

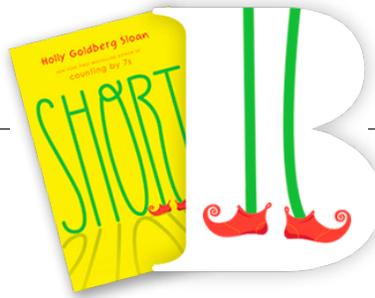
Short

by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Short can be read aloud to young readers over time or read independently by older kids leading up to a group discussion. A conversation about the value of diversity in children’s literature and the need to read books that are both “windows” and “mirrors” would be a great introduction to reading this book. Check out this short [TedX Talk](#) by Grace Lin, which also has a nice tie-in to *The Wizard of Oz*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe Julia. Name at least three qualities she displays. Would you want to hang out with Julia? Why or why not?
2. Who are Julia’s role models? Why is it important for kids to have role models? Who is your role model? Why?
3. Julia almost quit the play when she got nervous about being a lead dancer. What does Olive do to keep her in the show? Have you ever wanted to quit an activity? What motivated you to stick with it?
4. Julia often goes on funny rants about idioms that adults use. Name examples from the book or think of [idioms](#) that you hear adults say that don’t make sense to you.
5. Julia is praised for taking initiative during the play. How do you define *initiative*? Do you agree with Shawn that it is more important than talent, luck, or good looks? Discuss a time when you took initiative and how it felt.
6. Several characters in the story must deal with the assumptions that people make based on how they look. What do you think it’s like to be Olive? What did Julia assume about Mrs. Chang? Have you ever made an incorrect assumption about someone else that you later corrected, or felt like people made an incorrect assumption about you?
7. Shawn Barr explains that “artists are observers.” This challenges what Julia has always thought an artist is. How are you an artist? What does Shawn say is the purpose of theater? Do you agree? What do you think is the purpose of art?
8. Why is Julia upset when she finds out she is just slow to grow and will probably not be short forever? Why does she want to be “short”?
9. Discuss how Julia, Randy, and Shawn each handle the review of the play after opening night. Talk about a time that you had to react to negative criticism. What can you learn from Shawn and Randy’s reactions?
10. At the beginning of the story, Julia sees herself as plain and ordinary except for being really short. What does Julia learn about herself during her summer as a Munchkin that makes her unique? What qualities or skills make you unique?



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A FEW MORE JUST FOR FUN:

1. Julia comes up with a slogan that she would put on a business card – “*Marks Hits Her Marks.*” What would your personal slogan be?
2. Julia talks about words that sound yucky like “crotch” and “mucus.” What are examples of yucky words for you?
3. Julia wonders how many adults really like their jobs and fantasizes about a future career where she could eat apricots, walk a dog, and lay in the grass and daydream. What is your fantasy career?
4. Shawn Barr teaches the Munchkins about the value of body movement in acting. What does your body movement say about you? Does how you move change based on your mood? Walk across the room expressing different emotions and see if someone can guess your mood.