



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P!

Alex Gino (Author)

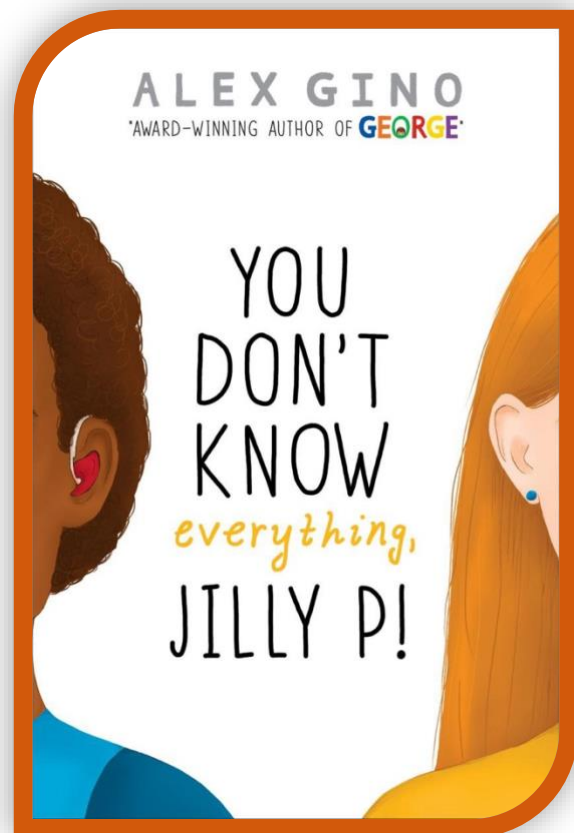
Jilly thinks she's figured out how life works. But when her sister, Emma, is born deaf, she realizes how much she still has to learn. The world is going to treat Jilly, who is white and hearing, differently from Emma, just as it will treat them both differently from their cousins who are Black. A big fantasy reader, Jilly makes a connection online with another fantasy fan, Derek, who is Deaf, Black and an ASL user. She goes to Derek for help with Emma. Jilly makes some mistakes...but comes to understand that it's up to her, not Derek, to figure out how to do better next time. Within a world where kids like Derek and Emma aren't assured the same freedom or safety as kids like Jilly, Jilly is starting to learn all the things she doesn't know—and by doing that, she's also working to discover how to support her family and her friends.

ISBN: 978-05459562537

Publisher: Scholastic Press

Year Published: 2020

Age Range: 8–12



Book Themes

People, Identity and Culture, Race and Racism, People with Disabilities, Privilege, Friendship

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with students prior to reading the book and remind them of the meanings as they come up in the book. See also ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).

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|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| ■ American Sign Language (ASL) | ■ deaf | ■ modesty |
| ■ amplified | ■ defeated | ■ nervous |
| ■ asylum | ■ drought | ■ oblivious |
| ■ audiologist | ■ feisty | ■ oralism |
| ■ candidate | ■ intense | ■ patented |
| ■ clever | ■ interpreter | ■ precious |
| ■ cochlear implant | ■ invaluable | ■ racism |
| ■ complicated | ■ judge | ■ subtle |
| ■ condescending | ■ milestone | ■ vigil |

Discussion Questions

If the students read the book in small groups or as a whole class, ask discussion questions throughout their reading in order to check comprehension and engage them on a deeper level. Some of these questions can also be used as writing prompts. When students have finished the book, choose from these questions to guide a group discussion.

- What is the book about?
- What is Jilly like at the beginning of the book? How does she change? What causes her to change? What do you think is the author's message about her character?
- When you first meet Derek, what do you learn about him? How does your impression of Derek change throughout the book?
- What do you learn about the relationship between Jilly and Derek from their interactions in the De La Court chat room?
- What are your thoughts about the chats in De La Court? Have you had experiences like that?
- What does Jilly think and feel when she finds out her baby sister is deaf? How do her parents react?
- Why does Jilly want to talk with Derek about her sister being deaf? What is his reaction?
- When people ask Derek what it's like to be deaf, why do you think he asks them what it's like to be hearing?
- What happens when Jilly and her family bring Emma to the audiologist? What reactions do different family members have, and why?
- Where does the family agree about what to do, and where do they disagree (in relation to the cochlear implant, whether they encourage/discourage signing, what it means to be "part of the hearing world," etc.) What do you think your opinion would be if you were in this situation?
- Why does Jilly decide to teach herself American Sign Language (ASL)? How does she learn?

- What happens when Aunt Alicia learns about the police shooting of a Black 13-year-old boy named James Dupree? What is her and Jilly's conversation about it like? How does Jilly feel? How does Aunt Alicia feel?
- Why does Alicia encourage Jilly to talk with her parents about the shooting? What happens when Jilly talks with her parents about it?
- When Jilly thinks to herself, "If Justin and Jamila (her cousins) aren't safe because they're Black, does that mean that Emma and I are safe because we're white?" How do you relate to this? Have you ever thought about this before?
- What happens at Thanksgiving dinner? What comments are made about Emma being deaf? What comments are made about race and racism? How does the family respond?
- Why do you think Aunt Alicia leaves Thanksgiving dinner? What happens when Jilly tries to reach out to her afterwards?
- When Jilly and Alicia talk afterwards about racism, Alicia says, "What Mike did was on purpose. What your Gram did wasn't. It's like the difference between stepping on someone's foot by mistake and kicking them. Only one is mean, but they both hurt." What does Alicia mean? Why does she use this metaphor to describe the different comments?
- In Alicia's metaphor, how are the two comments different (on purpose, not on purpose)? How are the two comments similar (e.g., they both hurt or cause harm)? Have you ever thought about that before? Can you relate to this type of comment and if so, how?
- When Jilly talks with Derek in the private chat and he says, "hearing people are still trying to make us like them," what does he mean by this? What is Jilly's reaction?
- How does Jilly feel when Derek invites her and her family to an event for families with babies who are deaf?
- What different perspectives do Jilly and her family learn at the event? What are your thoughts about the different opinions?
- According to the book, how can a person get an ASL name? What do you think about that process?
- What happens when Jilly and her family go to their relative's house on Christmas? What does Jilly do? How are things different compared to what happened on Thanksgiving?
- What happens when Derek tells Jilly about what happened when he and his family went out to dinner and hearing people stared at them? How does Jilly respond? What assumptions does Jilly make? What does Derek tell her that makes her think again about her response?
- What happens when Jilly and her family find out that Jessica Johnson, (who is deaf and Black), who they met at the event for families of deaf children, was fatally shot by the police? What happens at the vigil? What does Jilly reflect on and learn from this?
- When Jilly asks her parents, "Why don't we talk about this stuff (race and racism) more," what is their response? Do you discuss race and racism with your family? Please explain.
- Why do you think the author decided to make the last 3 chapters: "9 months later," "3 months after that," and "3 years after that?" What did you learn by seeing what happens in later months and years?
- Why do you think the book is called *You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P!?*
- How did you feel when the book ends? What do you think will happen next? Would you have ended it differently and if so, how?
- What messages does the author communicate through the story?

Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

1. Reader's Response Writing Activities

Create more dialogue in De La Court chat room: De La Court is the chat room where kids ages 11-13 can talk about the *Magically Mysterious Vidalia* trilogy, Jilly's favorite book. De La Court is where Jilly (JillyinP) and Derek (profoundinoaktown) meet and where they spend a lot of time. Have students create a dialogue between Derek and Jilly in a private chat or create a dialogue in the main De La Court space that could include other people such as: PureGreenElvenGrl, BADisGreat, DelacourtFan413, Botswanahavefuntoo and others. Talk with students about what they already know about those characters and how they should try to convey their personalities through the dialogue in the chat. They should also decide in advance what time period it is and what they want to discuss. You can also direct students to choose a central theme of the book (e.g., deafness, race and racism, privilege) and have them construct their dialogue around that theme.

Write a book review or book talk: Have students write a book review of *You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P!* The elements of a book review should include: (1) title, author, genre and theme; (2) personal reflections about the book—how it made you feel, what you learned and your thoughts about it; (3) plot summary—describe what happened without giving away spoilers; (4) people and characters you loved, liked, disliked or different have strong opinions about; (5) a theme or message that resonated with you and why; and (6) why it is worth reading or not. Consider sharing the reviews on a class blog or use [Good Reads](#) or [Biblionasium](#) (book review website geared towards young people) for online reviews. Another idea is for students can do a "book talk" with the class in which they discuss the elements of their book review based on the categories above and can be recorded on video or done "live."

Get to know the author: Have students get to know Alex Gino, the author of *You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P.* Explain to students that they will conduct research about Alex Gino that will culminate in a project. Read aloud the "Author's Note" and "About the Author" in the back of the book. After reading, generate questions students have about Alex Gino and what more they want to know about them*, including where they grew up, their inspiration for writing the book, aspects of their identity and their relevance to the book, other books they wrote, their interests and hobbies, family life, relevant quotes, etc. Possible sources for their research can include: (1) Gino's website (www.alexgino.com/), (2) their social media posts on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (3) articles written about them and (4) other online research. The final culminating project of their research may include one of the following ideas: an extended "author bio" contact page, a timeline of Alex Gino's life including other books they have written, a video (or audio) simulated interview between the author and a journalist (one student plays the author and another plays the interviewer).

[Note: Alex Gino uses the pronouns they/them. To learn more about pronoun use, see resource below.]

2. Learn More about American Sign Language (ASL)

Ask students: *What is American Sign Language (ASL)? How is it used in the book?* Explain that **American Sign Language (ASL)** is:

"A visual language that is expressed by movements of the hands, face and body. It is the language used by people who are deaf, hard of hearing and many hearing people as well. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information. ASL is used in North America (U.S. and English-speaking

parts of Canada) and other countries have their own sign language. Like any spoken language, ASL is a language with its own unique rules of grammar and patterns.”

Discuss with students why Emma, Jilly and her family learn ASL and why it was important to communicate with Emma in this way. Ask students: *What did you learn about ASL from the book? What more do you want to know? Do you know any ASL signs and if so, how and why did you learn them? What did you learn from the book about why some deaf people use ASL and some do not?* If students are interested, they can learn some ASL. Start with Jilly's first 100 signs in the back of the book as well as books and websites including [Handspeak](#). Explain to students that while learning ASL can be interesting and fun (many young people enjoy learning signs), ASL is a legitimate and serious language for people who are deaf and should be taken as seriously as learning any language.

[Note: You can also engage students in a general discussion and provide a larger context about people with disabilities. Be sensitive and thoughtful about whether you have students with disabilities in your class, especially disabilities that may not be visible. First ask students: *What does it mean to have a disability?* Elicit and define **disability** as a mental or physical condition that restricts an individual's ability to engage in one or more major life activities (e.g., seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, communicating, sensing, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working or caring for oneself). You may choose to bring in additional resources—materials and people—to provide more information and context for students.]

3. Race and Racism

In the book, Jilly P and others face situations and share reflections on race and racism. Elicit/explain a definition of **racism** as the disrespect, harm and mistreatment of people of color based on made up ideas that white people deserve to be in charge and treated better.

If you have not talked about racism previously, here are some important things to keep in mind and to share about this definition with students:

- **People of color** includes people who are Black, Latinx, Asian and/or Native American.
- **Mistreatment, harm and disrespect** can be done on purpose by people or by groups. Sometimes harm is caused even when it's not on purpose. People can experience harm based on where they live, their experiences with police, by a doctor, by pollution in the air and water, by their experiences at school. Harm can be done on purpose by a person which can be physical, psychological or emotional. Groups and institutions (like education, police, healthcare, media) can also cause harm by not helping people of color, treating them unfairly or not allowing them to get what they need.
- **Made up ideas** refers to ideas people may have like “white people deserve better treatment” or “white people deserve to be in charge.” You may not always be aware that these thoughts or feelings exist within your community or even your mind, but they show up in different ways. Some of these ideas come from the past, like legalized slavery, segregation, voter suppression, etc. and the attitude “back in the day, people believed that...” Even though most people would say out loud that those ideas are wrong, they can still cause harm by remaining stuck or ingrained in our mind and in our world.

Ask students: *Where do we see examples of racism in the book?* Possible examples include comments made by Gram and Mike at Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner, incidents of police violence against Black people in their community, assumptions that people make about Derek.

Have students think about a time where they faced racism, either as a target, bystander or someone who engaged or participated in the racism. Explain that any of these situations can be incidents they heard about in the news, in person or in digital spaces. Ask students to turn and talk with a partner about what happened, how they felt and what they learned. If time permits, have students write (or make a video) with their reflections, responding to some or all of the following prompts:

- What happened?
- How did you feel while this was happening?
- What was your response and what was the response of others around you?
- Did anyone act as an ally?
- Describe how and how it made you (or the person being targeted) feel.
- What impact did the experience have on you?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Did the experience change you or someone else in some way, and if so, how?

[**Note:** Be sensitive and thoughtful about who are the students in your classroom. Avoid putting students of color on the spot or in the position of “representing” their racial group’s point of view. Be sure to establish ground rules that make sure that students of color are protected and safe from intentional or unintentional harmful comments.]

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and educational resources on people, identity and culture, race and racism, and people with disabilities.

Curriculum Resources

Equal Treatment, Equal Access: Raising Awareness about People with Disabilities and Their Struggle for Equal Rights, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/equal-treatment-equal-access-raising-awareness-about.

Experiences with Race and Racism, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/experiences-with-race-and-racism.

Identity-Based Bullying, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying.

Lonnie Chavis of ‘This Is Us’ Writes about Racism, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/lonnie-chavis-of-this-is-us-writes-about-racism.

The Sound of Silence in Football: Derrick Coleman, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/the-sound-of-silence-in-football-derrick-coleman.

Understanding and Challenging Ableism, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/understanding-and-challenging-ableism.

Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

Disability Glossary

www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/disability-glossary

Disability related terms and definitions used in association with ADL's anti-bias programs and resources.

Let's Get It Right: Using Correct Pronouns and Names

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/lets-get-it-right-using-correct-pronouns-and-names

An educator resource about using accurate pronouns and names to convey understanding and respect for all people, especially for those who are transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary.

Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about

As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

[Ability, Disability & Ableism](#)

[Race and Racism](#)