

# Discussion Guide

Aligns with Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

## The Wig in the Window

by Kristen Kittscher

Sophie Young and Grace Yang have made a game of spying on their neighbors, but when they stake out the home of bizarre middle school counselor Dr. Charlotte Agford (aka Dr. Awkward), they stumble across a terrifying scene.

At least, they think they do. The truth is that Dr. Agford was only making her famous pickled beets! But when Dr. Agford begins acting even weirder than usual, Sophie and Grace become convinced that she's hiding something—and they're determined to find out what it is.

Soon the girls are breaking secret codes, being followed by a strange blue car, and tailing strangers with unibrows and Texas accents. But as their investigation heats up, Sophie and Grace start to crack under the pressure. Even if they solve the case, will their friendship survive?


The Wig in the Window is the first in a smart, funny new middle-grade mystery series sure to please fans eager for humor, clever clues, and fun plot twists.





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## Questions for Discussion











*For classroom use, ask students to cite specific textual evidence for their answers.*

 One of the book's major themes is the consequences of making assumptions. Where do we see examples of this? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

 Identify another theme or central idea in the book. Where do we see examples of it? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme?

 What statement do you think the author is making about perception?

 Sophie and Grace are each other's yin and yang. Explain how the idea of opposites is important to this book. Where do you see examples of this affecting the plot?

-  What do you think the future of Sophie and Grace’s relationship will hold? Do you believe all of their problems are resolved? Why or why not?
-  Look at the phrases on Trista’s T-shirts throughout the book. How do each relate to the novel?
-  Sophie’s interest in Chinese culture borders on obsessive. What might explain her strong interest? Why do you think Grace is upset by it?
-  Explain what Sophie is realizing when she says, “Besides, you were right. It’d get old fast if you were dancing jigs and quoting St. Patrick all the time. I never thought of it like that.”
-  How do we see Sophie evolve as a character from the start of the book to the end? Who is she in the beginning and who does she become? What events in the book help to shape this? How do we see Grace evolve?
-  How have Sophie’s relationships changed because of what has happened during the course of the book?
-  It appears as if Grace is often driving the action in the novel but not suffering the consequences. Examine times where we see this happen and explain why she’s able to do this. What is Sophie’s reaction to all of this?
-  How does the fact that the story is told in Sophie’s point of view influence how events are described in the story? How might the story be different if it was in the point of view of someone else? Examine different characters and explain how their point of views would change the story.
-  Compare and contrast how Sophie first viewed the girls in S.M.I.L.E and what she learns about them in the end. Support your view with specific examples from the text.
-  We read books for enjoyment, but sometimes we discover that books can teach us things. What will you take away from *The Wig in the Window*?

## Activities

### What’s in a Name?

List five chapter titles and explain how they connect to what happened in each. Now, give each chapter a new title and explain why you retitled it.

### Be Proud to Be Awesome

Trista’s T-shirt slogans often reflect her bold personality. What slogan would you invent for Sophie Young to wear? What about Grace Yang? Now create a design and slogan for your own t-shirt. What would represent your view of the world?

### Question Your Assumptions

Reflect upon a specific time in your life when you made the wrong assumption about someone. What was the outcome? Write a short journal entry or narrative about that time.

### Opposites Attract

In Chapter 23, Sophie reflects on the Venn diagram that Ms. Gant draws on the board as she wonders about her assumptions. Draw your own Venn diagram that represents Sophie and Grace's friendship. Where do they overlap? Where are they different?

### Sun Tzu Says...

Sophie frequently relies on the advice of Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu. How does his advice help guide Sophie as she works to uncover the mystery? Make a T-chart that lists Sun Tzu's advice on one side, and how Sophie uses this advice in the other.



## About the Author

Kristen Kittscher was a former child neighborhood spy, but she (allegedly) grew up to be an upstanding seventh grade English teacher and writing tutor. A graduate of Brown University, she lives in Pasadena, California with her husband, Kai, and their hyperactive lab mix. *The Wig in the Window* is her first novel.

Visits [kristenkittscher.com](http://kristenkittscher.com) to investigate more about her and learn about Young & Yang's next adventure, *The Tiara on the Terrace*.

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Common Core Standards addressed by the discussion questions in this guide:  
CCSS ELA-Literacy RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.6

This guide was written by Rachele Alpine, National Board certified English teacher and author of *Canary* (Medallion Press, 8/13).