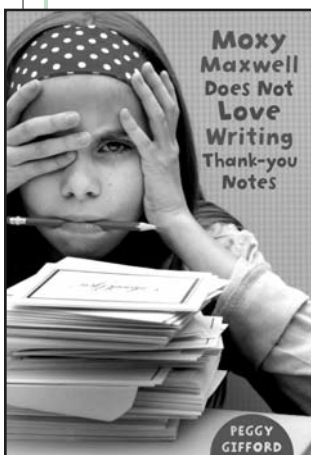


Fresh Middle-Grade Reads To Inspire Young Writers

**Grades
3–7**



Schwartz & Wade Books
HC: 978-0-375-84270-2
GLB: 978-0-375-94552-6
Themes: Humor • Morals
& Values • Family

About the Book

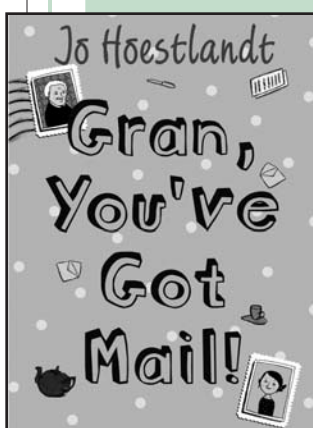
It isn't as though Moxy isn't grateful for her Christmas presents. She is. She's just not thrilled that she has to write a thank-you note for each one by tomorrow . . . or she will not be allowed to fly to California to attend a star-studded Hollywood bash with the father she hasn't seen in three years. And writing thank-you notes is not something that a world-class Creative Type relishes doing.

Activities

- Moxy Maxwell likes to make lists, such as Moxy's List of 13 Things to Do Before Tomorrow and Moxy's List of 218 Possible Career Paths. Create a class list of 20 Things We'd Like to Learn This Year. Then have students write individual lists, both silly and serious, of their own.
- Moxy thinks that writing "Dear" and "Love, Moxy" over and over again will "take an ice age" so she decides to write one fill-in-the-blank note and photocopy it. Recreate Moxy's fill-in-the-blank note on the board and see how many adjectives and verbs the class can come up with for a few gifts that Moxy may have received.
- At the end of the book Moxy writes the "first real thank-you note of her life." Read the note aloud to the class and ask why they think this particular note came easily to Moxy. Have students write their own heartfelt thank-you note to someone in their life who cares about them.



COMPANION BOOK
Yearling
PB: 978-0-440-42230-3
Schwartz & Wade Books
HC: 978-0-375-83915-3
GLB: 978-0-375-93915-0



Delacorte Press
HC: 978-0-385-73565-0
GLB: 978-0-385-90553-4
Themes: Intergenerational
Relationships • Family
Friendship

About the Book

Annabelle's father wants her to master her computer keyboard. Annabelle thinks the chore will be more tolerable if she writes letters to someone. She chooses Gran, her great-grandmother. Of course, Gran is most definitely not online, so Annabelle prints and mails her letters off. At first, Gran takes her time answering—and she's in the habit of repeating herself—but soon the two are keeping up a steady correspondence. Letter by letter, a true, tender friendship evolves.

Activities

- Discuss the importance of writers knowing their audience. Then have students write a letter to their best friend about a particularly happy or sad day in their lives. Next have them write a letter about the same day to a teacher, and then to a family member. How do the style and details differ from letter to letter?
- Annabelle and Gran talk about everything in their letters: parents, movies, school, the past, and the present. Work with a teacher in your school or another school to launch a pen pal program that will develop relationships between students in your classrooms. Encourage the students to handwrite their letters as Gran preferred Annabelle's letters, spelling mistakes and all.
- In one of her letters Annabelle tells Gran the reason she and her best friend are no longer speaking. Have students write a journal entry about an argument or misunderstanding they have had with a friend or family member, how it made them feel, and how things were resolved.



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Grades
3–7



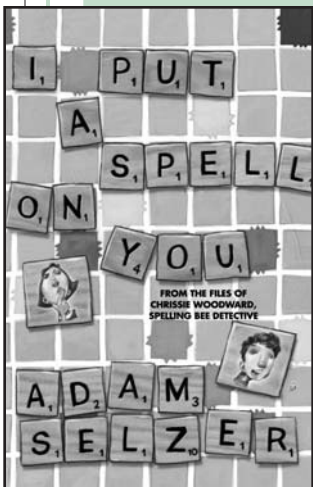
Delacorte Press
HC: 978-0-385-73568-1
GLB: 978-0-385-90556-5
Themes: Responsibility
Family • Making Choices

About the Book

When 12-year-old Gracie buys an old journal at a yard sale, she is stunned to realize that everything she writes in the journal comes true—though sometimes in unexpected ways. At first Gracie uses the journal selfishly, but then she starts to think about bigger issues. Unfortunately, before she can make headway on any of those issues, the journal falls into the wrong hands.

Activities

- Ask the class: If you could write the future, where would you start? Have students pretend that they have gotten ahold of Gracie's journal and whatever entries they make will come true. After they write, have them think about which wishes are selfish, selfless, realistic, and unrealistic. Ask for volunteers to share their entries with the group.
- When Gracie searches for the journal in the wooded area, the author touches upon all five senses to give readers a true play-by-play. Read the passage on pages 92–93 aloud and have students identify the sense used in each sentence. Then have students write an original descriptive passage touching on each of the senses.
- Gracie lies to her mother that her class is studying nonprofit organizations and she needs to interview the managers for five minutes. Have your students do Gracie's made-up assignment. They should choose a local organization whose cause they are passionate about, draft a list of questions for the manager, and schedule a time for a phone or in-person interview.



Delacorte Press
HC: 978-0-385-73504-9
GLB: 978-0-385-90498-8
Themes: Humor
Acceptance & Belonging
Government & Politics

About the Book

Come spelling bee season, the tiny town of Preston erupts in excitement: the bee is televised, and the hottest ticket in town. This year, an assortment of sixth-grade miscreants are going for the top prize. Chrissie, the constant observer, suspects something is off at the bee and will stop at nothing to get to the truth. Principal Floren is acting shady to everyone—but, as he insists, “I am not a crook.”

Activities

- Many of the chapters in *I Put a Spell on You* begin with a vocabulary word with its type of speech, definition, and an example of it used in a sentence. Challenge students to write an essay using 10 of the words from the chapter headers.
- Have students create trading cards for the seventh graders participating in the Preston school spelling bee. They should draw the character's picture on the front of the card and include information bullets on the back of the card about the character's personality, interests, and study tactics for the bee. Finally have them prepare a victory speech from the perspective of their favorite character.
- The book's appendix has selected songs of the Good Times Gang. Choose one and have a class sing-along. Then divide the class into groups and have them write a song about your school to the tune of a song that the majority of the class will know. Host a class concert to share the new tunes.



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