Counting by 7s

AUTHOR: Holly Goldberg Sloan
PUBLISHER: Dial Books for Young Readers
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GENRE: Realistic
SETTING: The setting is modern day San Joaquin Valley, California.

SUMMARY:
Twelve-year old genius Willow Chance loves counting by 7s and maintaining an organized and predictable world, until her parents are killed in an accident. Willow then has to learn to connect with people to create a new ‘normal’ for herself. The problem is she doesn’t know how to do that.

BOOK TALK:
Willow Chance is a genius, but her school believes she cheated on a test. She has to see the school counselor, Dell Duke, about why she cheated. Also sitting in Mr. Dell’s office are a Vietnamese brother and sister, Quang-ha and Mai. After their sessions are over, Mr. Duke takes all three students out for ice cream. It’s a fairly normal day, until Mr. Duke pulls into Willow’s driveway, where there are police cars waiting for her. Willow finds out her parents have just been killed in an accident. How she deals with this tragedy is what makes Willow an amazing character. Pick up this book today.

BOOK TRAILER/AUTHOR DISCUSSION:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg4MmKi8s_E from Piccadilly Press

AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:
Author’s Name: Holly Goldberg Sloan
Author’s Website: www.hollygoldbergsloan.com

Other books written by the author:
I’ll Be There
Appleblossom The Possum
Just Call my Name

SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:
Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper
Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine
The Secret Hum of a Daisy by Tracy Holczer
A Handful of Star by Cynthia Lord
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the number 7 so important to Willow? In what ways do this and her other obsession guide her life? (Chapters 1-9 and pages 9-19)
2. What is your first opinion of Dell Duke? (Chapter 5)
3. Willow says, “Everything in life can be seen in a garden.” What does Willow mean by this statement?
4. Pattie tells Willow, “What we expect rarely occurs; what we don’t expect is what happens.” How does this statement relate to Willow, Dell, and Quang-ha by the end of the book? (214)

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:
https://texasbluebonnetaward2015.wordpress.com/counting-by-7s/

Language Arts

- Have students choose one of the main characters--Willow, Dell, Mai, Quang-ha, or Pattie Nguyen--and draw a portrait of that character. This portrait should reflect physical traits of the character. On the back of the portrait students list seven character traits of the character. Go around the classroom and have students tell the seven character traits and have other students guess which character from the book is being described.

  **7.RL.2.1**: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.(6.RL.2.1 & 8.RL.2.1)

Science

- Willow plants an actual garden at the Gardens of Glenwood. In this activity have your students design their own garden for their own homes. Students will design a garden on paper. They will need to research these topics: the climate of their area, best suited plants, good soil types, water needs, the best time to plant, and the amount of sun or shade that a plant requires.

  **6-8.WS.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
Reviewer’s Name: Gigi Shook
Reviewer’s Position: Center Grove High School Librarian

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

Reader Theatre: https://texasbluebonnetaward2015.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/rtcountingby7s-2.pdf

Teaching Books.net: www.teachingbooks.net


More resources from the Texas Bluebonnet Award: https://texasbluebonnetaward2015.wordpress.com/counting-by-7s/

Challenging Words

biohrythm- (pg. 21)
circadian-(pg. 21)
chiropterophily-(pg. 23)
duplicitous-(pg.50)
corpuscle-(pg. 53)
gusto- (pg. 63)
lemur-(pg.64)
fixated-(pg71)
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