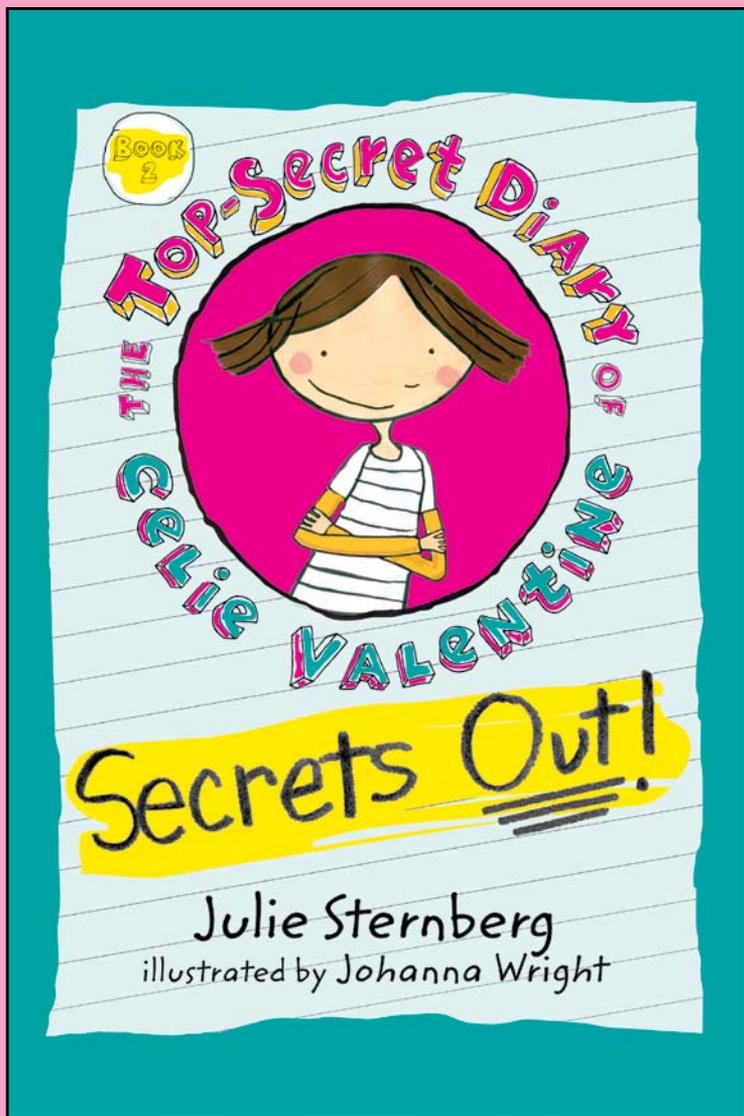


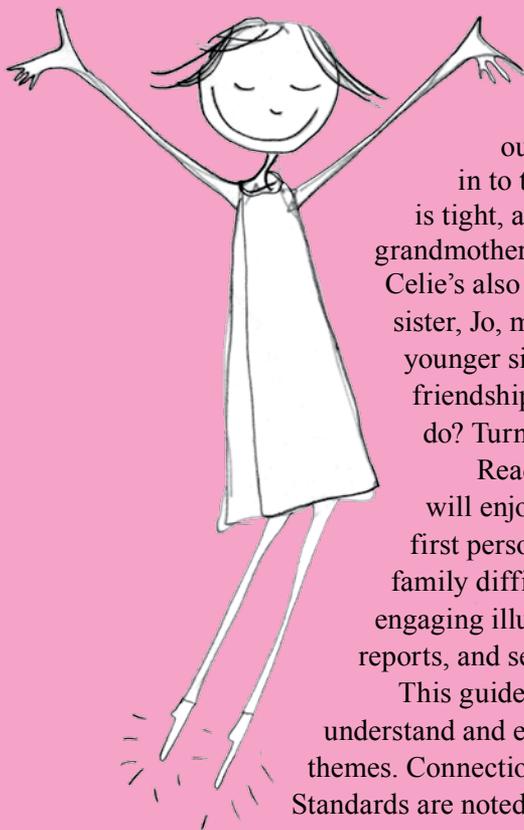
# Educator's Guide



 BOYDS MILLS PRESS

Highlights

## About the Book



Celie Valentine is back, and she's still trying to figure things out. Her grandmother has moved in to the family's apartment, so space is tight, and Celie's worried because her grandmother's memory isn't what it used to be. Celie's also a little anxious because her big sister, Jo, might have a boyfriend—and *his* younger sister is causing Celie some big time friendship troubles. What's a 10-year-old to do? Turn to her journal, of course.

Readers from grades 3 through 6 will enjoy Celie's lively and entertaining first person account of her friendship and family difficulties. Her journal is filled with engaging illustrations, humorous taped-in spy reports, and secret class notes.

This guide is designed to help students understand and examine the book's characters and themes. Connections to the Common Core State Standards are noted with each activity.

## Pre-Reading Activity

Celie's grandmother bought her a new journal when Celie filled all the pages in her last one. A letter from her grandmother is taped to the first page. Her grandmother writes, "How nice that the moments you describe in here will be forever available to you in these pages." What does Celie's grandmother mean by that?

## Discussion Questions

- On the first line of her new journal (page 8), Celie writes that she is going to stop being so worried about her grandmother. Why is Celie worried? Why does Celie decide she can stop worrying? **[RL 3.1]**
- Celie likes to draw, just like her grandmother. How does Celie draw her feelings? How does her grandmother inspire her drawing? **[RL 3.7]**
- Celie's best friend, Lula, is also friends with Violet. How does Celie feel about Violet? **[RL 3.1]**

• Jo is Celie’s 12-year-old sister. When Jo loses her phone at school, Celie can’t help but remind her sister about the family’s rules for phone use. When both Celie’s mom and Jo start to lose their patience with Celie, Celie’s grandmother invites Celie to come sit with her. Her grandmother has been sketching. What did she draw? Why do you think she didn’t want to show it to Celie? **[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

• When Celie comes back from Lula’s house, she has a lot of things to write about in her journal. How does Celie get along with Violet? **[RL 3.1]**

• Celie writes in her journal, “. . . ever since Jo finally got rid of her evil former best friend, Trina, it’s been nice talking to Jo about friend meanness” (page 36). But when Celie starts telling Jo about Lula’s house, what does Jo do? How does this make Celie feel?

**[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

• On page 40, Celie writes, “I’ll be as sneaky as a ninja warrior.” What is she planning to do? What does she find out about her sister? How does her top-secret, under-the-bed spy mission go? **[RL 3.1]**

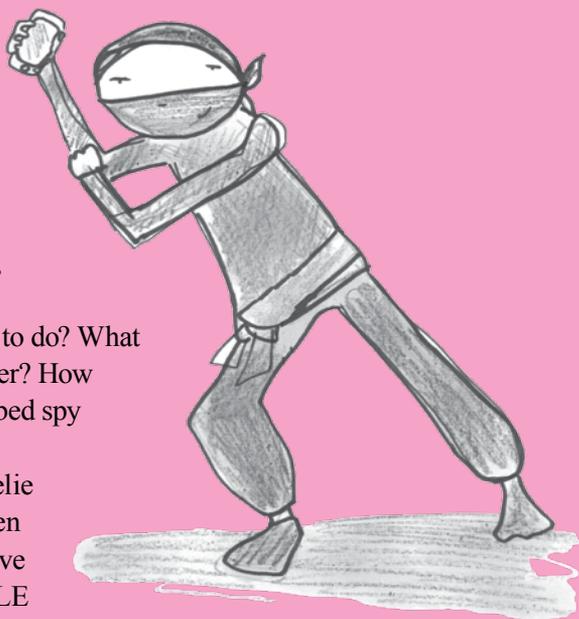
• Who is Jake? Who is Celie talking about on page 48, when she writes, “Why does she have to be ALL OVER MY WHOLE LIFE now?” **[RL 3.1]**

• Lula and Violet pass notes to each other throughout math class, making Celie feel left out and miserable. What does Celie do at the end of class? What does she find out? How does she feel about her discovery—and the way she made the discovery? **[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

• Even though Celie is upset about Lula and Violet, she writes, “I don’t have space in my brain and heart to think about Lula and Violet anymore” (page 66). What is upsetting Celie so much that she puts aside her friendship struggles? What does her family talk about in their family meeting? **[RL 3.1]**

• Look at the pictures on page 73. Why does Celie draw each of those things? What is special about these pictures? **[RL 3.1 and 3.7]**

• At school drop-off, Celie, Jo, and their mom wind up next to Violet and Jake. Then Lula walks in with her dad. After an awkward conversation between Celie’s





mom and Lula's dad, what happens? Do things between Celie and Lula get better or worse? **[RL 3.1]**

- After a rotten day at school, Celie heads home in a bad mood. Her mom suggests that she bake with her Grandma. They decide to bake brownies together and Celie starts to feel better. But Celie's grandmother starts to act forgetful. What happens next? How does Celie handle it? **[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

- The next day at school, Celie decides that she can't deal with friend trouble and family trouble at the same time. What does she do to make peace with Lula? What does Lula promise Celie? **[RL 3.1]**

- After Celie's mom talks on the phone with Violet's mom, she comes into Jo and Celie's room and closes the door. Celie writes in her

diary, "[I] wished I could RUN" (page 119). Why does Celie want to run? How do you think Celie feels? How about her mom? **[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

- Why does Celie think Lula told her secret? What does Celie figure out after she talks to Lula? Why does Celie write notes to Jo? What does she want Jo to do? **[RL 3.1]**

- Celie and Jo are alone at home when Celie decides to do some investigating and heads to her mom's computer. She tapes two emails into her journal. What do the emails say? How do Celie and Jo handle this information? **[RL 3.1]**

- Celie's dad taped an invitation to Celie and Jo's bedroom door. What did it say? How would you describe their dad based on that note alone? **[RL 3.1 and 3.3]**

- Cousin Carla watches Granny while the rest of the family has a dinner meeting at Smokey Sadie's. According to Celie, what's good about the meeting? What's bad about it? What are Granny and Cousin Carla doing when Celie and her family get home? **[RL 3.1]**

• Jo and Celie are at odds over Jo’s friend, Jake. How does Violet change Celie’s thinking about Jo and Jake? What does Celie decide to do? How does it affect Celie’s relationship with Violet? **[RL 3.1]**

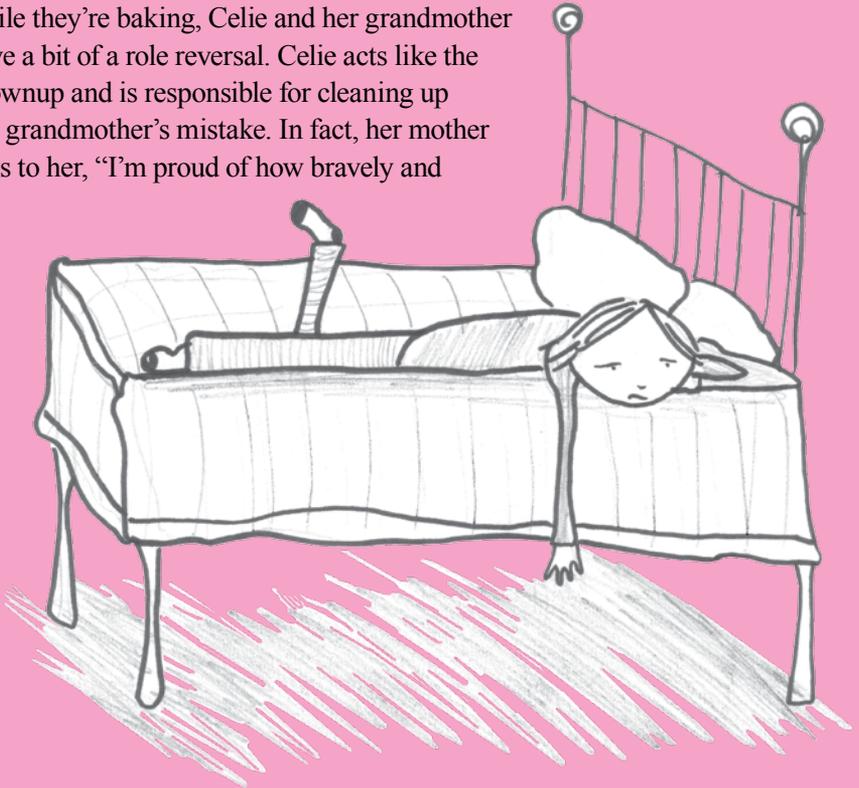
• Celie is worried about her family moving, and she debates whether to tell Lula about it. What happens next? How has Celie’s relationship with Lula and Violet changed from the beginning of the book? **[RL 3.1 and 3.5]**

## Post-Reading Activities

• Celie likes to draw and to bake like her grandmother. Think of activities someone you know introduced you to. For example, perhaps your grandfather taught you how to play chess or your aunt taught you how to fish. Share with the class something you learned how to do from someone else. **[SL 3.4]**

• Celie’s mom handles challenging situations by “counting backward to keep calm” (page 15). Think about how Celie handles her pomegranate conditioner problem with her sister. What are some other good ways to handle stressful situations? **[RL 3.1 and SL 3.3]**

• When Celie’s grandmother has the accident while they’re baking, Celie and her grandmother have a bit of a role reversal. Celie acts like the grownup and is responsible for cleaning up her grandmother’s mistake. In fact, her mother says to her, “I’m proud of how bravely and





capably you acted in that moment” (page 122). Think about a time you acted beyond your years. Write about your experience and how it made you feel.

**[RL 3.1 and WL 3.3]**

- Celie is a bit of a snoop. She takes Violet and Lula’s note and reads it. She sneaks a peek at her sister Jo’s texts. She reads her mother’s emails. Yet on the front of her diary, she wrote, “DO NOT TURN THE PAGE. IT IS PRIVATE.” How do you think Celie would feel if someone read her journal? Why do you think Celie snoops? Does snooping help or hurt Celie? **[SL 3.1]**

- At the end of the book, Celie’s dad comes in to check on her and finds her still awake. What is Celie thinking about? How does Celie’s dad help her to think about change in a different way? Write your own list of things you might like to have if you were moving to a new home. **[SL 3.1 and WL 3.3]**

- In this guide’s pre-reading activity, you thought about this quote from Celie’s grandmother in her letter in the opening pages of the book: “How nice that the moments you describe in here will be forever available to you in these pages.” Now that you have read the book, do you think her grandmother’s words hold a special significance for Celie? Why? Think about the ways that journals, photographs, and letters allow us to hold on to parts of the past. Share something with the class that holds a warm memory for you. **[SL 3.4]**

## Extra Credit

Celie uses pie charts—a lot. She uses them to organize her feelings about her fight with Lula. She uses them to compare what her life was like before and after her grandmother moved in. What is a pie chart? What are some things you can graph using a pie chart?

Celie and her grandmother each draw three different views of a spoon. Celie gives her spoons human characteristics. This is called personification. Think of some ways you might describe inanimate or nonliving objects using personification.

Celie's grandmother uses different techniques to draw her spoons. She draws one spoon in the style of Picasso. She draws another spoon using pointillism. Who was Picasso? What is pointillism?

## Further Reading

*11 Birthdays* by Wendy Mass

*Amelia's Friendship Survival Guide* by Marissa Moss

*Anastasia Krupnik* by  
Lois Lowry

*Friend or Fiend? with the  
Pain and the Great One* by  
Judy Blume, illustrated by  
James Stevenson



**SECRETS OUT!**  
**The Top-Secret Diary of  
Celie Valentine: Book Two**

By Julie Sternberg  
Illustrated by Johanna Wright

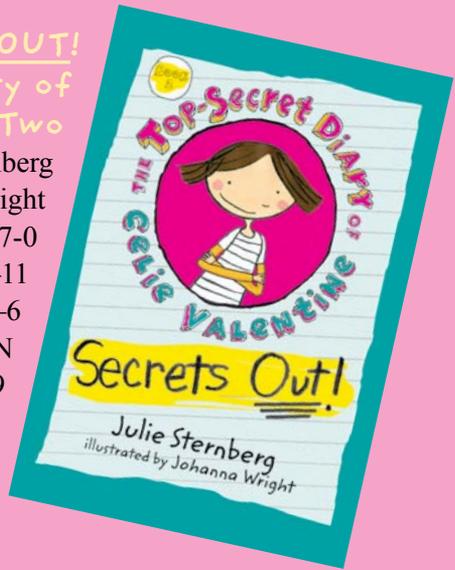
978-1-62091-777-0

Ages 8–11

Grades 3–6

\$15.95/\$19.99 CAN

e-book: 978-1-62979-434-1/\$5.99



**Common Core abbreviations used in this guide:**

**RL – Reading: Literature**

**RI – Reading: Informational Text**

**W – Writing**

**SL – Speaking and Listening**

For the complete Common Core State Standards,  
visit [corestandards.org/ELA-literacy](http://corestandards.org/ELA-literacy).

To order: Contact your Perseus Books Group sales representative, fax purchase orders to (800) 351-5073, or email [orderentry@perseusbooks.com](mailto:orderentry@perseusbooks.com).

Customer Service can be reached at (800) 343-4499.

For marketing inquiries, contact [marketing@boydsmillspress.com](mailto:marketing@boydsmillspress.com).

*This guide was prepared by Jane Becker.*

[boydsmillspress.com](http://boydsmillspress.com) • [juliesternberg.com](http://juliesternberg.com) • [johannawright.com](http://johannawright.com)

 **BOYDS MILLS PRESS**

**Highlights™**