

## Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Assignment: Read *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper

- As you read the novel, answer the questions below from the novel's Study Guide available at the author's website at.
    - You do not need to re-write the questions, as long as you number your answers.
    - Please write your answers in complete sentences.
    - Your answers should be typed.
    - The answers will be due September 1<sup>st</sup>. Five points will be deducted for each day they are late.
1. The novel opens with a powerful discussion of the power of words and language. How does this help capture the reader's attention? What predictions can the reader make about the narrator of the story? What inferences can be made about the thought processes of the narrator's mind?
  2. In a world that does not work for her, what seems to cause the biggest frustrations for Melody?
  3. Describe Melody's parents. How do they learn to communicate with Melody and help her to overcome everyday problems? Why are those efforts sometimes a complete failure?
  4. How does Melody feel about school? How does she fit in with her classmates and what makes her different from the rest of the children in H-5? What would be Melody's ideal school situation?
  5. Discuss Melody's teachers since she began going to school. What does this say about her school system, or about attitudes at her school about teaching children with special needs?
  6. Describe Mrs. V. What role does she play in Melody's development? Why is she a necessary addition to Melody's life?
  7. What is significant about the story of Ollie the fish? How does Ollie's life mirror Melody's? Describe Melody's feelings when she is unable to tell her mother what really happened.

8. Describe how the introduction of Penny as a character changes the family dynamics. Analyze Melody's complicated feelings about her little sister.
9. How does the inclusion program change Melody's school experiences? Describe both positive and negative results of the program. Describe Melody's deep, unrealized need for a friend.
10. What does Melody learn about friendship during the trip to the aquarium? Make a comparison between Ollie's life, the life of the fish in the aquarium, and Melody's life.
11. How does Melody's computer change her life, her outlook on life, and her potential? Why does she name it Elvira?
12. Why does Melody decide to enter the quiz team competition? What obstacles must she face and overcome just to get on the team?
13. What does Melody learn about friendship and the relationships of children working together as she practices and competes with the quiz team? What does she learn about herself?
14. What is ironic about the events at the restaurant after the competition? How does this scene foreshadow the events that led up to the airport fiasco?
15. Describe Melody's feelings before the trip to the airport, while she is there, and after she gets home. How would you have coped with the same situation?
16. Describe Melody's extreme range of emotions as she tries to tell her mother that Penny is behind the car. How did the scene make you feel?
17. Discuss the scene in which Melody confronts the kids on the quiz team. What is satisfying about how she handles the situation? What else might Melody have done?
18. Why is the first page repeated at the end of the book? How has Melody changed, both personally and socially, from the beginning of the book to the end?
19. How would this story have been different if it had been written from a third-person point of view; from the point of view of her parents, for example, or simply from the viewpoint of an outside observer?
20. Explain the title of the novel. Give several possible interpretations.

