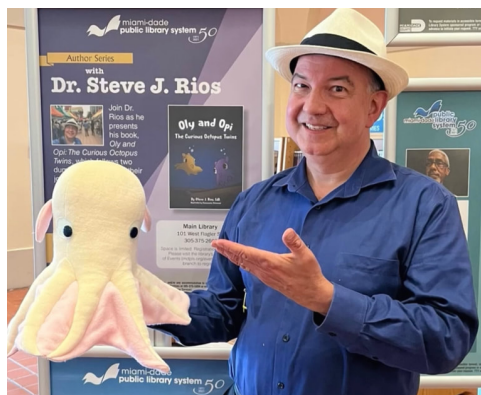


Oly and Opi: The Curious Octopus Book Series

Classroom Discussion Guide to Expand Students' Horizons



Oly and Opi: The Curious Octopus Twins, is a children's picture book written by Steve J. Rios, Ed.D., a veteran educator who has worked with children in and from foster care for more than 25 years. One of the goals of the book is to introduce a variety of new characters and uncommon themes to young readers. According to Dr. Joyce Fine, a nationally-known expert on reading and literature, books have the potential to expand children's horizons. They have to be the right books though. Too often, Dr. Fine notes, elementary aged

children are exposed to "old favorites," which, although valuable, rarely touch upon some of the world's most urgent topics, which are covered by Dr. Rios' *Oly and Opi* book series, which includes two toddler books and a Spanish-English book called *Oly and Opi: Please Let Me Talk*.

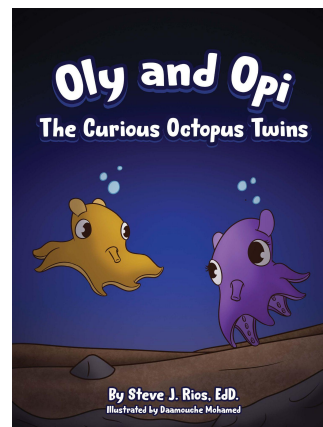
The *Oly and Opi* books for children ages 5-12 can be used to discuss a wide variety of topics, including alternative families, absentee parents, foster care, and the deep sea. Some topics are scientific and some are social-emotional. Many conversations can begin with this charming book, which gently introduces the serious topics of abandonment and foster care with colorful illustrations, interesting characters, and a soft tone.

The setting of these books is the deep sea, which relates to the life sciences body of knowledge, particularly diversity and interdependence, expected by Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS). The standards were created to provide increased challenges to students and to prepare them for college and careers ([Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards | Study.com](https://www.floridaeducation.gov/standards/Florida-Next-Generation-Sunshine-State-Standards-Study.com)) (1).

While the topics related to life sciences (see table below) are directly related to Florida's standard for K-5, the *Oly and Opi* series can easily be used to discuss a variety of other topics as well, such as those found under the categories "social emotional" and "social sciences."



*Dr. Joyce Fine, Associate Prof.,
Reading and Literacy
Florida International University*



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Life Sciences	Social-emotional	Social Science
Deep sea animals	Sadness	Foster care
The deep sea	Loss	Adoption
Dumbo octopuses	Loneliness	Non-traditional families
Toad fish	Uncertainty	Diversity
Deep sea plants	Insecurity	Siblings
Snailfish	Love	Extended family
Starfish	Commitment	Friendship
Conservation	Abandonment	Empathy
Diet	Anger	Compassion

The following section can be used to guide conversation at each grade level, after or during a reading of *Oly and Opi: The Curious Octopus Twins*.

Grade Level	Expectations based on Standards	Potential Questions
Kindergarten	In kindergarten, students start to explore the natural world and learn to make observations using their senses and learn about properties such as color, texture and temperature. Students will learn about plants and animals.	<p>What can you tell me about octopuses based on what you see?</p> <p>When you hear what Oly and Opi and Tia Pinky say, what can you tell me about them?</p> <p>What colors do you see in the book?</p> <p>Do you think it is cold or hot where Oly and Opi live?</p>
First Grade	In first grade, students continue developing the ability to investigate and explore the natural world. They learn how to ask questions and learn more about the properties of the Earth (i.e., oceans) and sun.	<p>Do you think it would be easy to explore the deep sea, where Oly and Opi live?</p> <p>How do you think the area where they live can be explored?</p>

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		<p>What questions do you have about Oly and Opi after you have read the story?</p>
Second Grade	<p>Second graders learn how to differentiate between what can be observed and what can only be inferred. They learn to compare other's observations to their own. Students learn more about Earth's soil and the development of plants. They also learn about the weather and seasons. Further, second graders learn how to measure and weigh objects and how to discuss the different states of matter.</p>	<p>What do you think we could learn by actually seeing dumbo octopuses in the deep sea?</p> <p>What might we NOT be able to know by observing dumbo octopuses?</p> <p>How do you think plants that grow in the deep sea are different from plants that grow on the land? Why do you think what you think?</p> <p>How large do you think Oly and Opi are? How large do you think Tia Pinky is?</p> <p>How much do you think Oly and Opi weigh?</p>
Third Grade	<p>Students in third grade learn how to make inferences based on what they observe. They learn the difference in common meanings of words versus scientific meanings. Additionally, they explore scientific classification.</p>	<p>Based on what you can observe about Oly and Opi and Tia Pinky from the book, what inferences can you make?</p> <p>What is the difference between the name Dumbo octopus, and the actual scientific name, <i>grimpoteuthis</i>, of these animals?</p> <p>What are the classifications of the various animals in the book?</p>
Fourth Grade	<p>In fourth grade, students begin to ask scientific questions and look for empirical answers. They are taught that scientists must find evidence to support their theories. Students start to learn about plant life and reproduction.</p>	<p>What type of scientific questions can we ask about Oly, Opi, Tia Pinky and their friends?</p> <p>What looks different to you about the plants on these pages? How are they different from other plants you may have seen?</p>

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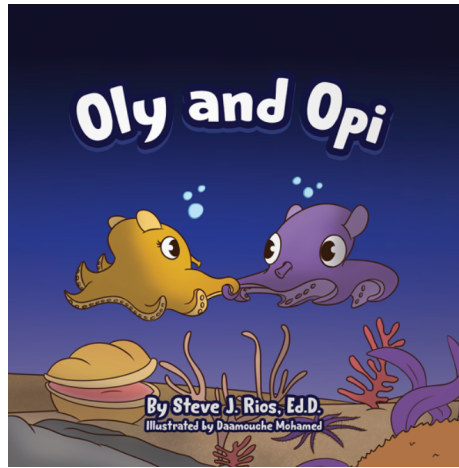
Fifth Grade	Fifth graders are introduced to methods of experimentation, including the need for repetition. They continue to progress in their knowledge of motion and energy. Further, they learn about the human body.	What type of experiments do you think we could do related to the plants and animals in the Oly and Opi book? How do you think these animals get their energy? How are Oly and Opi's bodies similar to, and different from, your body?
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Suggestion for BEFORE Child Reads the Book

Care must be taken to read *Oly and Opi* before allowing a child to read the book alone, as part of a small group and even one-on-one. In *Oly and Opi*, the twin Dumbo octopuses ask their "Aunt" toadfish why their mommy left them. The questions lead to heavy sighs and tears.

For this reason we now have a second version of the book, called simply *Oly and Opi*, that skips over the part where the twins' mother leaves them, and also leaves out the part where the little ones are crying because their mother is not with them. The shorter book is geared towards younger readers and is simply called "Oly and Opi."

It is common for children in care to ask about the missing family members. Furthermore, answering these questions can be difficult, especially since most of the time the questions may seem to come out of the blue.



Although they seem spontaneous, the child may have had questions on their minds and hearts for a long time. So it is important to be prepared to answer questions that reflect what may be the child's most personal fears, such as abandonment or being alone. Remember, discretion is always an expected and needed quality when talking to young children.

While discretion is needed, so is calmness and the ability to provide answers that satisfy young minds without providing too much information about parents who may be trying adequately to regain custody. or may not be doing what they need to regain custody.

Discussion Guide for Oly and Opi: The Curious Octopus Twins

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For more information, please contact Dr. Steve J. Rios, President, NPO Library, at DrSteve@DeepSeaMedia.org. Or call (786) 223-6884.



Click [HERE](#) for the video. (2)



Click [HERE](#) for our website. (3)

Links:

1. Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards | Study.com
<https://study.com/academy/popular/florida-next-generation-sunshine-state-standards.html>

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2. Oly and Opi YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/@deepseamedia5004>
3. Oly and Opi Website
<https://www.deepseamedia.org>