

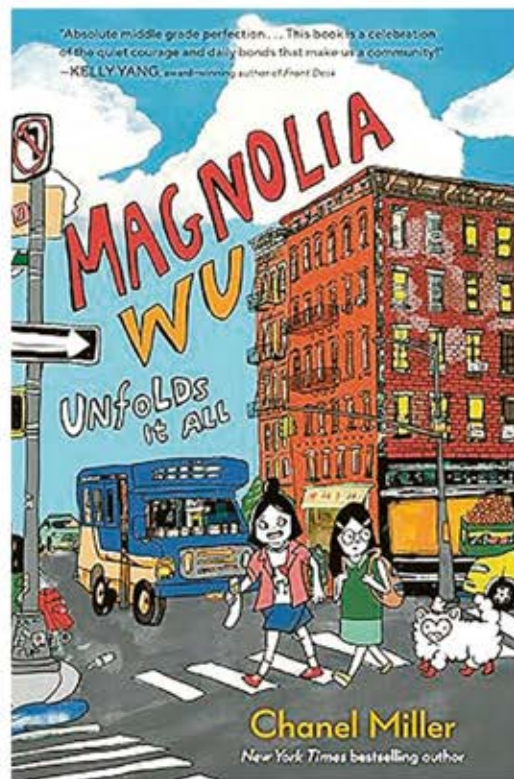
# Reading <sup>with</sup> Relevance<sup>®</sup>

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

## *Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All*

A novel by Chanel Miller



Recommended for:  
Grade Levels  
2-4

# A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around an authentically engaging novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their social and emotional development. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this standards-aligned curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!

Why



## Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All?

Meet 10-year-old Magnolia Wu, and follow along as she escapes summer boredom with her new friend Iris, who inspires them to quest around New York City reuniting a laundromat's collection of lost socks with their owners. We chose this book for its playful exploration of important social and emotional themes—friendship, empathy, and community—along with its powerful inclusion of more complex themes of immigration, racism, strength, and trust. Magnolia's ability to find the joy in everyday life, and her skill of capturing humor even as she dives into harsher realities will inspire and engage young readers; this curriculum will help students build connections between Magnolia's experiences exploring her city and their own experiences in community.

### This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program
- Eight individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts
- An assessment to monitor student progress throughout the program
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards
- A culminating essay-building unit
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel

# Session 2

pages 19-42

## Vocabulary

**stewed** (pg. 19): v., worried about something

**pummeling** (pg. 22): v., pounding, beating, or striking repeatedly with the fists

**mesmerized** (pg. 22): v., intensely held someone's attention

**demeanor** (pg. 28): n., behavior toward others

**unfurled** (pg. 30): v., unrolled, unfolded, or spread out

**dollop** (pg. 32): n., a lump or glob of something soft or mushy

**wheeze** (pg. 35): v., to breathe with a whistling or rattling sound in the chest

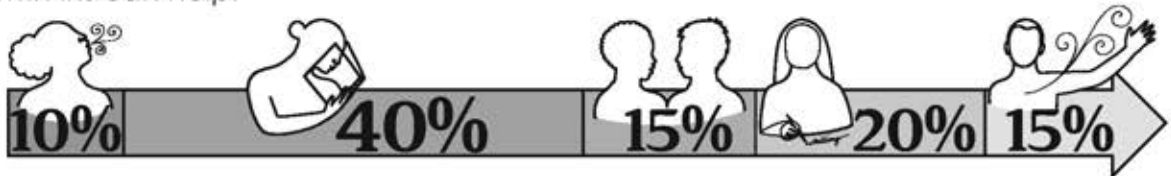
**instinctively** (pg. 37): adv., acted based on impulse, without reason

## Today's Theme

Today's theme is **community**. Magnolia begins to show Iris around her new home, helping her get to know her bustling new city; together, they explore some of their neighborhood's sights and meet some neighbors along the way. Ask your students how they would describe their own communities. Using their senses as a guide, what do their neighborhoods look like, sound like, smell like? If they were responsible for helping someone new get to know their community, what spaces and places would they share? What are their favorite things about their neighborhoods?

## Session 1 Recap

In the last reading session, we met Magnolia Wu, who is about to turn 10. The book opens in summer, with Magnolia at the laundromat where she spends most of her time—her parents have worked seemingly without a break since she was born, and are not always treated kindly by customers. Magnolia has made a bulletin board of lost socks and enjoys thinking about the mystery of the people who owned them before they were left behind at the laundromat. Magnolia is yearning for some adventure and excitement in her life and hopes her budding friendship with Iris can help.



## During Reading

**orb** (pg. 23): n., an object shaped like a sphere or globe

**burpee** (pg. 23): an exercise in which a push-up is followed by a leap in the air

**knapsack** (pg. 23): a bag with two straps that you wear over your shoulders, leaving your arms free, like a backpack

**stream of consciousness** (pg. 26): the continuous unedited, chronological flow of thoughts and experiences as they flow through the mind

## Discussion Questions

- What do you think about Magnolia's crush on Luis, the boy whose dad runs the barbershop?
- Iris explains that it's sometimes hard to speak up, sharing, "When people start yelling, I get quiet, like my mouth's full of glue" (pg. 23). Can you relate to this feeling?
- Iris's "stream of consciousness" method gets them started on their sock adventure. Do you agree with Iris that, "We don't need the right answer. We just have to begin" (pg. 27)?
- What do you notice about how Iris feels on the streets of New York City? Why do you imagine she feels this way?
- What do you think Carl means when he says, "You and Iris are two pawns, and the city is one big chessboard" (pg. 31)?
- Magnolia is embarrassed when she misspells the word exhausted. How do you feel when you make a mistake?
- Luis says that listening makes you a great barber. What else can listening make you great at?
- How do you think Magnolia and Iris feel after solving their first sock mystery?

**SOCK  
DETECTIVES**

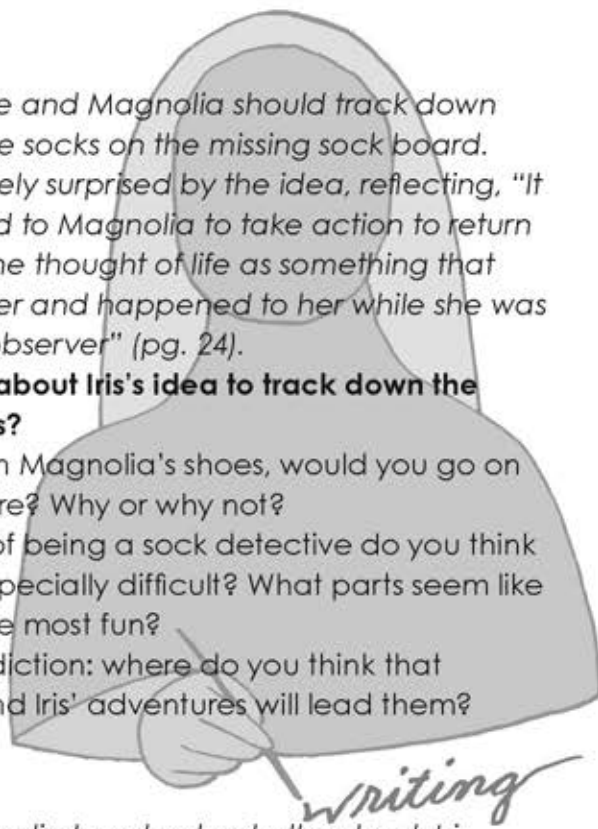


**OVERWHELM**

- Iris suggests that she and Magnolia should track down the owners of all the socks on the missing sock board. Magnolia is genuinely surprised by the idea, reflecting, "It had never occurred to Magnolia to take action to return the socks herself. She thought of life as something that unfolded around her and happened to her while she was content being an observer" (pg. 24).

**What do you think about Iris's idea to track down the owners of the socks?**

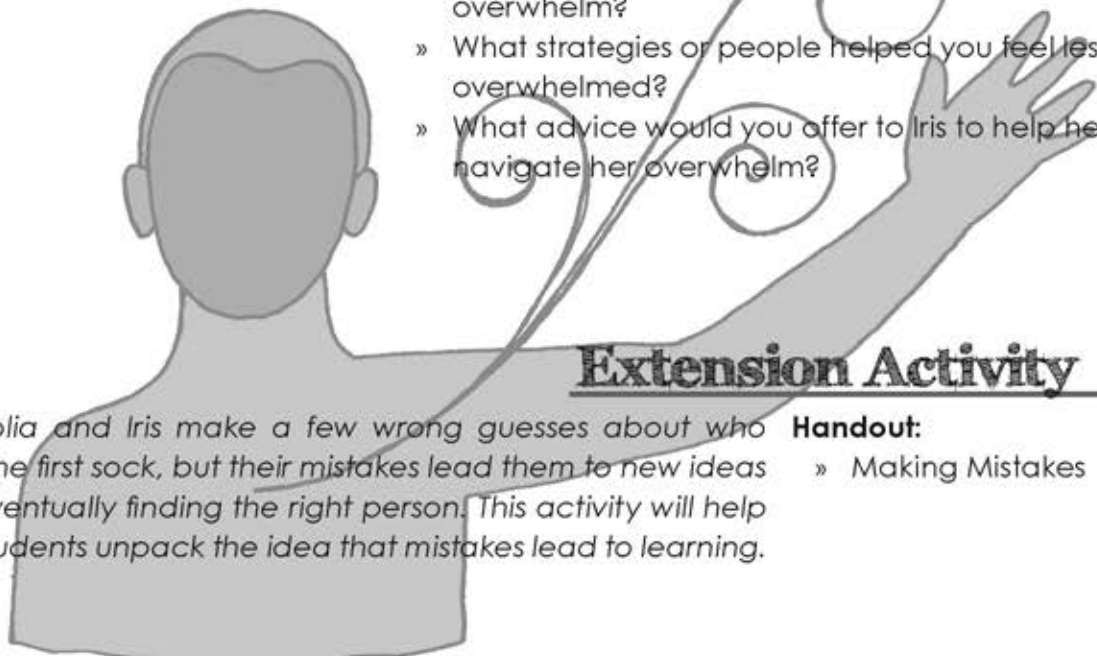
- » If you were in Magnolia's shoes, would you go on this adventure? Why or why not?
- » What parts of being a sock detective do you think would be especially difficult? What parts seem like they'd be the most fun?
- » Make a prediction: where do you think that Magnolia and Iris' adventures will lead them?



- When Iris and Magnolia head out onto the street, Iris doesn't feel as confident as she felt earlier. Because Iris hasn't lived in a big city before, Magnolia helps her with tips and tricks to adjust and feel safe in the busy world of New York City, advising Iris to break through her overwhelm by focusing on "look[ing] for the little things" (pg. 28) she notices around her.

**Write about a time when you were overwhelmed. What did this feel like?**

- » What do you think caused this feeling of overwhelm?
- » What strategies or people helped you feel less overwhelmed?
- » What advice would you offer to Iris to help her navigate her overwhelm?



**Extension Activity**

Magnolia and Iris make a few wrong guesses about who owns the first sock, but their mistakes lead them to new ideas and eventually finding the right person. This activity will help your students unpack the idea that mistakes lead to learning.

**Handout:**

- » Making Mistakes

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree that an error is a "creative act"? Why or why not?

What is a mistake you have learned from? What happened?

How did you feel in the moment?

How did you feel later?

What did you learn from the mistake?



Magnolia and Iris make a few wrong guesses about who owns the first sock, but their mistakes lead them to new ideas and they eventually find the right person. In this activity, you will explore an important idea that Lisa introduces—that an error is a creative act.

## Making Mistakes

# Appendix

## *Additional Activities*

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## Our Story

**We are a collective of progressive educators** on a mission: sharing and scaling the program we've built for (and with!) our students over the last decade, to inspire relevant reading experiences, heartfelt conversations, and instructional breakthroughs in classrooms across the nation. We wrote *Reading with Relevance* because we couldn't find the tool we needed to effectively teach our students. Most of the young people in our classrooms not only came to us two to four years below their grade level, but also with very real social and emotional struggles that sometimes felt more important than school. We came to believe that meeting students' social and emotional needs was the key to unlocking their academic potential.

*Reading with Relevance* leverages student interest in highly engaging social and emotional learning activities to develop crucial academic skills: reading fluency, comprehension, and critical thinking. We turn barriers to learning into the very tools that accelerate literacy.

## Training and Professional Development Services

*While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula. Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services.*

## Contact Us

*Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!*

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## If your students liked *Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All* . . .

they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *Donavan's Word Jar*, *Keena Ford and the Second-Grade Mix-Up*, and *Charlotte's Web*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!