Olive & Beatrix

A Curriculum Guide for Educators

Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *Olive & Beatrix: The Not-So Itty-Bitty Spiders* and *Olive & Beatrix: The Super-Smelly Moldy Blob* as classroom read-alouds or as selections for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

Common Core Aligned for Grades K–2:

K: ELA.RL.K.1, K.2, K.3, K.6, K.7, K.9, K.10; ELA.W.K.1, K.2, K.7, K.8; ELA.SL.K.2, K.3, K.4, K.5
1st: ELA.RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10; ELA.W.1.2, 1.3, 1.7; ELA.SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
2nd: ELA.RL.2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7; ELA.W.2.2, 2.3, 2.7; ELA.SL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

The Super-Smelly Moldy Blob can also be used as a springboard for activities based on the Next Generation Science Standards K-2-ETS1 Engineering Design and 1-PS1 Matter and Its Interactions.

SCHOLASTIC

Before You Read

1. Take a close look at the cover illustration of *Olive & Beatrix: The Not-So Itty-Bitty Spiders* and/or *Olive & Beatrix: The Super-Smelly Moldy Blob.* What do you see? Describe the characters. Can you guess what the story might be about? What clues can you find in the cover to support your prediction?

2. Read the text on the back of the book. What do you learn about the story from this blurb? What questions does it raise about the story?

3. Open the book and read the chapter titles. Do the titles give any further information regarding what the book might be about?

4. Using all of this information, can you make any predictions about what might happen in the book?

Olive & Beatrix: The Not-So Itty-Bitty Spiders

Chapter 1

1. At the beginning of the story we meet Olive and Beatrix. They are twins. What does that mean?

2. Who is Beatrix? Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Beatrix, on a large piece of paper.

    a. Using chapter one as evidence, write any known details about Beatrix inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Beatrix that the class might have.

3. Who is Olive? Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Olive, on a large piece of paper.

    a. Using chapter one as evidence, write any known details about Olive inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Olive that the class might have.

4. Beatrix is described as a witch, while Olive is described as "regular" and "boring." What is a witch? What does it mean to be "regular" and "boring"?

    a. Using the illustrations in chapter one, make a list of the things that Beatrix does that make her a witch.

    b. Then, make a list of the things that Olive does. Do you think Olive is regular and boring? Explain your answer.

5. Eddie lives next door to the twins, and he loves to sing. Why do you think Olive and Eddie are friends?

    a. Make up a song about the trick you think Eddie and Olive might be planning to play on Beatrix.

Making Connections

Using a ball of yarn, your class can create a spiderweb!

Sit in a circle. Start the web by holding on to one end of the yarn as you roll the ball (allowing the yarn to unfurl) to a student sitting across the circle. Then that student will grab ahold of the yarn and roll the ball to another student across the circle. When every student has participated, students can hold tightly to their piece of the yarn and stand up.

The way you have just made a web is like the way that spiders make webs, one string at a time.

Can you find shapes in the web you have created? How many triangles can you find? Spiders use webs to catch bugs that they eat. The caught bug will make the web vibrate, alerting the spider that food has arrived. Shake the web gently to demonstrate.

Do you think your web would be good for catching insects? Why or why not?

Chapters 2–3

1. Why do Olive and Eddie want to play a trick on Beatrix? Describe what they plan to do. What do you think Houston means when he says, "to trick a witch is a risky trick"?
2. Beatrix is so upset when she gets covered in spiders that she says, "if you thought my sneezing hex was bad, get ready for my darkness hex!" Can you guess what the darkness hex might be? Describe your guess in your own words.
3. What happens to make the spiders big? Whose fault do you think it is?
4. List some of the ways that the spiders run wild all over Juniper Hollows.
5. Why do you think Olive says they need magic to make things right?

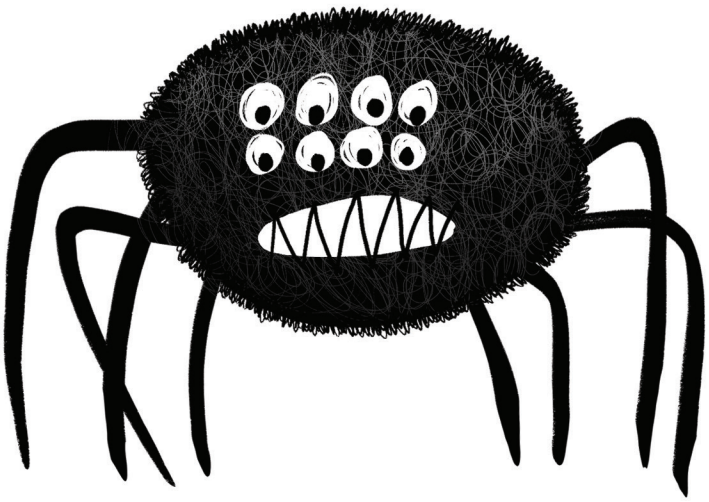
Chapters 4–6

1. While Beatrix works on a shrinking potion, Olive and Eddie gather up some gear. Explain how you think each bit of gear will be used to stop the spiders.

    a. A super-duper spider-sucker
    b. A rainmaker
    c. A spider-proof hat
    d. A pig
    e. Extra wands

2. The kids try several different ways to capture the spiders. Chart their attempts below.

Attempt #	The Attempt	The Result
1	Eddie sings a song	
2	Olive uses the super-duper spider-sucker	
3		
4		



Making Connections

Olive knows a lot about spiders. Take a trip to the school library and—with the help of the librarian—you can learn about spiders, too!

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Encyclopedias
- The Internet

Take notes on what you find. Information to gather could include:

- The many types of spiders
- What spiders eat and where they live
- Write three words that describe a spider
- Interesting fact #1
- Interesting fact #2
- Interesting fact #3

Chapters 7–8

1. Why do the kids head into the Dark Woods? What is their plan?
2. How does Eddie try to calm Olive's fear of the dark? How does Beatrix try to calm Olive's fear of the dark?
3. Explain, in your own words, why Houston hears "the thunder of a thousand teeny-tiny running legs."
4. How do the kids work as a team to shrink the spiders and clean up Juniper Hollows?
5. Olive apologizes for playing the trick on Beatrix. Do you think playing the trick on Beatrix was wrong of Olive and Eddie? Why or why not?

Making Connections

Beatrix is afraid of spiders and Olive is afraid of the dark, but both of them overcome their fears and act bravely to save Juniper Hollows from the spiders.

- What are you afraid of?
- What do you think it means to be brave?

Being brave means a lot of different things, such as:

a. Doing something that is really hard to do, like trying to learn to ride a bike

b. Getting a shot at the doctor's office even though it might hurt

c. Saying "No" to someone who is trying to get you to do something that you know is wrong

- Is it possible to be scared and brave at the same time?

It is okay to be scared sometimes, and brave people get scared too. Sometimes the bravest people are the ones who do what they are supposed to do even though they are scared. Being brave means that you try not to let those fears control how you live or act.

- How can you act brave when you are afraid of something?

Optional discussion for younger students to help them recognize some imaginary fears:

- Why do you think Olive doesn't like the dark? How can you help her feel better about it?
- Why do you think Beatrix is afraid of spiders? How can you help her feel better about it?

Sometimes our imaginations play tricks on us, making us scared of things that might not really happen.

EXTENSION: Use lunch bags, crayons, yarn, and glue to make a puppet and act out a situation in which the puppet is scared and needs to be brave.

Olive & Beatrix: The Super-Smelly Moldy Blob

Chapter 1

1. At the beginning of the story we meet Olive and Beatrix. They are twins. What does that mean?

2. Who is Beatrix? Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Beatrix, on a large piece of paper.

    a. Using chapter one as evidence, write any known details about Beatrix inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Beatrix that the class might have.

3. Who is Olive? Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Olive, on a large piece of paper.

    a. Using chapter one as evidence, write any known details about Olive inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Olive that the class might have.

4. Describe the different methods Olive and Beatrix use to get a cookie from the cookie jar.

5. Who is Eddie?

    a. Why do you think Eddie and Olive are best friends? What are some of the things they have in common?

6. Look closely at the illustrations on page 8. In your own words, describe at least two of the Science Fair projects created by Olive or Eddie in the past.

7. Look closely at the illustrations on page 9. Why does Olive say that Beatrix's projects aren't even scientific?

Making Connections

The Scientific Method is an eight-step process that engineers, scientists, and inventors use to problem solve.

Step 1: Ask a Question
Step 2: Do Research
Step 3: Guess an Answer (also called a Hypothesis)
Step 4: Test Your Guess/Hypothesis
Step 5: Was Your Guess Right? Do You Have a New Guess? Try Again
Step 6: Draw a Conclusion
Step 7: Write a Report of Your Results
Step 8: Retest

- Describe how these eight steps help with problem solving.
- What do you think would happen if you skipped a step?
- Why do you think Step 8 is important?
- Can you find evidence that Olive and Eddie used many of these steps in *Olive & Beatrix: The Super-Smelly Moldy Blob*? How so? Use the illustrations on pages 11 and 12 as evidence.
- Based on this information about the Scientific Method, explain why magic is not science.

Chapters 2–4

1. Why do Olive and Beatrix fight over a specific table at the Science Fair? What happens when they fight?

2. What is created when Olive's and Beatrix's projects smash into one another?

3. Describe Eddie's Science Fair Project.

4. Olive, Beatrix, and Eddie need to stop the moldy blob before anyone sees it. How do you think the friends plan to use the following blob-trapping supplies:

   a. A tennis racket

   b. A volleyball net

   c. A magic wand

5. Do you have any ideas on how to trap the blob? What would you do?

Making Connections

Be a scientist and make your own slime using these materials!

- 4-oz bottle of glue
- borax*
- water
- food coloring

*Wear gloves when handling borax. Do not ingest.

Prepare these two solutions first and then use just the amount needed to make perfect slime.

Borax Solution

Take about a half cup of hot water and stir in borax until it stops dissolving. The solution may be a little cloudy. That is fine. Use the liquid part for making slime, not the gritty stuff at the bottom of the container.

Glue Solution

The trick to making translucent extra-slimy slime is using the right glue. Use white glue and the slime will be opaque. If you want clear jellylike slime, use glue gel. It is usually pale blue, but a little food coloring can turn it any color.

1. Stir 4-oz bottle of glue into 1 cup of water.
2. Add a couple of drops of food coloring. The radioactive green-yellow color is obtained by adding 2 drops of yellow or 2 drops of yellow and 1 drop of green coloring, depending on how green you want the slime.

Make Slime

Mix together 1/3 cup of the borax solution and 1 cup of the glue solution. For bigger batches of slime, just use 1-part borax solution and 3-parts glue solution.

Store Your Slime

When not using the slime, keep it in a sealed plastic bag so that it won't dry out. It will stay moist and disgusting for a couple of weeks if stored in the refrigerator.

Chapters 5–7

1. The kids try several different ways to trap the blob. Chart their attempts below.

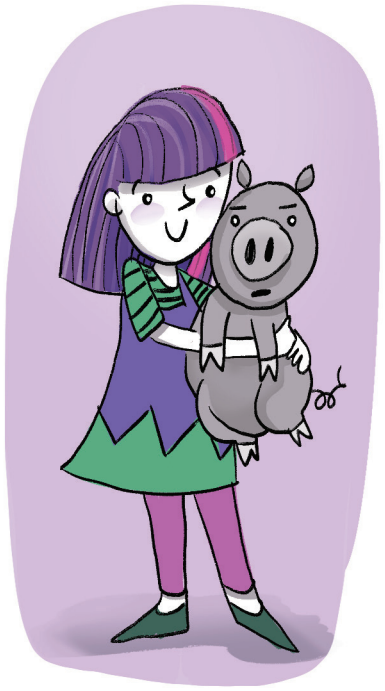
Attempt #	The Attempt	The Result
1	The volleyball net	
2		
3		

2. Olive gets the idea to freeze the blob so that it cannot move. Create a list of things that are frozen. Then, next to each item on the list, write what the item was in its melted state. For example, a fruit popsicle is frozen. In its melted state it is juice.

3. Imagine that you are at school and you see the blob. Describe where the blob oozes and what it gobbles up. Make your story come to life using sensory descriptions (see, taste, smell, touch, and sound).

4. Beatrix uses magic to freeze the blob. Are there any non-magic methods you can think of that could freeze the blob?

5. Olive uses science to free Houston from the blob. What does she do? Can you think of any other ways to free Houston from the frozen blob?



Making Connections

Changing the blob from a liquid to a solid stops it in its tracks and saves the day!

Place five minutes on a timer and list all of the liquids you can think of.

Then, place five more minutes on the timer and list all of the solids.

Looking at each list, describe what a liquid is and what a solid is.

BONUS: Salt lowers the freezing point of water. Using the Internet, find out all about this chemical reaction and create your own demonstration.

Chapter 8

1. How do the kids clean up the blob mess by using both science and magic?

2. Who wins the Science Fair?

3. What is served for dessert? How does Beatrix save them all from having to eat the blob?

After You Read

Here are a few extension activities to further the learning and the fun!

1. Re-enactment

Have students work together to create a newscast about Olive and Beatrix's adventures to present to their classmates. Students will write a script and take on the roles of anchors and on-site reporters. Students can choose to interview characters and eyewitnesses. Videotape the final newscasts so that students can watch themselves on TV.

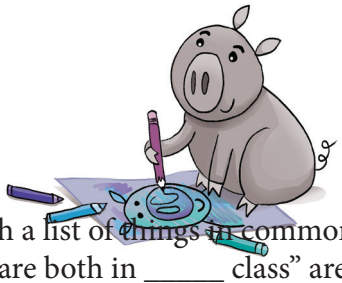
2. All About Siblings

Sibling relationships are very interesting. Here are some activities to explore sibling relationships.

- Make a list of the pros and cons of having a sibling. Use the Olive & Beatrix books for examples where necessary.
- Interview grown-ups who have siblings and discover if there are differences between the way they got along as kids and the way they get along as adults.
- Interview classmates and adults who are only children. Do they wish they had a sibling? Why or why not? What do they think they miss out on by being an only child? What is great about being an only child?

3. What Makes Us Alike/What Makes Us Different

Olive and Beatrix are alike in some ways. Finding things you have in common with people who are different from you can be a good way to start a meaningful relationship. Here is a way to learn what you have in common with your classmates, while also celebrating what makes each of you different and unique.



Materials: A pen and two pieces of paper.

This activity can be done as a whole class or in pairs.

- On one sheet of paper, you will have ten minutes to come up with a list of things in common. Completely obvious answers such as "we both have hair" or "we are both in _____ class" are not allowed!
- After ten minutes, switch to the other paper. You now have ten minutes to come up with a list of things that are unique to each person.
- Share both lists with the class when finished.

4. The Compliment Relay

- Sit in a circle in chairs or on the floor.
- The objective of the game is to pass compliments around the circle.
- One player will give a compliment to the player sitting to his or her right, who will say, "Thank you," and pass a compliment to the next player, and so on.

For example: "I like the way you always hold the door open," "Thank you for_____," or "You're really good at_____." The tendency will be to compliment physical characteristics, but try to focus on complimenting actions.

The game ends when the relay has gone around the circle once. To do a second round, students should change seats. Challenge your students to use a new compliment during the second round.

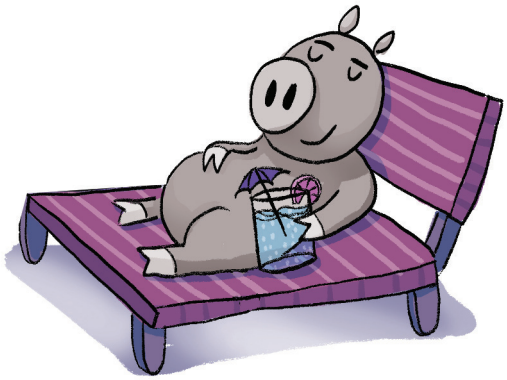
5. Deserted Island Survival Plan

Imagine that there has been an awful shipwreck and you are stranded on a deserted island with the rest of your classmates. Create a list of classmates and one by one determine what each classmate's strength is. For example, Eddie is a wonderful singer, Olive knows a lot about science, and Beatrix is great with magic. Be creative in finding out what each member of the class "brings to the table."

Then, each classmate must mention one item they will bring to the island that represents their strength. For example, Eddie might bring his radio, Olive might bring a beaker, and Beatrix could bring her magic wand.

In groups of 3–4, work together to improve the chances of survival by combining the various objects and abilities. Be sure to use all of the objects and strengths of the group members.

Present your survival plan to the class.



6. Working Together as a Team

Although Eddie, Olive, and Beatrix could not defeat the spiders or the slime alone, they learned that they could be successful when working together as a team. Try these team-building activities…

Rubber Band Trial (groups of 4–5)

- You will need several plastic cups, one rubber band, and four or five ribbons or strings.
- To make the rubber band grabber, tie pieces of string to the rubber band, spacing them as evenly apart as possible (it should look like a sun with rays going out in all directions).
- Each member of the team should hold on to one of the strings that are attached to the rubber band.
- Each group will be tasked with stacking all of the plastic cups on top of each other using only the rubber band grabber. The group uses this tool to pick up the cups and place them on top of each other by pulling the rubber band apart and then bringing it back together over the cups.
- Teams should work to increase speed and accuracy.

Kid-Tangled Challenge

- In a group of 6 or more people (even numbers work best), form a circle. Each person should hold out their right hand and grab the right hand of the person across from them as though the two were shaking hands. Then each person should hold hands (left hands) with a person standing next to them. Each person should be holding hands with two different people.
- Goal of the Game: The goal is for the students to untangle themselves from their situation so that a human circle is formed.
- Rules: The physical hand-to-hand contact that you have with your partner cannot be broken in order to facilitate an "unwinding movement." Sometimes the people in the final circle will end up facing alternating directions. This is OK.
- If the group has been struggling with a tangle for a long time, offer "Tangled First Aid." Let the group decide which grip needs first aid. This pair of hands may then be temporarily undone and re-gripped in order to help the group.
- Additional Challenge: Attempt to untangle without the use of words.

About the Author-Illustrator, Amy Marie Stadelmann

Amy did not grow up with a sister who was a witch, or with a talking pig. But she did grow up with a very active imagination! She often imagined that she had magical powers and could talk to animals. Like Olive, Amy loves reading and is curious about the world around her. And, like Beatrix, she is horribly afraid of spiders! Amy lives in Brooklyn, New York, with a non-talking dog. Olive & Beatrix is her first children's book series.

Visit her at www.amymariestad.com.

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and an MA in Educational Theater from NYU. Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California.

Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

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