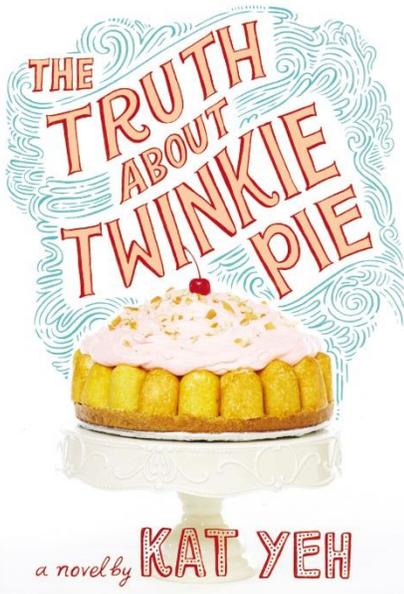


A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers

Aligned to the Common Core Grades 5-9



Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* as a classroom read aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

About the Author

Kat Yeh grew up reading, writing, and dreaming in Westtown, Pennsylvania. She currently lives with her family on Long Island, where she can see water every day. *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* is her debut novel. You can visit her at www.katyeh.com.



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About the Book

Take two sisters making it on their own: brainy twelve-year-old GiGi (short for Galileo Galilei, a name she never says out loud) and junior-high-dropout-turned-hairstylist DiDi (short for Delta Dawn). Add a million dollars in prize money from a national cooking contest and a move from the trailer parks of South Carolina to the Gold Coast of New York. Mix in a fancy new school, new friends and enemies, a first crush, and a generous sprinkling of family secrets.

That's the recipe for *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*, a voice-driven middle grade debut about the true meaning of family and friendship.

Common Core Aligned for Grades 5-9

5th grade: ELA. RI.5.1,2,3,4,6, 7, 8, 9; W.5.3a-e,4; SL.5.4,5; L.5.1,2,3,4

6th grade: ELA. RI.6.1,2,3,4,5,6,9; W.6.3a-e,4; SL.6.1a,3,4,5; L.6.1,2,3,4a,c,d

7th grade: ELA. RI.7.1,2,3,4,5,6,9; W.7.3a-e,4; SL.7.4,5; L.7.1,2,3

8th grade: ELA. RI.8.1,2,3,4,6,9; W.8.3a-e,4; SL.8.1a,3,5; L.8.1,2,3,4a,c,d

9th grade: ELA. RI.9-10.1,2,4,5,6,8,9; W.9-10.3a-e,4; SL.9-10.1,4,5; L.9-10.1,2,4a,c,d

Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the front cover photo of *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*. Describe what you see. Can you make any predictions of the time period or setting of the novel? Can you predict what this book might be about? What from the illustration and title of the book supports your prediction?
2. Read the text on the jacket flap. What do you learn about the book from this blurb?
3. List at least five questions that you have about this novel after looking at the covers and jacket copy.
4. Look closely at the design of the book: the colors, text, any illustrations, word choice. How would you describe the design of the book?
5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this book? If you saw this book on a shelf, would you want to read it? Why or why not?

Write one paragraph describing your thoughts about the book, and include one question you have that you hope to learn the answer to when you read. Share your paragraph with the class.

Chapters 1-10

1. "...there's something about asking for Impossible Things. For one little second, they feel Possible." Describe this opening scene in the Super Saver, plot point by plot point.

- a. What "Impossible Thing" does GiGi ask for?

2. "If my life were a TV cooking show, it's no mystery what I'd want in my Basket of Ingredients. But, like I said before, you don't get to pick. No one does. And besides, even if I could, I don't think there's a basket out there big and magic enough to hold Mama and her lipstick." Explain why you think GiGi would want these items in her basket of ingredients.

- a. GiGi says she doesn't believe there is a basket "big and magic enough." What does this say about her character and current state of mind?

- b. If you could choose what would be in your own Basket of Ingredients, what would you pick and why?

3. What are DiDi and GiGi's only connections to their Mama?

- a. Describe Twinkie Pie. How does DiDi keep Mama's memory alive through cooking?

- b. Describe what happens when DiDi is handed the fresh cherries for the Twinkie Pie. What does this tell you about DiDi's character? What does it tell you about GiGi's character?

- c. Do you have something special that your family always makes you on your birthday? Or a special family recipe handed down through generations? If so, what? Share the story about the recipe with the class.

Who is GiGi?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent GiGi, on a large piece of paper.

Using Chapters 1-10 as evidence, write any known details about GiGi inside the outline.

Outside the outline, discuss and write any questions about GiGi that the class might have.

4. Draw a sketch of DiDi and GiGi's new Long Island apartment, using evidence found in chapters 1-10.
 - a. Create a chart comparing where DiDi and GiGi lived in South Carolina and where they live on Long Island. Be sure to include evidence from chapters 1-10 on not only the structure they lived in but also the people of the community and the town, in addition to the schools.
 - b. No one eats the Twinkie Pie that DiDi bakes for Welcome Night at Hill on the Harbor Preparatory School. Why do you think this is? Do you think DiDi has an idea why?
 - c. Do you think DiDi being head of the Refreshment Committee for the Founder's Day Gala is a good idea? Why or why not?
5. Both DiDi and GiGi have a Recipe for Success for GiGi.
 - a. Describe DiDi's Recipe for Success.
 - b. Describe GiGi's new Recipe for Success.
 - c. Why does GiGi's name feature prominently in GiGi's new plan?
6. DiDi says, "People don't care what you name it, G. They like pie for what's on the inside." Do you agree with this statement regarding pie? What about regarding people?
 - a. How important do you think a name is?
 - b. If you could change your name, what would you choose? Why?
 - c. Do you think anyone would be upset at you for changing your name? Who and why?
7. Describe GiGi's first day at her new school.
 - a. How does the uniform make GiGi feel better about the school?
 - b. How does GiGi implement her new Recipe for Success?
 - c. Describe the people GiGi meets on her first day.

Create Your Own Recipe for Success

Using GiGi's recipe in chapter 4 as inspiration, create your very own Recipe for Success.

What ingredients would you include for success at home? At school? With Friends?

- d. GiGi's lunch serves as representation to the differences between GiGi's new life and her old life. How?
8. What is a KOB?
- a. Why do you think DiDi gives GiGi KOBs every day?
 - b. Who do you think the mystery KOB is from? Would you have peeked to read it, or waited until home like it asked?
9. Why do you think DiDi never wants GiGi coming to the hair salon to see her working? Why do you think it means so much to GiGi to be able to go to the hair salon?

Making Connections:

So many things have changed for GiG. She has left her home and now she is about to start a new school.

Put yourself in GiGi's shoes. What if you moved away from your home? Write a farewell letter to your home. Include what, and who, you are going to miss and what you wish you could take with you. What are you scared or anxious about? What are you excited or curious about?

What If?:

Based on chapters 1-10 and what you already know, play your own version of What If. Make a list of all of the What Ifs that come to your mind and then, individually or with your class, create some answers. Be sure to use text clues to support your responses.

For example: What if the Super Saver had Cherries in the Snow lipstick? What if GiGi told DiDi all about her new Recipe for Success?

Rewrite a scene from chapters 1-10 using your own What If scenario.

Chapters 11-20

1. Explain, in your own words, the Mayflower Bake-Off. Include textual details of DiDi's entry and win.
 - a. Why did DiDi not want anyone to know they won?
 - b. How did she go about making sure no one found out?
 - c. What was the million dollars prize to be used for?
2. Describe Mace and her friends. Why do you think they are not nice to GiGi?
 - a. How does GiGi feel about girlfriends?
 - b. What kind of girl(s) would you like to see GiGi becoming friends with?
3. Create a chart comparing the Stargazers and the Sports Boosters.
 - a. Which club would you choose for GiGi? Why?
 - b. Which club would you want to join? Why?
 - c. Describe, in your own words, Mr. McGuire and each of the girls in the Stargazers.
4. Why does GiGi take an interest in where Haven's mom works?
5. Her new life on Long Island includes many firsts for GiGi. List some of the firsts she experiences.
 - a. Do any of these firsts raise red flags for you, as a reader? Are you concerned or happy for GiGi? Why?
6. Do you believe writing fiction is no more than lying? What about poetry?
 - a. Using the William Carlos Williams poem in the book, do you think poetry lies or tells the truth?

Who is Trip?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Trip, on a large piece of paper.

Using Chapters 11-20 as evidence, write any known details about Trip inside the outline.

Outside the outline, discuss and write any questions about Trip that the class might have.

- b. What does GiGi think about fiction versus poetry and the Truth? How does her answer to Mr. McGuire parallel her own journey at her new school? Do you think GiGi is truly just "saying it like it is?" Or is she lying?
 - c. Describe Mr. McGuire's assignment on the Truth.
7. Why do you think Mace visited DiDi at the hair salon? What do you think her motives are?
- a. What do you think GiGi meant when she said, "she didn't look like an evil villain in a dark cape any more. She looked more like a little girl. In a big blanket. Being left behind"?
 - b. Do you think DiDi will be fired over Mace's hair?
 - c. Do you feel any differently about Mace based on Chapters 11-20. Support your answer with textual evidence.
8. What three words do you think GiGi would choose to describe the following:
- a. The Country Club
 - b. Mrs. Davis and Mr. Davis
 - c. Trip's house
 - d. In your own words, describe the events of chapters 18-20.
9. Why do you think GiGi blows up at DiDi when she gets home? Look closely at each statement GiGi says in this scene. Try to explain the feelings behind each statement.
10. GiGi yells, "Why can't one thing in my life be real?" What do you think she means by this statement?
- a. List some of the things that GiGi feels are fake?
 - b. Do you believe GiGi is living a fake life? How so?

Making Connections:

A person's private room can say so much about them. What can we learn about Trip from his bedroom? What about GiGi's room? Or where DiDi sleeps?

Look closely at where you sleep. What details stand out to you? Choose five items from your space. What do these five items say about your character?

Write a description of your space, as if you are a character in a novel. Be sure to use the five items and any other details to help the reader better understand your character.

What If?:

Based on chapters 11-20 and what you already know, play your own version of What If. Make a list of all of the What Ifs that come to your mind and then, individually or with your class, create some answers. Be sure to use text clues to support your responses.

Rewrite a scene from chapters 11-20 using your own What If scenario.

Chapters 21-31

1. Pretend you are GiGi and write a diary entry describing the moment you see Trip and Mace chatting. Feel free to use quotes from the text of things you overheard them say. (Bonus points if you write a poem to express your feelings.)
2. How is GiGi like DiDi's Secret Layered Salad? What about some of the other characters? How is anyone else like the Secret Layered Salad?
 - a. DiDi?
 - b. Trip?
 - c. Mace?

- d. If you were a Secret Layered Salad, what would people see on the outside? And what layers would they discover on the inside?
3. Why do you think Mace wanted to walk GiGi to the nurse? If you were GiGi, how would you have reacted to Mace's comment about really liking DiDi?
4. GiGi feels a little unsure with Allie and Haven coming over to her apartment and meeting DiDi. What are some of the things that make GiGi feel self-conscious?
 - a. Pretend that you are Allie or Haven and rewrite one of the following scenes from your own point-of-view: the apartment, the Blue Bomb, or the tailgate party.
 - b. After looking at the scenes from another's point-of-view, do you think GiGi needs to feel self-conscious? Why or why not?
5. Create a chart comparing Mace's relationship with her mother and GiGi's relationship with DiDi.
 - a. How are the girls acting similarly? How are the situations different?
 - b. If GiGi and Mace discussed their problems, do you think they would find they have lots in common? How so?
 - c. What are your thoughts on why Mace keeps trying to have a conversation with GiGi? If you were GiGi, would you have closed the door on her again?
6. Why do you think Mace declines the invite to watch a movie with Trip and GiGi?
7. List at least three reasons why the scene on the hill between Trip and GiGi was awkward. List at least three reasons why it was wonderful.
8. Describe Ida in your own words. Use textual quotes as evidence to support your description.
 - a. Why do you think GiGi opens up to Ida?
 - b. Why do you think Ida gives GiGi so much of her time?
 - c. The drugstore bulletin board included many 'thank you' notes. What does this tell you about the drugstore and its employees?
 - d. As GiGi, write a 'thank you' note to Ida, explaining how much the interaction with her meant to you.

9. GiGi finally has a group of girlfriends. Describe some of the things they do together that prove they are quickly becoming close friends and not just club members.
10. What is the plan with ordering a shipment of Cherries in the Snow?
 - a. How does this plan seem to change at the end of chapter 30?

Making Connections:

Two major themes in *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* are jealousy and the need to be heard or understood. Choose a character from the novel and explain how jealousy and the need to be heard or understood fuels their actions within the story.

Can you relate? Do you ever feel like no one is listening to you? Do you ever feel misunderstood?

Write a KOB expressing something that you want others to understand about you.

What If?:

Based on chapters 21-30 and what you already know, play your own version of What If. Make a list of all of the What Ifs that come to your mind and then, individually or with your class, create some answers. Be sure to use text clues to support your responses.

Rewrite a scene from chapters 21-30 using your own What If scenario.

Chapters 32-40

1. GiGi has so many questions for DiDi, but why does she refuse to talk to her when she finds her at the salon? How does what she find at the hair salon add insult to injury?
2. What is GiGi's plan to find out more about Mama and the Cherries in the Snow shipment?
 - a. For every ingredient in the "Recipe for Running Away to Find Your Maybe No Longer Dead Mama" list a "What if."
 - b. Do you think this is a good or bad recipe? Explain your reasons why.
 - c. How would you revise the recipe to make it better or eliminate some of the What Ifs?
3. Rewrite the backyard scene from the point-of-view of the Beast, as he watches from his backyard window. Be sure to include his motives for saving the day.
4. What reason is GiGi given as to why Mace is in the cab instead of Trip?
 - a. Do you think Trip made the right decision in sending Mace? Why or why not?
 - b. If you were Trip what would you have done?
 - c. How does the absence of Trip and the presence of Mace revise the Recipe for Running Away?
5. Despite her negative feelings towards Mace, list all of the ways in which Mace's savviness helps GiGi.
 - a. Do you think GiGi could have made the trip to South Carolina without Mace? Why or why not?

The Backyard and the Beast

GiGi must navigate her way across Haven Chang's enormous backyard and garden to get to the awaiting cab.

Using details mentioned in the text, draw a map of the area, marking clearly GiGi's path from the window to the cab.

Other important landmarks, such as the Changs and their friends, the tomatoes, the bushes, and the Beast's upstairs window should be included, as well.

Be creative and add other details based on what you know about the Changs.

- b. What do you think would have happened if GiGi did attempt the trip alone?
6. Pretend you are Mace and write a diary entry about the trip once GiGi leaves for the trailer park. Include details that Mace would know about. And remember, people do not always say and do what is going on in their heads and hearts.
 - a. Why did Mace really agree to help?
 - b. How does she really feel about GiGi?
 - c. Why does she give her a water bottle to take? What does this gesture mean to Mace?
7. How would you describe the Verity trailer park? In what ways is this trailer park different from the one GiGi last lived in?
8. There are so many What Ifs in chapters 31-40. Go through and write down all of the questions GiGi is thinking in these chapters. Then, list any additional questions you, as the reader, might have.
 - a. Can you predict answers to any of these questions? Share your predictions with the class.
9. In what ways is Mama exactly how GiGi imagined her? In what ways is she different?

What If?:

Based on chapters 31-40 and what you already know, play your own version of What If. Make a list of all of the What Ifs that come to your mind and then, individually or with your class, create some answers. Be sure to use text clues to support your responses.

Rewrite a scene from chapters 31-40 using your own What If scenario.

Chapters 41-50

1. What does Mama tell GiGi about her name?
 - a. Do you agree that “when someone gives you a name, they are pretty much telling you what your life is going to be?” Why or why not?
 - b. Mama and DiDi have the same name. What is similar about them? What is different?
 - c. Why did DiDi choose to rename GiGi? Why did she pick the name she did?
 - d. Why do you think Mama insisted GiGi be named Delta Dawn, too? Do you think life will be different now that GiGi knows her *real* name? Will it change who she is?
 - e. Think of your own name. Where did your name come from? What would change about your life if you had a different name?
2. GiGi learns the Truth about so much. Explain the Truth about:
 - a. Mama
 - b. Dead Drunk Donna
 - c. GiGi’s scar
 - d. How Trip feels about GiGi
 - e. Her sister, DiDi
3. GiGi seems to find comfort in holding the KOB that Trip gave her, without even reading it. Why do you think the KOB is comforting to her?
 - a. What do you think the KOB symbolizes for GiGi?
 - b. Do you have any predictions as to what the KOB says?
4. About Mace, in chapter 42 GiGi says, “I had never been so grateful to anyone in my life.” Why do you think she feels this way?
 - a. How does Mace show care for GiGi?
 - b. Pretend you are GiGi and write a thank you to Mace, telling her how grateful you are and what you are grateful for.
 - c. Why does GiGi go to Mace’s house at the end of chapter 50?

5. What do you think the Recipe to Lose 10 Pounds and the purple pocketbook have in common? Why did Yeh choose to place this recipe at this moment in the book?
- What secrets does the purple pocketbook hold?
 - Would GiGi be better off not knowing the Truth or knowing everything? Why do you think the way you do?
6. Why do you think GiGi likens kissing Trip to the moment at the zombie movie? Support your answer with textual examples.

What's in a Name?

GiGi knows that Delta Dawn is the name of a top country song, in addition to being a family name.

Pretend that the song Delta Dawn was written about GiGi and her family.

Design an album cover for the song and include symbols and colors you think would best represent the Delta Dawns of GiGi's family.

Using your own name, create your own album cover using symbols and colors to represent and identify who you are and what your name says about you.

What If?:

Based on chapters 41-50 and what you already know, play your own version of What If. Make a list of all of the What Ifs that come to your mind and then, individually or with your class, create some answers. Be sure to use text clues to support your responses.

Rewrite a scene from chapters 41-50 using your own What If scenario.

Chapters 51-55

1. With GiGi staying at their house, the Tanglewoods face some tough realizations about their own family and relationships. Write a journal entry about GiGi's stay from the point-of-view of either Mr. Tanglewood, Mrs. Tanglewood, or Mace.
2. Why do you think Mace tells DiDi that she and GiGi "get each other more now"? What has changed?
 - a. How are Mace's and GiGi's parental situations similar? How are they different?
 - b. Do you think Mrs. Tanglewood and DiDi would "get each other more now" too? How so? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
3. What do you think Trip was trying to confess in his KOB to GiGi?
4. Why do you think GiGi says she "doesn't know who she is" anymore? How would you describe who GiGi is? Has your view of GiGi changed through the book? How so?
5. Yeh writes so many wonderful metaphors in these final chapters of *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*. Using the text as reference, explain the use of the following metaphors and how they bring light to deeper themes and issues in the novel.
 - a. Meteor showers and shooting stars
 - b. The Tanglewood's refrigerator
 - c. DiDi's new versions of Mama's original recipes at the Gala
 - d. Kenneth's ponytail
 - e. The new Cherries in the Snow recipe
6. Yeh packs lots of clues about the weeks after chapter 55 in the epilogue. What are some of the events that happen? How do things change for GiGi? Using this information, write a chapter 56.

After You Read...

Below are a few final project ideas for the conclusion of *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*.

1. Create your own poem for Mr. McGuire's "What is your Truth?" project. Take notes. Live with it. Ruminant. And then write your poem.
2. Read the quotes from award-winning authors on the back cover. Choose one and write a 500 word essay supporting what they said about *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* using textual evidence as support.
3. Two themes that run through *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* are "say it like it is" and "don't have to say anything." Choose one of these themes to write a 500 word essay about.
 - a. How is this theme evident in the characters and events of the novel?
 - b. How does this theme play into the idea of Truth?
 - c. What can readers takeaway from *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* in relation to this theme?
4. *The Truth About Twinkie Pie* is referred to as "voice-driven." What do you think this means? Look closely at the recipes included throughout. GiGi, as well as readers, learn all about Mama from her voice in Recipes.
 - a. Go through all of the recipes within the novel. Be sure to note the moments when Mama's personal voice comes through. How does Yeh convey Mama's voice. List examples.
 - b. Then, write "how to" directions (either a favorite recipe, or directions to your house) in your own personal voice, using some of the conventions that Yeh used.
5. Create a book trailer for *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*. Carefully choose music, visuals, and words to create an overall feel for the book.
6. Music is an important part of *The Truth About Twinkie Pie*, from GiGi's family's connection to Tanya Tucker's song "Delta Dawn" to Mace's choosing to name the fictitious Aunt Joan after the artist Joan Jett (of The Blackhearts).
 - a. GiGi's family song was handed down to her, while Mace's chose her own. Discuss this difference. Why do you think Mace chooses Joan Jett? Do you

think GiGi would choose Tanya Tucker if she had a choice? If not, who do you think GiGi would choose?

- b. Research both Tanya Tucker and Joan Jett. Who would you pick to represent you?
- c. Create a playlist of songs that you would choose for key, emotional parts of the novel.