

Absolutely Almost Book Discussion Guide

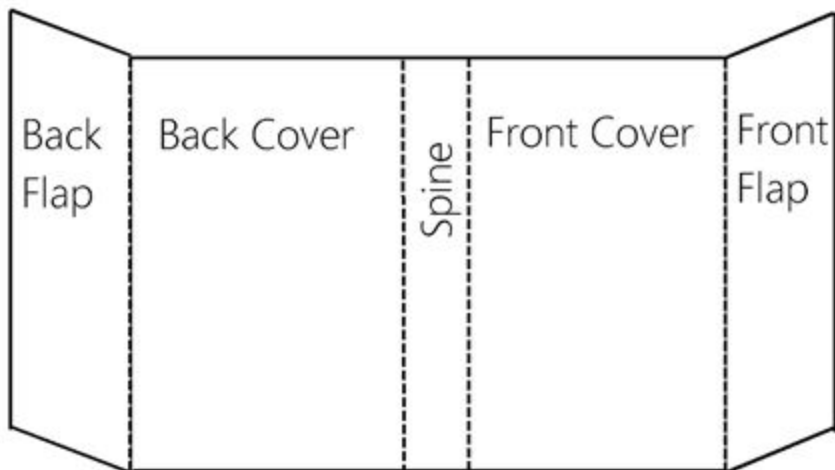
Icebreaker & Introductions

- Name, Grade, Question
 - Sample questions:
 - “If you could pick a character from any book to be your best friend, who would you choose?”
 - “If you had to describe Absolutely Almost in one word, what word would you choose?”
 - “What is the last great book you read?”
 - “On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate Absolutely Almost?” (Question can be asked both before and after discussion)

Snack: Donuts!

Activity: (Can be done throughout the discussion)

Calista designs a Johnny Tremain book cover for Albie to use over his copy of *Captain Underpants*. Design your own book jackets! Materials: Piece of paper (cut to size of book jacket), markers, crayons, etc.



Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel when Albie’s mom wouldn’t let him read *Captain Underpants*? WHY? Do you think someone has the right to tell another person what he can or cannot read?
- Why do you think Mr. Clifton starts off every class with a math joke?

- Calista believes the Albie's superpower is that he is kind. Do you agree? Is kindness a superpower? WHY or why not?
- Did Calista have the right to let Albie skip school and go to the zoo?
- How did you feel about the "helpful hints" that Albie left for Betsy? Do you think Albie is a good friend?
- When his teacher asks for a note to explain his absence, Albie forges his mother's signature. What would you have done if you were in his situation?
- Do you think Albie's mom should have fired Calista?
- Why did Hugo ask for Albie's help stacking the cups?
- Does Albie undergo any changes throughout this book? What kinds of changes?
- Did this book remind you of any other book you've ever read?
- Why do you think Albie hangs up his letter from Mountford Prep?

Games: Readers can select a trivia question or a Whose Line is It? question

Trivia Questions:

- What is Albie's favorite food?
- Where did Albie used to go to school? Mountford Prep
- What's the name of their doorman? Bernard
- What museum does Mom suggest Albie and Calista to visit? The Met
- What is the name of Albie's best friend (first and last name)? Erlan Kasteev
- What is Albie's apartment number? 8A
- What state is Calista from? California
- What kind of candy does Betsy give to Albie? Gummy bear
- What is the nickname Albie short for? Albin
- What museum did Albie and his dad go to together when Albie was 9? Sea, Air, and Space Museum
- What model airplane does Albie's dad buy for him? An A-10 Thunderbolt
- What is the name of the Math Club teacher? Mr. Clifton
- What does Albie get Erlan for his birthday? A Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robot
- What is Albie's last name? Schaffhauser
- What series of books does Albie's mom not want him to read? Captain Underpants
- What kind of insect is good at math? An account-ant
- What does Albie call Johnny Tremain? Johnny Treeface
- Who wrote Johnny Tremain? Esther Forbes
- What grade did Mr. Clifton get in fourth grade math? F
- What class position does Albie run for? Vice president
- What does Albie bring to school on his birthday that gets him in trouble?
- Where do Albie and Calista go on the day that Albie cuts school? Bronx Zoo
- What kind of sandwich does Albie's dad teach him to make? a famous schaffhauser grilled cheese

- After she is fired, where does Calista leave her final message to Albie? On cups in the stockroom of Hugo's store

"Whose Line is It Anyway?" Questions

- "Not everybody can be the rock at the top of the rock pile. There have to be some rocks at the bottom to support the top." – Grandpa Park
- We're just going to hang out together. I'll pick you up from school. Maybe we'll go to the park a little bit, I'll help you with your homework. – Calista
- "You can't stop my son from going to this birthday party. He and Erlan have been friends for eight years, and I'm not going to let some idiotic television show get in the way of that." – Dad
- "Want to eat all the old pickles in the fridge and see if we throw up?" – Calista
- "What kind of insect is good at math? An account-ant." – Mr. Clifton
- "I figured if math didn't make any sense to me, it probably didn't make sense to lots of other people. So I promised myself that if I ever did figure it out, I'd become a math teacher so I could help other people who'd had trouble, just like me." – Mr. Clifton
- You help me stack, I give you donuts." – Hugo
- "Find something you'd want to keep doing forever, even if you stink at it. And then if you're lucky, with lots of practice, then one day you won't stink so much." – Calista
- "Stop leaving dumb notes in my desk. I don't want to talk to you." – Betsy, in a note
- "Why did you tell everyone that kid Erlan was your best friend? Just so people would think you were cool?" – Darren
- "Everyone deserves a sad day once in a while. Sometimes things are too big for cheering up. Sometimes the best way to make things better is to just let yourself be sad for a little bit." – Calista
- "I don't feel safe having someone take care of you who I can't trust, so I had to let her go." – Mom
- "I love you, Albie. You are caring and thoughtful and good." – Mom, then Albie
- You want to know what's so great about being on TV? Nothing. That's what. No one at school will even talk to me anymore. Everything that happens on that stupid show, they laugh about it all week. – Erlan