

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

## PIPPA PARK RAISES HER GAME

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Pippa Park, a Korean American, lives with her older sister, Mina, and brother-in-law, Jung-Hwa. An outstanding basketball player at the local middle school, Pippa receives a mysterious scholarship to Lakeview Private. She isn't sure how this happened but suspects that Eliot Haverford, her math tutor and a student at Lakeview, might be responsible. When she is initiated into the Royals, a clique that rules the school, Pippa finds herself caught between two worlds. She dismisses her closest friend and carefully follows the Rules of Cool. She manages to keep her home life private until the school "mean girl" captures a photograph of her working in her sister's laundromat. The picture is posted to the school blog along with a brief article that reveals the "real" Pippa Park who must come to terms with her place at Lakeview, within her family, and among her new and old friends.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erin Yun grew up in Frisco, Texas, and used to play basketball as a middle grader. She received her BFA in English from New York University and served as president of its policy debate team. Erin is a member of the SCBWI and has written reviews and articles for BookBrowse. She currently lives in New York City. This is her first children's book.



Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-944020-26-2  
\$15.99 • Page count: 288 pages  
Available as an ebook

Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, visit [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org).

### ★ PRE-READING ACTIVITY

■ Discuss the idiom "a fish out of water." Then ask students to write a short paper that discusses a time they have felt like "a fish out of water." Perhaps it was when they attended a new school, a party where the people were mostly strangers, or a summer camp with mostly strangers. Have students write a concluding paragraph that describes what they did to adjust to the situation.

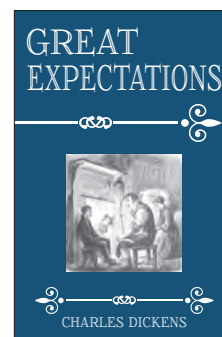
CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3.

■ Tell the class that *Pippa Park Raises Her Game* is a reimaged version of the Charles Dickens

classic *Great Expectations*. Ask students to locate and read a summary of the Dickens novel. <https://englishsummary.com/summary-great-expectations-charles-1/>. Then read aloud the first chapter from *Pippa Park Raises Her Game*. Ask students to write

a one-page paper that compares the opening scene of the two novels.

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3.



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## ★ CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

■ Define family. Explain why Pippa's mother had to return to Korea. How are Mina and Jung-Hwa realizing their American dream? Discuss how Pippa's family situation is similar to that of new Americans throughout our nation. How are many of them separated from their loved ones because of immigration laws? Discuss why it's important to celebrate all types of families.

■ Pippa isn't an orphan, but at times she feels like one. Describe Pippa's relationship with Mina, her older sister. Why is Mina so tough on Pippa? Discuss whether Mina resents taking care of Pippa. How is Jung-Hwa, Mina's husband, a father figure to Pippa? How does he make Pippa feel better after she has suffered Mina's wrath?

■ Pippa is playing basketball at a court near Grey Woods when she sees a hooded figure. He says, "If anyone asks, I was never here, okay?" (p. 7) How does this man make the woods seem ominous? Pippa also spots a suspicious SUV. Explain how this adds an element of mystery and intrigue. How does the mystery grow deeper when she sees the SUV at Eliot's house?

■ Describe Eliot's family. How does Mr. Haverford put pressure on Eliot? Debate whether this contributes to Eliot's arrogance and rudeness. Describe Matthew's relationship with his dad. How do the brothers suffer because of their family's dark past?

■ Pippa receives a scholarship to Lakeview Private. She and Mina tour the school. Explain Mina's sarcasm when she says, "Relax. It's just a tour. Not even you could mess this up." At what other times in the novel does Mina use sarcasm when dealing with Pippa?



■ Contrast Lakeview with Victoria Middle School. The bell system at Lakeview plays classical music. What does this reveal about the school? What might Pippa say is the biggest difference between the schools?

■ Describe the cliques at Lakeview. Who are the Royals? Explain why Olive is so anxious for Pippa to be accepted by the Royals. How do the other kids treat Pippa once she starts eating lunch with the Royals? How does Divya describe each of the Royals? Why is Divya reluctant to accept Pippa? Explain Divya's warning, "Bianca likes new things, but she gets bored fast." (p. 108) How is Helen the most genuinely nice Royal?

■ Pippa says, "At Lakeview I could be anyone, as long as they didn't find out the total truth about me." (p. 70) What doesn't she want the kids at Lakeview to know about her? How does she take precaution to keep her home life private? What does Pippa think would happen if the girls found out the truth about her? How does trying to fit in cause Pippa to lose her sense of self? Why is she ashamed of her family and the way they live? At the end of the novel, Pippa invites the team to her apartment. What is significant about this gesture?

■ Pippa is an excellent basketball player, and she was a star on the team at Victoria Middle. Explain why she doesn't tell the team where she had gone to school. Why is the coach concerned about Pippa's team loyalty?



■ Olive Giordana is the student ambassador that shows Pippa around the school. Discuss the duties of an ambassador. How does Olive violate her duties? How does Olive's desire to be popular affect her judgment? Explain how Pippa learns that Olive is Throwaway? What is zero tolerance? Define cyberbullying. How is Olive appropriately disciplined for cyberbullying?

■ What is Pippa's reaction when she meets Evelyn, Eliot's great-aunt? Pippa had heard the stories of the Haverford family tragedy. How does meeting Evelyn make the tragedy seem as if it had just happened? Explain Evelyn's dress. How is she living in the past?

■ Why does Pippa think that Eliot's family life is more messed up than hers? How does knowing about his family make her better understand Eliot? Explain what Eliot means when he says that "his father acts like a headmaster whether at school or home." At what point does Mr. Haverford gain the courage to stand up to Aunt Evelyn?

■ Explain what Matthew means when he says, "Both of us know what it's like to have our family discourage our passions." (p.175) The mood in the Haverford home is dark and gloomy. How does this change after Pippa helps Matthew? How do Mina's father and Matthew's father grow to understand that following one's passion is important?

■ Discuss what Jung-Hwa means when he says, "The lower you fall, the more room you have to rise." (p. 233) What is Pippa's lowest point? How do you know that she is about to rise?

CCSS: Reading Literature: Key Ideas & Details RL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3; Craft & Structure RL. 4-7.4, 4-7.6; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 4-7.1; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3; Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 4-7.5.

## ★ COMPARISON TO GREAT EXPECTATIONS

■ *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, is set in nineteenth-century England and is commonly taught in ninth grade. Students sometimes voice trouble in understanding the vernacular of the book. But the

themes are timeless and universal. A reimagined telling of the story, like *Pippa Park Raises Her Game*, may help middle school students connect to the Dickens novel when they do read and study it. Students may wish to gain a better understanding of *Great Expectations* by watching the following movies:

An animated version of the novel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWL29H4QvUk>

1945 full film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgdBJkiXpOc>



■ Consider the following quote from Pip in *Great Expectations*: "We were equals afterwards, as we had been before; but, afterwards at quiet times when I sat looking at Joe and thinking about him, I had a new sensation of feeling conscious that I was looking up to Joe in my heart." Joe is a kind and caring character in *Great Expectations*. Compare Jung-Hwa to Joe. How does Pippa look up to Jung-Hwa in her heart? How does his kindness make Pippa ashamed of her actions?

■ Think about all that has happened to Pippa. Then consider the following quote from *Great Expectations*: "And it was not until I began to think, that I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces." What is the metaphorical ship that Pippa sails? At what point does Pippa realize "how wrecked" her life is? How does she turn her life around once she begins "thinking"?



■ In *Great Expectations*, Pip becomes obsessed with becoming a gentleman. Compare his desire to elevate his social standing to Pippa's desire to fit in at Lakeview.

■ What is an antagonist? Who are the antagonists in *Pippa Park Raises Her Game* and *Great Expectations*? What is the role of the antagonist in helping Pippa and Pip change how they live their lives?

CCSS: Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RL. 5-7.9; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3.

## ★ CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

■ Pippa's family celebrates Chuseok: Korean Thanksgiving Day. Ask students to find out the traditions associated with this holiday (<https://asiasociety.org/korea/chuseok-korean-thanksgiving-day>). Mina and Jung-Hwa encouraged Pippa to ask her new friends to celebrate with them. This was before the new Pippa. Consider the celebration the next year. Make an invitation that Pippa might send to each of her friends. Describe the holiday and provide the menu. Think of a unique gift that she may present to each of them.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4, W. 5-7.6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-7.7, W. 5-8.9; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.

■ Ask students to write a short paper that discusses Pippa's "great expectations" when she enters Lakeview Private. Have students include a concluding paragraph that expresses whether her expectations were met.

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.



■ Explain the following metaphor: "It was as though the violin was telling a tragic love story, and Green Hoodie was its translator." (p. 173) What is the love story the violin is telling? How can music be a translator for emotions and mood? Find other examples of metaphor in the novel.



CCSS: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 5-8.5.

■ Pippa buys a copy of the magazine *Tween Things* and reads about the Rules of Cool. Cool Rule #3: Cool Takes Courage. Write an acrostic poem from Pippa's point of view using COURAGE as the spine word.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4.

■ Pippa and Mina have a contentious relationship. Write a letter that Pippa might write to an advice columnist, asking about the best way to deal with Mina. Instruct students to exchange letters. Then have them answer the letter written by a fellow student.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4; W. 5-7.5; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.

■ Write an essay that applies the following quote from *Great Expectations* to Pippa Park's life: "I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape." Make reference to specific passages or use direct quotes to support your thoughts.

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.

■ Pippa's best friend at Victoria Middle is Buddy Johnson. Think about how she betrays him. Then write a letter of apology that she might send to Buddy. Include an explanation for her behavior.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4, W. 5-7.6; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.

## ★ VOCABULARY/USE OF LANGUAGE

■ Most schools and school districts have policies about bullying. Some of these policies include cyberbullying. Read the warning signs for parents about cyberbullying on the following website: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/prevention/index.html>. Then divide the class into small groups and ask them to develop appropriate points for students. Ask the administration to consider posting these points on the school website.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4, W. 5-7.6; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.

■ Write an article for the Lakeview Private newspaper that Pippa might write at the end of the novel. Borrow Olive's title: "Just Who Is Pippa Park?"

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.3; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3.



■ Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them by taking clues from context. Such words may include: *intimidating* (p. 3), *suppressing* (p. 7), *abysmal* (p. 16), *contiguous* (p. 26), *renegade* (p. 29), *immaculate* (p. 69), *averted* (p. 102), *adrenaline* (p. 107), *constrict* (p. 129), *claustrophobic* (p. 171), *imperious* (p. 179), *cursorly* (p. 203), *inconspicuous* (p. 203), *genial* (p. 204), *presumptuous* (p. 236), and *extenuating* (p. 242).

CCSS: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 4-7.4.

*The discussion questions and activities in this guide were written by Pat Scales, children's literature consultant and retired school librarian.*

# ★ ACTIVITY FOR PIPPA PARK RAISES HER GAME

What is each *Great Expectations* character's counterpart in *Pippa Park Raises Her Game*? List the characters side by side and apply two adjectives that best describe each of them.



<i>Great Expectations</i>	<i>Pippa Park Raises Her Game</i>
Character: Pip Adjectives: ambitious, selfish	Character: Pippa Adjectives: spirited, determined
Character: Adjectives:	Character: Adjectives:
Character: Adjectives:	Character: Adjectives:
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CCSS: Reading Literature: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RL. 5-7.9; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3.

