

Sophie Simon Solves Them All

AUTHOR: Lisa Graff

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GENRE: Fiction

LEXILE: 680L

SUMMARY: Sophie Simon is extremely smart. She enjoys learning about topics “normal” third-graders don’t, including calculus, civil disobedience, and reverse psychology. And, she has no desire to make or have friends, despite her parents’ constant efforts to make her a “well-adjusted” child like everyone else. When her classmates present her with a series of problems, Sophie uses her intelligence to come up with a plan to help them and learns that friends aren’t such a bad thing to have around.

BOOKTALK: Sophie Simon is extremely smart for a third grader. She actually enjoys learning about calculus and reads high school and college textbooks for fun! She also doesn’t see the need to have friends, even though her parents constantly try to get her to be like all the other kids. A few of Sophie’s classmates have some problems that they feel can only be solved with Sophie’s help. Will she be able to help them come up with solutions? Will Sophie learn the value of friendship? Will she ever be the “well-adjusted” or “normal” kid her parents want her to be?

AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Author’s Name: Lisa Graff

Author’s Website: www.lisagraff.com

Other books written by the author:

A Tangle of Knots

Double Dog Dare

Umbrella Summer

The Thing About Georgie

The Life and Crimes of Bernetta Wallflower

CHALLENGING WORDS

blouse, p. 3--a lightweight, loose-fitting shirt that looks a little dressy

dismantle, p. 4--to take apart

well-adjusted, p. 5--someone who fits in with everyone else

concerto, p. 6--a piece of music (a composition) played by an orchestra

temples, p. 6--the side of a person’s forehead, on the outside of his eyes

topographic map, p. 8--a map that shows the height or elevation of Earth’s surface

authority, p. 26--the people who are in charge or in control

squeegee, p. 29--a tool with a handle and a rubber edge that is used to wipe the

liquid off of a surface

petrified, p. 38--extremely afraid

extravaganza, p. 38--a lavish, over-the-top, spectacular event

piranhas, p. 40--flesh-eating fish with large sharp teeth, may attack humans and animals in the water

queasy, p. 63--feeling like you are going to throw up

resignation, p. 68--telling someone you are going to quit or give up a position or a job

taffy, p. 81--a soft and chewy candy

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Sophie does some things that are different from other kids in third grade and that her parents and classmates don't understand. Julia's father wants her to be a mathematician instead of a journalist. Owen's mom throws a party for him with lots of things he doesn't like at all. What is something that others misunderstand or don't get about you?
2. Mr. St. Cloud has MANY rules in his classroom in an attempt to prevent the students from doing things that annoy him. If you could make up a list of rules like his, what would be your top 5 rules?
3. Each of the major characters in this story has a problem that he/she needs help solving. What are some problems that you wish you had someone to help you solve?
4. At the beginning of the story, Sophie doesn't really have any friends. What are some of the reasons she doesn't have friends? Be sure to think of her words, thoughts, actions, etc. (4.RL.1, 5.RL.1, 6.RL.1)
5. Sophie doesn't have friends at the beginning of the book. What would your life be like without friends?
6. Every story has a message about life that the author tries to share with his/her audience. What is the theme of this book? Use evidence from the story to support your answer. (4.RL.2, 5.RL.2, 6.RL.2)

ACTIVITIES with COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Language Arts

- Friends Are NOT Important (4.W.1, 5.W.1, 6.W.1)--Explain why friends are NOT important. Describe your argument in the form of a Facebook post, an article for the school newspaper, or a note to your best friend. For a greater challenge, write your argument in the form of a Tweet, using less than 140 characters.
- Sophie's Character (4.RL.3)--Describe Sophie's character (personality) by making a character scrapbook. Be sure to support your inferences with details from the story. (This website describes a great way to make a Character Scrapbook: [Creative Educator Character Scrapbook](#).)
- Friendship (5.RL.9)--Compare and contrast "friendship" in *Sophie Simon Solves Them All* with "friendship" in another Young Hoosier book, such as *The Second Life of Abigail Walker* or *Summer of the Gypsy Moths*. Use a graphic

organizer to record your ideas. Then, write a multi-paragraph paper to explain how friendship is similar and different in these two stories.

- Sophie Simon, The Television Show (6.RL.3)--Working in a small group, break the plot of the story down into a series of TV episodes, divided logically based on the events of the story. To present your work, make a visual representation of the set and write a script for each episode. (The work for this can be divided up among the members of your group.) In your final episode, be sure to include how Sophie changed throughout the story, describing how she is different at the end of the book from how she was at the beginning.

LIFE SKILLS:

friendship
acceptance
helping others

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

[Lisa Graff's website](#) This site has many great things associated with the book, including a book trailer on TeacherTube and information about making taffy (including a video).

[Sophie Simon booklet](#) This is a comprehension activity for the book. It is shared on the "[Math is Elementary](#)" blog.

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:

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