accident, learns some important and wonderful things about both her students and herself.

CHARACTERS

People
Mrs. Olinski . . . . Sixth-grade teacher
Noah Gershom . . . . . . . . . . a Soul
Joey Gershom . . . . Noah’s brother
Mrs. Gershom . . . . Noah’s mother
Sadie and Nate . . Noah’s grandparents
Margaret Draper . . . . Bride of Izzy Diamondstein; grandmother of Ethan
Izzy Diamondstein . . . Nadia’s grandfather
Rabbi Friedman . . . . Resident of Century Village
Mrs. Potter . . . . . . . . . Ethan’s mother
Allen Diamondstein . . . . Izzy’s son
Mrs. Korshak . . . . . . . . Bus driver
Michael Froelich . . . . Sixth grader
Mr. Singh . . . . . . . . Julian’s father; owner of Sillington House
Mrs. Reynolds . . . . Director of Annie
Jared Lord . . . . . . . . Sixth grader
Dr. Pat Knapp . . . . Ham’s mother; a vet
Mrs. Sharkey . . . . . . . . . . Math teacher
Ms. Masolino . . . . . . . . . Music teacher
Mrs. Laurencin . . . . Epiphany Middle School principal
Mr. Connor LeDue . . . . Knightsbridge Middle School principal
Holly Blackwell . . . . . . . . News anchorwoman

Animals
Thomas Stearns (T.S.) . . . Tillie’s cat
Ginger . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Nadia’s dog
Alice . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Julian’s puppy
Arnold . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Michael Froelich’s dog
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Elaine Lobl (E.L.) Konigsburg was born in New York City, attended Carnegie-Mellon University, and did graduate work in organic chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh. She then taught science at a private girls' school. When her youngest child started school, Konigsburg began writing. She is the only author to have won the Newbery Medal and a Newbery Honor Book award in the same year. Like all her books, The View from Saturday focuses on the theme of self discovery. Says Konigsburg, “Who am I? What makes me the same as everyone else? What makes me different? I think those remain the central questions of young people.” The author and her husband live in Jacksonville, Florida.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS
Other Books by E. L. Konigsburg
• From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler
• Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth
• The Second Mrs. Giaconda
• Father Arcane’s Daughter
• Journey to an 800 Number
• Samuel Todd’s Book of Great Inventions

VOCABULARY
The following words from the story may be unfamiliar to some students. After introducing the words and discussing their meanings, you might tell the class that there is a funny scene in the book in which a character has a problem with syllables in a word and mispronounces the word as a result. Then use the words on this list to teach a lesson in syllabification. Students might make a chart like the one shown on the following page.

- puberty
- chandelier
- vanquished
- brawn
- genus
- trajectory
- decorum
- chanteuse
- jubilant
- benevolently
- calligraphy
- caryatids
- domiciles
- incubating
- syllabification
- ironic
- admonish
- transluence
- coiffed
- salivating
- ethnicity
- incandescently
- tranquilizer
- anemia
- de facto
- sentinels
- atrociously
- malice
- phalanx
- prepubescent
- ruckus
- incarnation
- archive
- chartreuse
- audible
- paraplegic
- trounce
- parched
- maneuver
- mediocre
- frieze
- protruding
- culled
- unprecedented

Scholastic Literature Guide: The View From Saturday © Scholastic Teaching Resources
GETTING STARTED

You might try one or more of the following activities to introduce the book to the class:
- Write the book title on the chalkboard. Ask students to comment on it. Is it possible to have a view from a day? What do students think the title means?
- There are several references to *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* in this book. You may wish to ascertain how many of your students are familiar with these classics and suggest that students read or reread them.
- Tell students that the characters in the story take part in an Academic Bowl. Then give to your class some of the sample questions (found at the end of the book) that the characters answer. How many can your students answer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Syllable</th>
<th>2 Syllables</th>
<th>3 Syllables</th>
<th>4 or More Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brawn</td>
<td>genus</td>
<td>decorum</td>
<td>trajectory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trounce</td>
<td>archive</td>
<td>protruding</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEACHER TIP

Because this book has many characters who are linked in various ways, you might suggest that students keep track of the characters and their relationships in a writing journal as they read.

TEACHER TIP

There are many references to famous people, places, and events as well as other works of literature in this book. You might assign some students to be Story Detectives to look up these references and report on them to the class.
Exploring the Book

**WHAT HAPPENS**
Noah Gershom writes a thank-you letter to his grandparents for his visit to their retirement community in Century Village, Florida. He reminisces about learning calligraphy, and about being the last-minute best man in the wedding of Izzy Diamondstein and Margaret Draper. The story shifts to New York, where Mrs. Olinski’s sixth-grade team, unofficially called The Souls, is competing in the Academic Bowl. A question posed to Nadia Diamondstein brings to mind her visit to Florida to see her father, recently divorced from her mother, and to attend her grandfather Izzy’s wedding. Although Nadia is angry at her father for the divorce, she gets involved in saving sea turtles with her grandfather and new stepgrandmother. She also meets Margaret’s grandson, Ethan, who is there for a visit. Most importantly, she makes peace with her father and comes to terms with the effect of her parents’ divorce on her own life.

**QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT**

**Comprehension and Recall**

1. What is the Academic Bowl? *(It’s a contest of knowledge.)*

2. Why does Noah know about calligraphy? *(He learned about it from Tillie Nachman when he visited his grandparents.)*

3. How does Noah solve the problem of the cat’s paws on the invitations? *(He puts a Post-it over them saying the receiver will get a surprise gift.)*

4. How does Noah become the best man at the wedding? *(Allen Diamondstein sprains his ankle and has to go to the hospital.)*

5. What is Nadia’s relationship with Noah? *(Both are on The Souls team; her mother works for his father, a dentist; Noah is the best man at her grandfather’s wedding.)*

6. How does Nadia get interested in Florida sea turtles? *(She learns about them from her grandfather and Margaret.)*

**Higher Level Thinking Skills**

7. Why does Noah change his mind about writing a B & B note? *(He recalls what happened on his visit and realizes that he got a lot out of it.)*

8. How do you know that Dr. Rohmer is insensitive? *(He calls Mrs. Olinski a cripple.)*

9. How does Nadia’s attitude toward her father change? *(At first she finds him annoying because he hovers; she probably also resents the divorce. Later, she becomes more understanding and becomes closer to him.)*

10. How does Margaret help Nadia’s father? *(She gets him interested in turtles.)*
11. Why is Nadia so upset when she finds out that Margaret helped her mother get a job in New York? *(She thinks Margaret interfered in her parents’ marriage.)*

12. How are Nadia and her dad like the turtles? *(They’ve had a storm in their lives, been picked up in one place and set down in another. They need help resettling.)*

**Literary Elements**

13. **Story beginning:** What issue do the first two paragraphs focus on? *(how Mrs. Olinski picked the team for the Academic Bowl)* Why do you think the author starts the book this way? *(She wants the reader to think about this issue, too.)* What question does the first paragraph of the book leave unanswered? *(What was Mrs. Olinski’s reason for giving the superintendent a bad answer?)*

14. **Point of view:** Who is telling this story? *(Many characters as well as the author; the book is written in different voices.)*

**Personal Response**

15. Where do your grandparents or great-grandparents live? Have they retired?

16. People offer their gifts or talents as the fifth gift at the wedding. What would you offer?

**Cross-Curricular Activities**

**Science: Sea Turtles in the Sargasso Sea**

Point out that there is a lot of interesting information about sea turtles in this book. Assign groups of students to learn more about the five species mentioned: loggerheads, greens, leatherbacks, hawksbill, and Kemp’s ridley. Have students read about the Sargasso Sea and locate it on a map. Explain the name comes from the Portuguese word for seaweed; the is known for a seaweed with air sacks that resemble grapes. Students can trace the migrations of sea turtles on a map.

**Art: The Fine Art of Writing**

Remind the class that Noah learns calligraphy while visiting in Florida. Tell students that calligraphy was developed in China more than 2000 years ago. Although it is a form of handwriting, it is also an art and the decorative form of the letters is more important than the clarity of the writing. Calligraphy has also been used in Japan and Islamic cultures for hundreds of years. Display examples of different kinds of calligraphy. Borrow copies of calligraphy books from a library and invite students to try their own hand at this ancient art.

**Social Studies: Culture Corner**

Noah’s recollections of the wedding include many references to Jewish customs and Yiddish words. For example the wedding party stands under a bridal canopy called a *chupah*, and Izzy smashes a glass while the guests yell *mazel tov*. If you have students of Jewish background, invite them to describe these and other customs mentioned in the story to the class.
WHAT HAPPENS
More connections among the characters are revealed: Mrs. Olinski once worked in the same school as Margaret Draper Diamondstein. Ethan meets Julian on the school bus; both become members of the team. Although Ethan and the rest of the students are rude to Julian—who is Indian and dresses and speaks differently—Julian maintains his dignity. Reluctantly, Ethan admires Julian’s spirit. Julian holds a tea party and intrigues Ethan with the clues from Alice in Wonderland that make up the invitation. The other guests are Nadia and Noah. From then on, the four meet for tea at Sillington House every Saturday. They decide to support Mrs. Olinski by winning the bowl. Ethan suggests that Nadia’s dog Ginger should play Sandy in the school production of Annie. Ginger’s understudy is Arnold, Michael Froelich’s dog. Julian overhears a plot by Ham Knapp and Jared Lord to drug Ginger so that Arnold can take her place. When Julian learns that Arnold is unexpectedly scheduled for a matinee performance, he realizes that Arnold will eat the drugged dog treats. Although he is tempted not to, Julian removes the drugged treats, but he lets Ham know his trick has been exposed.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT

1. How does Mrs. Olinski know Margaret Draper? (She was the principal in Mrs. Olinski’s first school.)

2. How is Ethan Potter related to Margaret Draper? (She’s his grandmother.)

3. How does the team get its nickname—The Souls? (Nadia gets to choose a name because she takes off the longest piece of wallpaper at the Singhs’ inn.)

4. How does Julian help Ginger get the part of Sandy in the play? (He teaches The Souls how to palm treats so that Ginger responds.)

5. What does Julian decide to do about the drugged dog treats when he learns that Arnold will play Sandy? (He removes them so Arnold isn’t drugged.)

6. Why is Ham Knapp’s request about writing higher on the blackboard cruel? (It’s obvious Mrs. Olinski can’t write higher from a wheelchair. He’s mocking her disability.)

7. Ethan says, “Sometimes silence is a habit that hurts.” What does he mean? (Sometimes it’s important to communicate so that others know how you feel.)

8. How does Julian handle the teasing that others give him? (with good grace, intelligence, maturity)

9. Why is Ethan excited about Julian’s tea party? (He has been specially chosen as a guest; the invitation is intriguing.)

10. Julian is a magician who performs tricks, but what is the real magic that he performs for Epiphany? (He brings together the members of the team and helps them to flourish.)
11. Why do The Souls decide to help Mrs. Olinski as their project? (They can see how badly some others are acting and that she needs support.)

**Literary Elements**

12. **Organization:** How does the organization of this book differ from most novels? (It’s not told in strict chronological order; it’s told by different people from different points of view.)

**Personal Response**

13. Julian strikes Ethan and others on the bus as weird because he is different. How do you view classmates who are different? How do you act toward them?

14. Ethan asks the others, “If you could live one day of your life all over again, what day would it be?” How would you answer?

**Cross-Curricular Activities**

**Thinking Skills: An Academic Bowl**

Challenge students to create an Academic Bowl competition for your class or grade. Provide the reproducible forms on page 15 and have students work with partners to write questions. Use questions from the book as models. Invite students to help you create the rules for the competition. You may wish to ask families or other students to attend your Academic Bowl.

**Social Studies: Faces and Places**

After passing out the reproducible map on page 16, you might assign students to learn more about the people and events associated with Ethan’s question on Seneca Falls, Homer, Rochester, and Auburn.

**Language Arts: A Lesson in Acronyms**

Remind students that Julian answers a question about acronyms (words formed from the initial letters of a series of words). Divide the class into two teams and have them compete to find as many acronyms as they can within a given time period. Students must be able to tell what each letter in an acronym stands for. Post the teams’ lists and review each acronym. Students may be surprised at the number of words they use that are really acronyms.

**Teacher Tip**

Because of the structure of this book, some students may have difficulty following the story while others may miss some of the many connections on a first reading. Encourage students to go back and reread passages or the whole book.
WHAT HAPPENS
Margaret and Izzy come to New York to see the play in which Ginger is starring. They stay at Sillington House as its first guests. Mrs. Olinski goes to tea there and meets Mr. Singh; she is impressed with the atmosphere and with The Souls who are also having tea. In class, Mrs. Olinski has to discipline Ham Knapp and Jared Lord. In the Academic Bowl, Julian defies an official by insisting that “tip” is an acronym for “To insure promptness.” The Souls win the regionals and move on to the finals in Albany. They win. Back at Sillington House, Mrs. Olinski realizes why she chose the members of the team; like herself, they were all on a journey—for kindness, excellence, self-knowledge.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT
COMPREHENSION AND RECALL
1. How do Ham and Jared show their small-mindedness when The Souls are winning? (They belch in class.)
2. How does Mr. Fairbain “meet his Waterloo?” (He mispronounces “Geronimo,” then assumes that Julian is a Native American; he says “taxpayers are very proud” when asked how the trip to Albany will be financed.)
3. How do the residents of Century Village help the team? (They make and sell T-shirts to pay for gas so the buses can take people to Albany.)

HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS
4. How do you think Mrs. Olinski knows that Ham Knapp causes trouble at the play? (She can probably tell from his expression.)
5. Why do Nadia and the others on the team stick out their legs and arms when Ham returns to his seat? (They are like Julian’s trick monkey who can balance on any limb. They are showing their support of Mrs. Olinski.)
6. Why do the sixth graders pin rope on their shirts when The Souls beat Knightsbridge? (They are hanging the Knightsbridge team symbolically—a reference to Mr. LeDue’s remark to Mrs. Olinski.)
7. What does Mr. Singh mean by, “Every voyage begins when you do”? (A voyage begins when you start to experience and understand it.)
8. What reason does Mr. Singh give for Mrs. Olinski's selection of the team? *(They have all, including Mrs. Olinski, been on a journey—searching for something; coming to terms with what they encountered.)*

9. What does the title refer to? *(It refers to the attitude The Souls develop at their Saturday teas.)*

**Literary Elements**

10. **Characterization:** How does the author show that Julian is very determined? *(He refuses to accept the officials' ruling on the acronym “tip.”)*

**Personal Response**


12. Which character did you like the best? Why?

**Cross-Curricular Activities**

**Language Arts: Sensational Similes**

Draw students’ attention to the author's use of similes and metaphors. You might use these examples:

- “His smile was as genuine as a Xeroxed signature.”
- “…the Epiphany sixth graders stood like caryatids”
- “…the ink as black as Hecate’s soul”

Point out that the author has used challenging references almost as if she’s daring readers to be as well-informed as the members of the Epiphany team. After discussing these and other similes and metaphors from *The View from Saturday*, ask students to write examples of their own.

**Civics: A Code of Behavior**

Threaded through this book is the theme of respect for other people. Review with the class how various characters act toward one another in the story. Then work with students to develop a code of conduct for your classroom. Post the completed code where everyone can see it and remind students that it applies to their behavior outside the room as well.

**Teacher Tip**

This book includes some humorous scenes. Draw students’ attention to the play on words using the Roman numeral II in Chapter 7, then ask them to cite other examples of humor.
Summarizing the Book

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
Use one or more of the following activities to help students summarize and review *The View from Saturday*.

CLASS PROJECT: *Tea Time*
Suggest that students hold a class tea party to discuss the story. Begin by reviewing the passages in the book which describe the teas at Sillington House. You might want to point out that India, the homeland of Mr. Singh, is a major tea producer, and the custom of afternoon tea is very popular in England where Julian attended school. Then have students plan a menu and program for their own tea party. If students choose to invite guests—family members or another class—they might send invitations in clue form as Julian does for his first tea party. Guide students in selecting questions to discuss. It may be necessary for students to give brief summaries to guests beforehand.

PARTNER PROJECT: *Reviewing Relationships*
Have students work with partners to create diagrams showing how the various characters in *The View from Saturday* are related. Students might use different colors to indicate blood relatives from other kinds of relationships. Be sure students include labels and a title on their diagrams.

PARTNER PROJECT: *Reasons for Reading*
Tell students that *The View from Saturday* won the Newbery Medal, E. L. Konigsburg’s third such award. (She also won it for *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler; Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth*, was a Newbery Honor Book.) Ask students to work with a partner and draw up a list of at least 10 reasons *The View from Saturday* is a winner. Have each team present its reasons to the class.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT: *An Epiphany*
Remind students that the name of the town and school attended by The Souls is Epiphany. Ask if students know what this word means. (a sudden revelation) Do students think the author chose this name for a reason? What revelations do the characters in this book have? Have students write an essay explaining their ideas. Invite them to share their work when finished.
**EVALUATION IDEAS**

Ask students to think of a set of rubrics to use in assessing one of the summarizing projects. For example, a rubric for the relationship diagrams might include these objectives:

- Did the students include all the major relationships in the book?
- Is the diagram well-organized and easy to read?
- Are the labels clear?
- Did the students include a good title?

**Possible Answers for Worksheets**

**page 14:**

1. ...she does it on instinct. ...Mr. Singh helps her see that each of the team members has been on a journey of self-discovery in the same way that she has, and that they are all committed to excellence, kindness, and decency.

2. ...he hasn’t thought about what he got out of the visit. ...he begins to appreciate the people he met and how he was able to help them.

3. ...she thinks Margaret is responsible for her parents’ divorce. ...she makes her grandfather happy and shows how people can make a difference with her turtle work.

4. ...he is different. ...he realizes that Julian is vulnerable and the others will try to hurt him.

5. ...he is on to the dirty trick. ...he wants Ham to know that he didn’t get away with anything.

**page 15:** Students’ questions will vary.

**page 16:**

1. It’s the state capital.
2. Check to be sure students circle the Finger Lakes region.
3. Possible: Otisco, Owasco, Honeoye, Canadice, Hemlock, Conesus
4. east
5. It is part of an answer to a question that Ethan has: Elizabeth Cady Stanton led a group of women to the polls there in 1872 to test their right to vote. Ethan’s grandmother was in the group.
6. southeast
Name: __________________________________________

Changes

In a good book, the characters grow and change. They also learn things about themselves. Complete each sentence in the chart below to show some changes in the characters in *The View from Saturday*.

1. Mrs. Olinski doesn’t know why she chooses the members of the team because ______________________

   __________________________________________

2. Noah resists writing a B & B note because ______________________

   __________________________________________

3. Nadia resents Margaret because ______________________

   __________________________________________

4. Ethan doesn’t want to associate with Julian because ______________________

   __________________________________________

5. Julian is tempted to let Arnold eat the drugged doggie treats because ______________________

   __________________________________________
An Academic Bowl

Write three questions that your class might use in an Academic Bowl. Tell what subject area each question is in. Be sure to write the answers, too.

1. Category: ______________________________________________________
   Question: _____________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Category: ______________________________________________________
   Question: _____________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. Category: ______________________________________________________
   Question: _____________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   Answer: _________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
It Happened Here

Much of *The View from Saturday* takes place in New York State. Study the map, then answer the questions. You may also need to do some research.

1. The Academic Bowl finals are held in Albany. Why are they held in that city?

2. Epiphany is in the Finger Lakes region. Circle this region on the map.

3. Only five of the Finger Lakes are labeled on this map. Name two others.

4. In what direction do The Souls travel to compete in Albany?

5. Find Rochester on the map. Why is this place important in the story?

6. Tillie Nachman is a former New York City person. In what part of the state is the city?