Real Friends
Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham

GENRE: Graphic Novel Memoir (fictionalized)
LEXILE: 290 (Guided Reading Level S, per Scholastic)

RELEVANT WEBSITES:
Shannon Hale's Site
GoodReads Link
Book Trailer
Event Kit and Activities created by Macmillan
Book Website for Kids
Author Interview

BOOK SUMMARY: Shannon learns to navigate friendship in elementary school. Best friends in kindergarten aren’t always best friends in third grade. Sometimes, even really tight cliques can shift into new patterns over the years. Shannon deals with a mean girl, Jenny, an angry older sister, Wendy, and counting the bricks on the wall on the way to the lunchroom (if she doesn’t, she feels yucky). The imaginative stories she writes help her to deal with the issues around her giving her support and hope that things will improve.

BOOKTALK: “Believe me, I know,” says Shannon’s older sister, Wendy. “Friends. Can’t live with ‘em, can’t live without ‘em.” Have you ever felt that way? Like you love your friends; but, MAN, they’re bossy! Or maybe you find YOURSELF being the bossy one! Shannon’s figuring out how to make friends, to keep friends, and to be a new kind of popular—the friendly kind. Read Real Friends by Shannon Hale and LeUyen Pham to find out. Can you be popular AND friendly? Can a friend who ditched you in fourth grade come back in fifth grade? And what makes a big sister so mean anyway?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. In the Zara and Veronica chapter, Shannon gets her freedom from the group. How would you describe how she felt?
2. Did Shannon do the right thing to break free from the group? Why do you think so?
3. Do you think Shannon Hale is very honest about herself in this memoir? Why or why not?
4. What seemed true to life to you about the character Shannon?
5. Describe a time when you and a good friend went through a difficult time. How did it make you feel? Did it get better?

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS, YOU MIGHT ALSO ENJOY:
1. Princess Academy by Shannon Hale
2. Smile by Raina Telgemeier
3. The Baby-sitters Club series (graphic novels)
4. Awkward by Svetlana Chmakova

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY: Elizabeth Finney/Computer Lab Instructional Assistant/Smoky Row Elementary School, Carmel, IN