

# A READING GROUP GUIDE

TO BOOKS BY

# Hena Khan



## A READING GROUP GUIDE TO *Amina's Voice*

HC: 9781481492065 | PB: 9781481492072 | Ebook: 9781481492089  
Ages 8–12 | Grades 3–7 | Lexile® 800L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ U

### Awards & Honors

- ALA Notable Children's Books
- CCBC Choices (Cooperative Children's Book Center)
- CBC/NCSS (Notable Social Studies Trade Book)
- Texas Bluebonnet Master List
- South Asia Book Award Highly Commended Title
- NCTE Charlotte Huck Outstanding Fiction Recommended Title

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

The first year of middle school is tricky. Suddenly, Amina's best friend, Soojin, starts talking about changing her name and, even worse, spending time with Emily—a girl that used to make fun of them! Amina's older brother seems to be getting into a lot of trouble for his grades, and now he wants to play basketball instead of studying. To make matters worse, her uncle comes to visit from Pakistan, and her parents seem to be trying awfully hard to impress him. With so many changes, it's hard to know how to be a good friend, sister, and daughter. But when Amina's mosque is vandalized, she learns that the things that connect us will always be stronger than the things that try to tear us apart.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe Amina's feelings about music. What keeps Amina from telling her teacher that she would like to sing a solo? What could Amina do to overcome her fear? Have you ever been afraid to do something you wanted to do? What happened?
2. Why does Soojin consider changing her name? Why do you think Amina is uncomfortable with the idea of Soojin changing her name? Have you ever wanted to change your own name?
3. Why do you think Emily decides to stop being friends with Julie and to start being friends with Soojin and Amina? Why doesn't Amina trust her at first? How would you react if someone who had been mean to you in the past tried to become your friend?
4. What causes tension between Amina's parents and her brother? How do they resolve their differences? Have you ever wanted to do something your parents did not want you to do? Have your parents ever required you to do something you did not want to do? How did you handle the situation?
5. How is Thaya Jaan related to Amina? How can you tell that Amina's parents respect Thaya Jaan? What do they agree about? What do they disagree about?
6. Why is Amina initially unhappy with the group she is assigned to work with on her class Oregon Trail project? What is the best thing about working with a group? What is the hardest thing about working with a group? What does Amina learn from working with Bradley, Soojin, and Emily?

7. Describe what happens at Amina’s Sunday school. Do you attend any religious services or classes? If so, how is Amina’s experience similar to yours? How is it different?
8. Both Amina and Soojin have been teased because of the food they bring to school or the way their food smells. Why do you think people tease or bully kids who are different? If you were in Amina or Soojin’s position, how would you respond? If you encounter someone from a different cultural background, how should you respond to them?
9. Discuss the role that forgiveness plays in the novel. Who does Amina need to forgive? Whom does she need to ask for forgiveness? Do you think it is more difficult to ask for forgiveness or to forgive someone else?
10. How does jealousy threaten Soojin and Amina’s friendship? What does Amina learn about Soojin, Emily, and herself as a result? Do you think Soojin is a good friend to Amina? Is Amina a good friend to Soojin?
11. In the novel, Amina is trusted with secrets. Do you think she’s right to keep Mustafa’s secret? Should she have kept Emily’s secret? Why is it sometimes hard to keep secrets? Are there ever secrets that you should not keep?
12. Amina’s parents and Thaya Jaan disagree about whether or not music is forbidden. In every family, people disagree about the way to raise children and about what types of behavior should be allowed. How does Amina navigate the conflicting viewpoints in her own family? Have you ever had to navigate a similar situation? If so, how did you handle it?
13. What is backbiting? Why does Amina feel guilty of backbiting? In your opinion, did she backbite Emily? Explain your answer.
14. Amina’s parents are concerned that Thaya Jaan will not be happy when he visits because, as they say, “You know there’s some bad feeling in this country toward Muslims, and all this negative talk in the news these days.” When Thaya Jaan is in America, what evidence of bad feelings toward Muslims does he witness? What good things about America and acts of kindness does he witness? What does he conclude about life in America?
15. What is vandalism? How did the description of the vandalism of Amina’s mosque make you feel? How do you think you would feel if your school or place of worship was vandalized? Explain how this act of violence ends up bringing Amina’s community together.
16. The novel ends with a message of change. In literature, characters that change are called *dynamic* characters. Almost all the characters in *Amina’s Voice* are dynamic characters. Explain how each character changes.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. The characters in *Amina’s Voice* have different cultural backgrounds. Amina’s family is from Pakistan, Soojin’s family is Korean, and Emily’s grandmother was Polish. Research the cultural background of a character in the novel or research your own family’s cultural heritage and participate in a multicultural celebration where you present your research to your class.
2. *Amina’s Voice* includes vocabulary and references to Islamic and Pakistani culture. Choose an unfamiliar vocabulary word and research what it means. Working with your classmates, create a word wall for the book.
3. Food plays an important role in both Soojin and Amina’s families. Research the food of Pakistan or Korea and try cooking a traditional dish at home or eating in a Korean, Indian, or Pakistani restaurant to sample one of the foods that Khan writes about (ex. kimchee, masala chai, naan, gulab jamun, or bulgogi). Write a food review of the dish or dishes you sampled, including a recipe so that your classmates can try the food at home if they wish.
4. One of the conflicts that Soojin must resolve is the question of whether or not to change her name. Ask your parents the story behind your own name. How did they select it? What does your name mean?
5. After Amina’s mosque is vandalized, Soojin’s church volunteers to host the Islamic Center’s carnival and Quran competition. What common values bring these communities together? Why is it important for people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds to be kind to one another and work together?

6. Amina is given a class project to compete with her classmates in a game called *The Oregon Trail*. What was the Oregon Trail? With a group of classmates, play this game and see how you do as settlers. The original version of the game is available for free online, but it has also been reimagined as both an app and a card game. What did playing this game teach you about working together?
7. In Sunday school, Amina hears the story of Prophet Yusuf and his jealous brothers. How is this story similar to the story of Joseph and the coat of many colors? Examine another story, such as the story of the great flood or a folktale like “Cinderella” or “Beauty and the Beast” that has different versions in different cultures.
8. Amina chooses the classic Sam Cooke song “A Change Is Gonna Come” to sing at the concert. Look up the lyrics and research the history of the song. What inspired Cooke to write the song? Why do you think the song became known as an anthem of the civil rights movement? Why do you think Amina relates to this particular song?
9. Throughout the book, the author uses figurative language to describe Amina’s feelings. For example, Amina describes jealousy as “a fresh shock...that courses through my veins like I had stuck my pen in an electrical socket.” Using Amina’s descriptions as a model, write a list of similes that describe the way different emotions feel.
10. Soojin and her family are very excited about becoming American citizens. Research the pathway to American citizenship. How difficult is it to become a United States citizen? What happens at a naturalization ceremony? If you have a family member that has gone through the naturalization process, ask them what it was like. Did they do anything special to celebrate the ceremony?
11. After the mosque is vandalized, Imam Malik says, “Muslims have far more friends than enemies in this country. Some people don’t understand Islam or are misled and fear us. But I’m getting so many calls of support from our friends and neighbors in the community.” One quality that makes America special is the fact that we are welcoming of different cultures. What steps can your class or community take to support and be kind to one another and to people from different cultural backgrounds?
12. Imagine this book as the first part of a series. What do you think is next for Amina, Soojin, Emily, and Mustafa? Create a book jacket for an imagined sequel to *Amina’s Voice*. Include a brief synopsis of your imagined sequel.



## A READING GROUP GUIDE TO *Amina's Song*

HC: 9781534459885 | PB: 9781534459892 | Ebook: 9781534459908  
Ages 8–12 | Grades 3–7 | Lexile® 800L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ U

### Awards & Honors

- APALA Asian/Pacific American Award for Children's Literature
- Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year Selection Title
- CCBC Choices (Cooperative Children's Book Center)

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

*Amina's Song* picks up where *Amina's Voice* leaves off; these books can be read in any order as companion novels. As Amina prepares to enter seventh grade, she becomes more aware of navigating her dual identities as an American and a Pakistani girl. A summer trip to visit her uncle Thaya Jaan and extended family in Pakistan opens her eyes to the rich culture of her family's homeland, sparking a desire to share her culture with her friends and classmates in America and to counter stereotypes. Music provides the answer that she's looking for, but this time around, she won't use her voice to sing a song written by someone else; with the help of her new friend Nico, she will share her own unique song with the world.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before you begin reading, brainstorm everything you know or think you know about the country of Pakistan. Next, make a list of things you want to know about Pakistan. After you finish reading, look back at your list. Were the things you believed you knew correct? What did you learn about Pakistan by reading *Amina's Song*? What are you still curious to know?
2. Why was Amina initially nervous about visiting Pakistan? Explain how her experience in Pakistan was different from what she expected.
3. Amina remembers her father explaining the difference between rational and irrational fear. Why is it important to recognize this distinction? How can you tell the difference? Can you give examples from your own experiences or from the novel?
4. Why does Amina want her classmates and friends in America to see Pakistan the way she sees it? Why is she happy when she learns that America is helping to preserve a World Heritage Site in Pakistan?
5. Why do you think Amina is emotional when it comes time for her visit to Pakistan to end? Can you relate to how Amina feels when she says goodbye to her uncle, aunts, and cousins? What experience of your own comes to mind?
6. Amina and her cousin Zohra have very different approaches to bargaining with the street vendors at the market in Pakistan. Describe the differences in the ways they approach their roles as customers. Do you think you would be more like Zohra or Amina in a similar situation?

7. Explain how seeing the little boy asking for money in Pakistan impacts Amina. How does she turn this sense of empathy into action to help others once she returns to America?
8. When she is on the plane returning to the United States, Amina wonders if her brother is “as mixed up as I am, as we travel not only through time zones but also from one part of our lives to another.” Why does leaving Pakistan cause her to feel this way? Do you have a place that is so important to you that it feels like it is a part of you? Explain your answers.
9. Why does Soojin decide to run for student body president? What sets her campaign apart from her competitors? Have you ever considered running for student government? Explain your answers.
10. What does Amina realize about Rabiya’s feelings toward her friendship with Zohra and her trip to Pakistan? What do you think might have happened if Amina had gotten angry with Rabiya instead of considering how Rabiya might be feeling? What actions does she take instead, and how does her response toward Rabiya impact their relationship?
11. Toward the end of the book, Amina reflects, “even if my friends can’t understand everything I’ve been going through lately, they’re trying. And we can support each other while we do different things.” What steps does Amina take to maintain her friendships with Emily and Soojin? Why do you think some friends grow apart while others remain? Can you learn anything from Amina, Soojin, and Emily about how to be a good friend?
12. Why does Amina choose to research Malala for her history project? Explain why sharing her preliminary research makes Amina worry that she’s chosen the wrong person to profile. How does Amina solve this dilemma? Why do you think her teacher calls her decision “brave”?
13. All the seventh-grade students participate in a Living Wax Museum project, where they research, dress as, and present reports on a historical figure. You may have participated in a similar project in the past. If so, whom did you choose as your historical figure? Reflect on your reasons for selecting them and what you learned. If you have never participated in this activity, whom would you select to research and impersonate? Why would you choose them?
14. One of Amina’s strengths is her ability to consider what other people might be thinking or experiencing and how they might feel. Read the last paragraphs of chapter eleven. What can you learn from Amina’s example? How does having and practicing empathy change the way a person interacts with other people?
15. What is the difference between primary sources and secondary research sources? Why is it important to look at a variety of different sources when you are gathering information? What can happen if you only use one source or one type of reference source in your research?
16. Amina is frustrated by her friends’ and family’s assumptions that she is romantically interested in Nico. She reflects, “But maybe I want to be friends with a boy without everyone assuming he’s my boyfriend.” Have you ever been in a situation like Amina? Do you think that it’s harder for boys and girls to be friends as they get older? Explain your answers.
17. Describe the special bond that Amina has with her uncle, Thaya Jaan. Do you have a family member whom you feel particularly close to? What interests or activities brought you together?

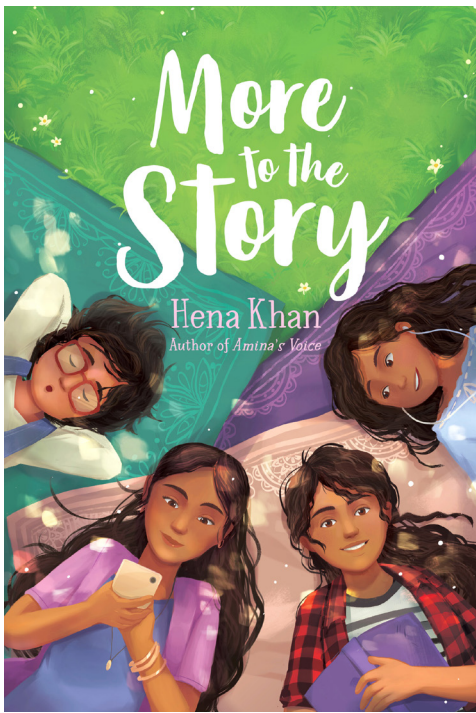
## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. This book is a companion novel to *Amina’s Voice*. Read both books and consider how Amina’s character develops throughout. Identify events in the first book that are significant to her character’s development, and discuss how these events impact her in the second book. For example, in the first book, Amina’s mosque is vandalized, an event that is alluded to several times in *Amina’s Song*. How does this continue to impact the way Amina feels and responds to others?
2. Children like Amina, who grow up in between two cultures, are sometimes referred to as “Third-Culture Kids” or TCK, a term that recognizes the impact of growing up in a culture different from a parent’s culture. Amina describes this sensation when she says, “I can’t help feeling like an impostor or a shapeshifter who appears to be a regular Pakistani girl on the outside but doesn’t know how to act like one.” Research the concept of third-culture kids, and think about Amina’s experiences in the book. Then write an essay considering the following questions: What unique challenges might TCKs face? What are

the benefits of being a TCK? Alternatively, if you identify as a TCK, write an essay sharing and reflecting on some of your experiences. Then participate in a class or small group discussion about what most surprised you or what you felt were the most important conclusions in your essay. What can you do to make your classroom or community more welcoming or inclusive? What kinds of things would you like to learn about your classmates?

3. Amina documents her trip to Pakistan by taking photos and videos. Journaling gives her another way to preserve her memories, and she is eventually able to create a song and video about her trip. Look back at photos and videos of a special day or memorable trip and then write down your memories and reflections about what the experience meant to you; if you don't have these items, consider talking to the people who were with you to remember some of your favorite parts about the experience. As Amina says, "All the memories, funny moments, and unforgettable scenes living inside me, things I've been thinking about and writing about in my notebook, are parts of me." Use your memories to create a song, collage, video, webpage, slideshow, poem, podcast, or even a narrative essay to document and share this part of your life with others.
4. Amina finds herself drawn to the music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a musician who performed in a traditional Pakistani style known as Qawwali. Research this style of music and explain the cultural significance of Qawwali. Choose one Qawwali song and analyze the lyrics. Can you think of any Western songs that have similar themes or messages? Why do you think this music resonates so strongly with Amina?
5. Soojin's cousin inspires her to run for student government by telling her, "we can't afford to sit on the sidelines because we're the next generation of leaders." Work with a small group to discuss a local, national, or global problem that you would like to help tackle, and brainstorm ways to make a difference through community service.
6. When Amina is anxious or upset, she often gets a stomachache. Research the different ways anxiety can impact physical well-being, and find strategies to help deal with it. Present your findings in an informational poster or flyer to help raise awareness about best practices for managing and talking about mental health.
7. Amina describes her feelings by saying, "It's like a piece of me was left in Pakistan, and I wonder when I'll be whole again." When she shares this with her friends, she finds out that Soojin hasn't visited Korea in years, and her friend Emily misses her summer camp. Write a descriptive essay about a place that is important or meaningful to you. Try to describe it with the same level of detail that author Hena Khan uses to describe Pakistan, making sure to use imagery or words that appeal to each of the five senses to help your reader picture the place you describe.
8. Amina's family works with their faith community to help refugees get settled in America. How do different members of the community contribute? Why is it important to make people feel welcome? Choose one of the following projects:
  - Research local or national organizations that help refugees, and share ways your classmates can help.
  - Develop a plan for ways that your school can formally welcome transfer students, help them make friends, and adjust to a new school.
9. Nico teaches himself and then Amina how to use music-editing software on his laptop. Most computers, phones, and tablets have access to programs for music composition and editing. Using a photo or group of pictures as inspiration, try composing a short piece of music about your memory. Consider the way that different sounds, beats, and melodies can reflect emotions. You can choose to include lyrics in your song, or you can make it instrumental.



## A READING GROUP GUIDE TO *More to the Story*

HC: 9781481492096 | PB: 9781481492102 | Ebook: 9781481492119  
Ages 8–12 | Grades 3–7 | Lexile® 710L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ V

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

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Hena Khan offers middle grade readers a modern story inspired by the classic novel *Little Women*. When a work contract takes their father overseas for six months, the Mirza sisters—Maryam, Jameela, Bisma, and Aleeza—find their lives changed unexpectedly. Jameela, an aspiring journalist, wants to find the perfect subject for her next school newspaper article: one that will make her father proud and position her to become senior editor next year. But when her latest story threatens to end a new friendship with Ali, a boy from England with a charming accent and sense of humor, and her beloved younger sister becomes dangerously ill, she discovers that there is more to the stories she wants to tell.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Describe the relationships that the Mirza siblings have with their parents and one another. Which sisters are the closest? Which sisters have conflicts? How does each sister relate to their mother and father? Explain the ways that the relationships in the book are similar to and different from relationships you have with your parents, siblings, or others you live with.
2. Why does Baba have to be away from home? Have you ever had to be separated from someone close to you, like a parent or sibling? What did you do to stay in touch? How did the distance affect your relationship?
3. How do the characters in this book encourage one another? Why do you think it's important to support and encourage others?
4. Jameela says, "That's why social media is messed up. It makes you worry about what you're not doing, or lets everyone else know what they're not doing. And then you can't enjoy what you're doing now." Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement. Can you identify any positive uses of social media in the book?
5. What advice does Jameela's mother give her about handling her emotions? How does Jameela's temper cause her trouble? Are you quick to show anger like Jameela, or do you have a different way of dealing with things that bother or upset you? What advice have people given to you?
6. Why is Jameela offended by Kenzie's and Maureen's comments that she's good at archery because she's "Indian"? Do you think Kenzie and Maureen were trying to be offensive? Do you think Jameela, Kenzie, and Maureen handled this situation correctly? How would you respond if you realized you had unintentionally offended or hurt someone's feelings?



7. Jameela’s parents don’t want their daughters to worry about the family’s finances, so they try to protect them from finding out too much. Do you think parents or guardians should be open with their children about things like financial challenges, or is it better for them to keep these problems to themselves?
8. Why does Ali refuse to contribute to Jameela’s newspaper article about microaggressions? Why do you think he reacts the way he does when she tells him that she wants to change the focus of the article? How would you have handled the situation if you were Jameela?
9. Travis and Jameela have to work together on the school newspaper even though they disagree about many issues related to journalism. How do they learn to work together? How have you dealt with disagreements with a partner on a group project or other activity? Why is it important to work with people who have ideas that are different than yours?
10. What does Jameela help Ali realize about the reason he has given up playing soccer?
11. Why was it wrong for Jameela to include Ali’s anecdote in the article she published on microaggressions? In chapter thirty-five, Ms. Levy discusses the ethical rules of journalism with her students. Identify these rules and explain why each one is important.
12. Aleeza feels like she should be allowed to have a phone even though she is not yet thirteen, which is the age that Jameela and Maryam received their phones. Do you agree or disagree with her reasons for wanting a phone? How would you make an argument for receiving your first phone? What responsibilities come with having one? Explain your answers.
13. How does Bisma’s illness bring the Mirza family closer together? Why do you think it can sometimes be difficult to ask for help?
14. Do you think that Ali and Jameela feel the same way about each other? How do you know? Explain your answers.
15. Why does Jameela decide to shave her head? How do you think her gesture made Bisma feel?
16. Jameela’s article is about microaggressions, which are comments or actions based on stereotypes or prejudices that are intentionally or unintentionally insulting. The media often perpetuates stereotypes in the way it portrays people and communities. How does Hena Khan’s book challenge stereotypes about Muslim families? Why do you think books that challenge stereotypes are important?
17. One of Jameela’s characteristics that helps her to write well is her ability to view others with empathy. How does she demonstrate empathy toward Bisma? Why is empathy especially important for a journalist?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

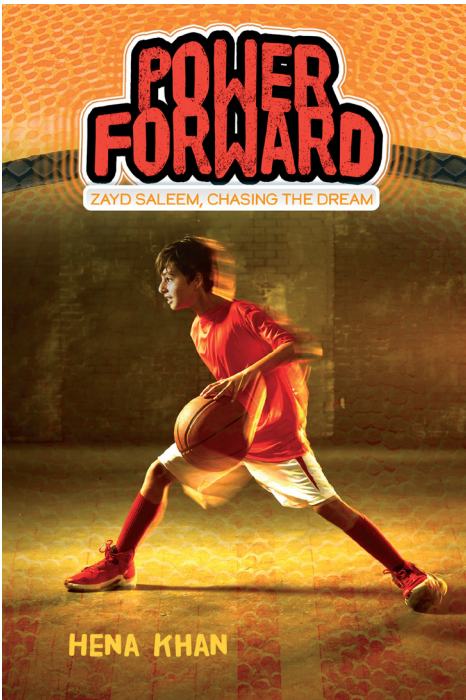
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1. Jameela wants to publish a digital version of the paper rather than continuing to print paper copies. Work with a group to write and publish an edition of a class or family newspaper. Before you begin writing, debate and decide whether you want to publish a physical or digital newspaper, and the merits of both. Each group member should choose a story to write, keeping in mind Ms. Levy’s ethical rules of journalism. Make sure you’ve chosen diverse content in various styles and formats that showcases your group’s personalities!
2. Hena Khan’s novel is inspired by Louisa May Alcott’s 1868 novel *Little Women*. Read Alcott’s novel or watch a film adaptation of the book, and create a chart comparing characters and plot elements in *More to the Story* and *Little Women*. Does seeing the parallels give you a deeper understanding of any of Hena Khan’s characters or their motivations?
3. When Bisma is diagnosed with cancer, her friends and family create a support network for her. Research an organization or event that supports cancer patients, survivors, and their families. Some research possibilities include Relay for Life, St. Baldrick’s Foundation, Light the Night, Rally for the Cure, CaringBridge, Beads of Courage, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Deliver a presentation about the organization you’ve selected, including ideas about how you or your classmates can get involved. Why do you think communities like this are so important?

4. Research microaggressions, including what they are, why they matter, and how to avoid them. With your newfound knowledge, create an awareness campaign that encourages your school community to be mindful of the words they use. Develop a slogan, a poster image, and a call to action.
5. Jameela considers the role of English classes and an after-school writing club in fostering her love of journalism and her friendship with a fellow writer, Lily. Create your own piece of creative writing, inspired by *More to the Story*. You may want to write a short story that imagines where one or more of the characters will be five years after the end of the novel, or rewrite a scene in the book from a different character's point of view. You may even want to try writing a contemporary retelling of a classic story.
6. One article that Jameela proposes for the paper is a debate about whether or not schools should ban football. Research this issue, and then divide into two groups for a class debate about this controversial topic.
7. Baba's career takes him away from his daughters as he travels overseas with a short-term contract for work in Abu Dhabi. Locate Abu Dhabi on a map or globe and research some key locations and facts about Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Then create a travel guide for Abu Dhabi that includes information about local currency, transportation, climate, places to see, food, and culture.

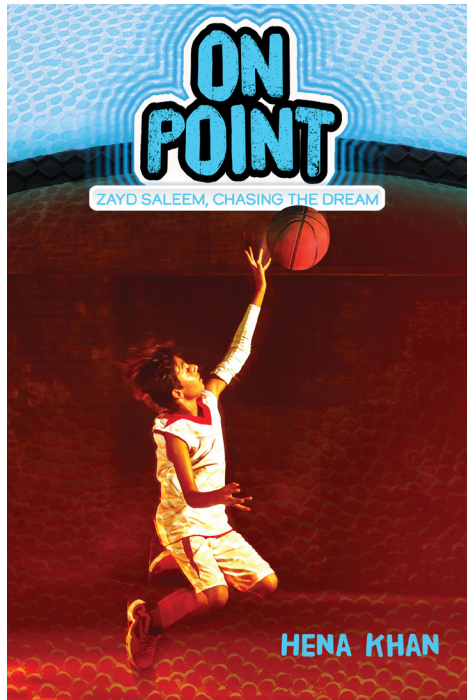
## A READING GROUP GUIDE TO

# ZAYD SALEEM, CHASING THE DREAM



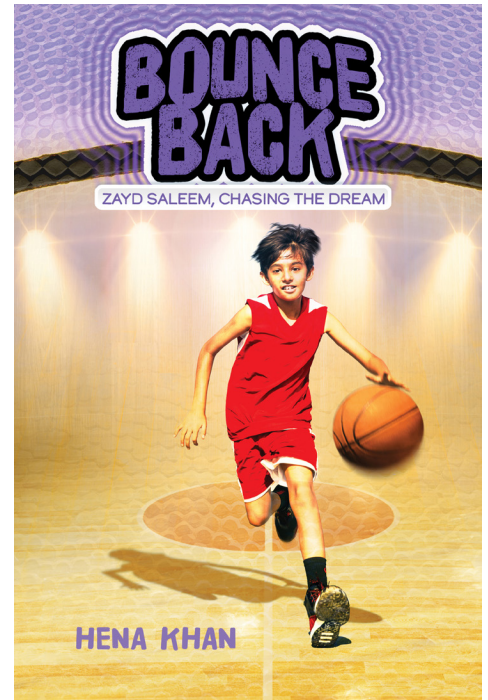
### #1: *Power Forward*

HC: 9781534411982 | PB: 9781534411999  
Ebook: 9781534412002  
Ages 7–10 | Grades 2–5  
Lexile® 600L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ Q



### #2: *On Point*

HC: 9781534412026 | PB: 9781534412019  
Ebook: 9781534412033  
Ages 7–10 | Grades 2–5  
Lexile® 650L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ Q



### #3: *Bounce Back*

HC: 9781534412057 | PB: 9781534412040  
Ebook: 9781534412064  
Ages 7–10 | Grades 2–5  
Lexile® 680L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ Q

These questions and activities can be used with *Power Forward* and *On Point*.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

Fourth grader Zayd Saleem is not just going to be a professional basketball player. He's going to be a star—the first Pakistani American kid to make it to the NBA. However, life can get complicated, especially when your dreams are different from the plans your family has for you. Zayd has a loving and close-knit family, but what his parents want him to do (and eat) is not always the same as what he wants for himself. After his favorite uncle, Jamal Mamoo, helps him learn to stand up for himself, it's his turn to be a leader and help his best friend, Adam, and Uncle Jamal to follow their dreams as well.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Make a family tree for Zayd, including a description of each member of his family. Can you relate to his relationships with his mom, dad, sister, uncle, or grandparents? How is his family similar to yours? How is it different?
2. How does Zayd respond to stress and anxiety? Do you think there is anything that seems to help him when he is feeling anxious? What do you do when you are anxious or worried about something?
3. Why do you think Zayd's parents want him to continue to play the violin? Have your parents ever wanted you to do something that you didn't want to do? How did you handle it?
4. How does Zayd initially deal with the conflict between his desire to focus on earning a spot on the gold team and his parents' wish for him to pursue orchestra? How does his mother find out that he has stopped going to orchestra practice? What lesson does he learn from his mistake?

5. Zayd has a very close relationship with his uncle, Jamal Mamoo. How does Jamal encourage Zayd? Why is it important to have an adult in your life whom you can trust?
6. Zayd comes from a Pakistani American family. What cultural traditions do they have that are different and similar from your family's traditions?
7. Three generations of the Saleem family are featured in these two books: grandparents, parents, and children (Zayd and Zara). Do you see any differences in each generation's habits, styles, and preferences? Why might that be?
8. Why does Zayd's mother ask him to keep a food diary? What does he learn about himself as a result of keeping the diary? Have you ever thought about the way different foods make you feel?
9. Why does Zayd choose John Wall to research for his role model project? What qualities do you think make someone a good role model?
10. How does Zayd's family show that they support one another? Why do you think Zayd resisted telling his parents how he really felt about basketball and orchestra?
11. The book titles *Power Forward* and *On Point* are phrases that have both literal meanings and figurative connotations. How does each title reflect each book's message? The big ideas or messages in books are called themes. Can you relate the title of each book to its theme?
12. The first line of *On Point* states: "Sometimes when you finally get something you really want, it ends up not being what you hoped it would be." Why does Zayd say this? Have you ever felt this way?
13. What does playing basketball teach Zayd about being a good teammate? What is your favorite sport or activity? What can you do to become a better teammate, classmate, or friend?
14. Why is planning the wedding stressful for Jamal Mamoo and Nadia Auntie? What advice does Zayd give them?
15. What causes conflict in Zayd and Adam's relationship? How do they resolve this conflict? Have you ever argued with a friend? How did you resolve your differences?
16. Why is Zayd nervous about filling Adam's position on the basketball team?
17. What are important qualities in a leader? Do you think Zayd will be a good team leader?
18. When we talk about conflict in literature, we describe it as either internal (an emotional or mental conflict inside a character) or external. What types of conflict does Zayd face in these books? Are all of his conflicts resolved?
19. In fiction, we use the term *dynamic* to describe a character that changes. By the end of *On Point*, how has Zayd changed?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. Zayd's family is from Pakistan. What did you learn about Pakistani culture from *Power Forward* and *On Point*? After reading Hena Khan's books, make a list of questions you have about Pakistan and research the answers to those questions.
2. We all have cultural and family traditions that are important parts of our identities. How much do you know about your own cultural heritage? Prepare an informative speech, presentation, or video to teach your classmates about one of your family's traditions.
3. Food plays a big part in Zayd's family members' lives, especially in their celebrations. Have you ever tried Pakistani food? Choose one of the foods that Zayd mentions and decide how best to try it; you could recreate it from a recipe, visit a Pakistani restaurant, or find it in an international food market.
4. Who is your role model? Just as Zayd researches John Wall for his school project, research the life of someone you admire. After learning more about them, are they still your role model? Which of their traits and accomplishments do you value most? Did you learn anything about them that surprised you?

5. How would you describe Zayd and his experiences in *Power Forward* and *On Point* to other readers? Design a poster or a storyboard for a book trailer that you feel captures Zayd’s personality and how you felt while reading these books. Think about what makes a poster or trailer so compelling, including images, taglines, and a color scheme.
6. Being a successful athlete often means learning how to function well on a team. As a class, brainstorm some qualities you find important in a teammate or a coach. Then choose a partner and role-play a conversation between two teammates or between an athlete and a coach in which both display some of these qualities; now, role-play the same scenario again where one person does not display any of these qualities. How do the dynamics and end results of the conversations change? What do you think are the most challenging and rewarding elements of being a member of a sports team? Where else outside of a sports team might you need to work closely with others to accomplish a goal?

These questions and activities can be used with *Bounce Back*.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

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In the third installment of Hena Khan’s *Zayd Saleem Chasing the Dream* series, fourth-grader Zayd is having a great season on the Gold Team. Now that his best friend Adam is playing football and not basketball, he hopes that Coach Wheeler will choose to make him the new team leader. Everything seems to be going according to plan until an injury forces him to look at the game he loves and his role on the team in a new way. With only a few weeks until the championship and his favorite uncle’s wedding, will Zayd be able to bounce back in time?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. At the end of the first chapter, Zayd comments, “I can only imagine incredible things ahead of me.” How does the reality of what happens next compare with his expectations? What can you learn from Zayd about how to deal with disappointment or setbacks?
2. Explain how Zayd gets injured. What does the doctor tell him about recovering from his injury? How does Zayd react to the news?
3. What does Zayd think is the most difficult thing about being injured? Have you ever been injured? What was the most difficult thing for you? What advice would you give to Zayd about dealing with his injury?
4. Why does Baba say that Zayd should still go to practice even though he can’t play basketball? Why doesn’t Zayd want to go? What do you think Zayd should do?
5. What does Adam do to show Zayd that he is a good friend? How do you show your friends that you support them?
6. Why is Zayd nervous about his team facing the Lightning? Does being nervous impact his actions?
7. What is a dholki ceremony? Why does Zayd’s mother tell Baba and Zayd that they need to attend the ceremony?
8. What happens to Nana Abu at the dholki ceremony? How can you tell that Zayd’s family cares about Nana Abu?
9. Zayd’s favorite basketball player is John Wall; whenever Zayd tries to make decisions, he often thinks about how Wall would handle the situation. What does Zayd realize about the way that Wall leads his team? Is there someone you look to as an example or role model? How have they impacted your choices or actions?
10. When Zayd is injured, how does Coach Wheeler treat him? Why do you think Coach treats him that way? What does this experience teach Zayd about leadership?
11. What does Zayd notice about Sam? Why does he hesitate to give Sam feedback about how to improve his game? Are you comfortable giving your peers constructive criticism? Explain your answer.
12. What does Zayd realize about dancing and basketball as he’s preparing for Uncle Mamoo’s mehndi? Are you surprised by this realization?

13. How do Zara and Zayd trick Nana Abu into getting his exercise? Why do you think Nana Abu enjoys teaching his grandchildren about cricket? Have you ever taken the time to ask the older adults in your life about the activities they enjoyed when they were young? If so, what did you learn? If not, what do you think they might say?
14. Why is Zayd nervous about playing basketball after his injury? How does it impact the way he plays? Have you ever been afraid after an illness or injury? How did you overcome your fear?
15. How does Sam respond when Zayd finally gets up the courage to give him feedback on his game? How do you think you would have reacted if you were in Sam's place?
16. Why do you think Coach Wheeler compliments Zayd on his leadership skills even though he has been injured and hasn't been playing basketball? Explain how Zayd demonstrates leadership.
17. What advice does Nana Abu share with Zayd before the championship game? How does this advice relate to the challenges Zayd faces? How could you relate this advice to your own life?
18. If you've read the other books in this series, discuss the ways that Zayd changes in each book. What lessons has he learned? What lessons do you think he still needs to learn? If you haven't read the previous books, predict what lessons he might learn next.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. In the first chapter, Zayd's family struggles to assemble a basketball hoop. Why do you think it can be difficult to understand a list of instructions? When do you think video instructions might be more helpful than written instructions? Why do you think that? Working alone or with a partner, prepare your own video tutorial teaching others to do something you know how to do particularly well. Write down the instructions, and then film each other demonstrating the steps.
2. *Bounce Back* includes descriptions of a Pakistani wedding. Research wedding traditions in Pakistan. What happens during the mehndi ceremony? What happens during the wedding ceremony? Find a Pakistani tradition that you think is especially interesting, and explain its significance and why you like it.
3. Part of Zayd's preparation for his uncle's wedding involves preparing a dance to perform for the bride and groom. Explore the phenomenon of Bollywood-style or desi-style dance; a good example is "Ballay Ballay Song" from the Pakistani movie *Bin Roye* or the video for "It's the Time to Disco." Try learning some of the moves before choreographing and performing a dance that would be similar to the one Zayd and his sister created for the wedding. Alternatively, make a playlist of songs that match these two styles and explain how you feel while listening to them. What kind of emotions do they evoke? Describe the rhythms and melodies.
4. After Nana Abu's heart attack, Zayd's family tries to get him to eat food that is good for his heart. Research the role diet plays in heart disease. What foods are good for your heart? What foods put a person at risk for heart disease? Name a few foods someone might substitute with others to improve their health.
5. Teams are made up of groups of people who play different roles. Zayd is a team leader, but being a leader is only one role that a person might play. Research the traits of effective teams and the roles that different team members might play. What do you think is your role in a team setting, or what would you like it to be? What are your strengths as a team member?

# A READING GROUP GUIDE TO THE ZARA'S RULES BOOKS



**#1: *Zara's Rules for Record-Breaking Fun***  
HC: 9781534497597 | PB: 9781534497580  
Ebook: 9781534497603  
Ages 7-10 | Grades 2-5  
Lexile® 640L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ M

An NCTE Charlotte Huck  
Outstanding Fiction Honor Title



**#2: *Zara's Rules for Finding Hidden Treasure***  
HC: 9781534497627 | PB: 9781534497610  
Ebook: 9781534497634  
Ages 7-10 | Grades 2-5  
Lexile® 670L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ M



**#3: *Zara's Rules for Living Your Best Life***  
HC: 9781534497658 | PB: 9781534497641  
Ebook: 9781534497665  
Ages 7-10 | Grades 2-5  
Lexile® 650L | F&P Text Level Gradient™ N

These questions and activities can be used with *Zara's Rules for Record-Breaking Fun*.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

Zara Saleem enjoys being known as the Queen of the Neighborhood: the person who comes up with the best ideas and makes sure everyone has fun. Things change when a new family moves in and Zara finds her role challenged by the popularity of the new girl, Naomi. Worried that her friends are forgetting her, Zara decides that the way to win back their loyalty is to break one of the records in her uncle's old *Guinness Book of World Records*. It takes several failed attempts for her to realize that cooperation, not competition, is the way to be a true leader, and that sharing her crown is much more fun than ruling alone.

## PRE-READING EXERCISE

Discuss the differences between a leader and a ruler, paying attention to the verb at the root of each word (*lead* and *rule*). Think of an example of someone you believe is a good ruler and/or leader. What qualities are important in a ruler? What qualities are important in a leader? Is it possible to be a ruler and a leader at the same time?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Chapman nicknames Zara the “Queen of the Neighborhood” because she rules “with grace and fairness.” What do you think it means to rule with grace and fairness? Why do you think this nickname means so much to Zara?
2. When Zara and Zayd’s neighbor Mr. Chapman moves to Florida, they eagerly anticipate the arrival of a new neighbor. What kind of neighbor do they hope moves in? What kind of neighbor are they worried they might get? (See chapter one.) Imagine what your perfect neighbor would be like and describe them.

- Initially, Zara views Naomi as her competition. Why does she view Naomi as a threat? Do you think Naomi is trying to exclude Zara? How does the fact that Zara thinks Naomi is competing with her impact the way she interacts with her new neighbor? What do you think would have happened if Zara had not been worried about Naomi taking her place as the Queen of the Neighborhood?
- Zara believes that Gloria and Jade “were so quick to ditch me and pick Naomi.” Why do you think Zara felt excluded? Find evidence that suggests that Zara’s perception was inaccurate, and that Gloria, Jade, and Naomi tried to include Zara.
- Why does Zara want to try to break a Guinness World Record? What does she believe will happen if she is successful?
- What challenges does Zara encounter as she tries to break the world records for using a hula hoop, chalk drawing, and tap dancing?
- Describe Zara’s family. How can you tell that the Saleem family cares about and values one another? How can you tell that Zara and Zayd have a close relationship? (See chapter eight.)
- What causes the conflict between Zara and her little brother? Why are they able to repair their relationship? Think about a time that you had a conflict with a sibling or a friend. How did you resolve the conflict?
- Why doesn’t Zara tell her friends that she is trying to break a record? What happens when they eventually find out? What does Zara realize about including others and friendship?
- When Jade complains that Zara has “a million rules for every game we play,” Zara responds by saying, “I make rules so we don’t fight.” Whom do you agree with, Zara or Jade? How could Zara and Jade balance the need for rules with a desire for freedom from rules?
- Later in the book, Zara realizes that she has made mistakes in the way she reacted to Naomi’s arrival: “And it hits me that I might have brought cookies over to welcome her family on the day they moved in, but I have not been very welcoming ever since.” What does it mean to be welcoming? What specific things could Zara have done differently?
- What does Zara mean when she reflects: “I realize I’m sharing the crown. But, surprisingly, it makes me feel a lot lighter than I expected.” (See chapter fourteen). Think about an area of your life where you are a leader. How can you “share your crown” with others? What do you think might happen if you do?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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- When the Goldsteins move in, Mrs. Saleem bakes a plate of nankhatai: traditional Pakistani cookies. Mrs. Goldstein reciprocates with a plate of rugelach: traditional Jewish cookies. Food is an important element of cultural identity, and most cultures and nationalities have a special type of cookie, pastry, or other sweet treat. Research a culture or nationality, and share a recipe for their traditional cookie or pastry, or other hand-held dessert. You may want to create a cooking video demonstrating how to make the cookie. You can also work with your classmates to create an international cookie cookbook or international cookie celebration.
- After mishaps caused Zara to abandon her attempts at the world records for tap dancing and chalk drawing, she makes a plan and tries to prepare for her next record-breaking attempt. Later she realizes that there are rules and guidelines for attempting to break an official world record and documenting your attempt. Working either alone or with a group, research Guinness World Records ([GuinnessWorldRecords.com](http://GuinnessWorldRecords.com)). If you wanted to break one of the current world records, which would you choose? Develop a step-by-step plan that you would need to follow in order to break the record.
- Zara’s grandparents are from Pakistan, and the Saleem family include aspects of Pakistani culture including language (Urdu, chapter three), holidays (Eid, chapter seventeen), food (halal, chapter six; biryani, chapter sixteen; korma, chapter seventeen), and music (bhangra, chapter nine) into their family life. Research one aspect of Pakistani culture mentioned in the book to learn more about its origin. Create a visual (such as a poster, brochure) to share your research with the class.
- Zara and her friends decide to create the *Brisk River Book of Neighborhood Records*: their own version of the *Guinness Book of World Records* (chapter eighteen). Using their book as a guide, work together to create a book of classroom records, and celebrate your achievements with an awards ceremony.



5. One of the things that helps Zara resolve conflict is trying to imagine the situation from the other person's perspective. Choose a section of the book and rewrite it from another character's perspective. For example, you could imagine Zara and Naomi's first meeting from Naomi's perspective (chapter two) or Zayd's bicycle accident (chapter ten) from Zayd's perspective.

These questions and activities can be used with *Zara's Rules for Finding Hidden Treasure*.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

In this second book in Hena Khan's *Zara's Rules* series, Zara is thrilled to get a brand-new bike, but that excitement turns to disappointment when someone steals her bicycle from a nearby park. What's worse is that she had forgotten to lock it, so her parents insist that she earn the money she will need to replace the bike. Luckily, her best friend, Naomi, helps her start a business turning their families' unwanted trash into treasure with a mobile neighborhood yard sale. The only problem is that Zara and her grandmother Naano find it difficult to part with anything. How can you keep the memories if you get rid of the objects that inspire them?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Zara and her friends like to play at Radley's Park. Read the description of the park found in chapter one and then write a description of your favorite park or playground. What was your favorite thing to do at a playground when you were younger? What do you like to do now?
2. How does Zara feel when she realizes someone has stolen her bike? Have you ever lost or had something stolen from you? Compare how you felt (or imagine you would feel) to how Zara feels.
3. Why do Zara's parents think that Zara is at fault for having her bike stolen? Do you agree that Zara is responsible for what happened? Explain your answer.
4. Why don't Zara's parents help her buy a new bike? Do you think Zara's parents are doing the right thing when they require her to earn money to purchase a new bike?
5. Examine the conversation in chapter four between Zara and Naomi about how to earn money in the context of entrepreneurship.
  - In business, to make a profit, you need to be able to secure the product you want to sell (*supply*), and people need to want or need the product (*demand*). The cost of making or acquiring the product also needs to be less than the amount you sell it for to make a profit. Your profit margin is the difference between the price you sell an item for and the amount it costs to produce. The steps you take to inform customers about your product and make it appealing are a part of *marketing*. How do these concepts impact Zara and Naomi's decisions about their business?
6. Before starting their business, Zara comes up with three rules (chapter four). Explain why each rule is important. Are there any rules you think they should add to their list?
7. When Zara asks her mother to pack samosas in her lunchbox, her mother comments that "times have changed," noting that when she was Zara's age, she did not want any Pakistani foods in her lunchbox (chapter seven). Why do you think Zara's mother was hesitant to express her cultural identity at school? Why is it important for people to feel free to express their cultural identity? How can you show others that you respect and appreciate their cultural traditions?
8. Why does Naano get upset when Zara's mother tells her she needs to clean out her storage area and throw things away? Are you more like Zara's mother or Naano regarding how you feel about getting rid of objects you no longer use?
9. What experience helps Zara's mother understand why Naano holds on to things?
10. What mistake does Zara make when gathering her mother's unwanted items to sell? How does she fix the mistake?
11. Read the paragraph describing the handmade pillow covers in chapter thirteen and explain the difference between their

monetary value (how much money an item is worth) and their *sentimental* value (the personal and emotional attachment to an object). What possession of yours has the most sentimental value? What memory makes it valuable to you?

12. What experience helps Naano realize that she does not need to hold on to objects to hold on to memories?
13. Look at the apology that Zara's mother gives Naano in chapter fourteen. What does she do in addition to simply saying "I am sorry"? How do both her words and actions make this an effective apology? What can you learn about how to apologize from Zara's mother's example? Read Zara's apology to Naomi in chapter thirteen. Explain how her apology follows her mother's example.
14. How does Zara finally earn the money she needs to purchase a new bike? What bike does she end up choosing to buy? Had Zara not worked to make her own money, do you think she would have purchased the bike she did? How did working change her perspective on what is valuable?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. Zara and Naomi create a business to earn extra money. While they decide to sell a product, a business can also provide a service (like babysitting). Working alone or with a friend, develop a plan for a business you could start and present your plan to a group such as your class, friends, or family. If you need additional resources, WikiHow has a tutorial on how to create a business plan: [WikiHow.com/Make-a-Business-Plan-\(for-Kids\)](https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Business-Plan-(for-Kids))
2. Zara and Nana Abu share a love of gulab jamon, a dessert made of fried dough balls in a sweet syrup. Interestingly, most cultures have a version of fried dough (a video showing the different iterations of fried dough can be found here: [Insider.com/Fried-Dough-Delicacies-from-Countries-Around-the-World-2021-3](https://www.thespruceeats.com/fried-dough-delicacies-from-countries-around-the-world-2021-3)). Choose a fried dough recipe and have an adult help you make it at home. After trying the food, record your thoughts of the cooking process and the taste in a video, voice recording, short essay, or comic strip. What was familiar about the food you tried? What was unfamiliar? Why do you think fried dough is a food that so many cultures have in common?
3. At Michael's bar mitzvah, Zara's mother notices the similarities between the synagogue and their family's mosque and comments, "We truly are all brothers and sisters" (chapter eleven). Later Zara, Naomi, and Jade discuss the things that a bar/bat mitzvah, Ameen ceremony, and sweet sixteen party have in common. Using the library and internet resources, research the ways different cultures celebrate coming-of-age, and choose a cultural tradition to highlight. Create a visual aid to share information about your selected tradition with your classmates, friends, and/or family.
4. Both Zara and her Naano have a sentimental attachment to objects that connect to important memories. Think about something you own that is emotionally valuable to you and write a descriptive essay, sales ad, or commercial about the object. Make sure to use imagery (words that appeal to the senses) to describe the object. You should also use your preferred method to explain the memories that make the object personally valuable.
5. Zara and Naomi discuss the Marie Kondo method of organization in chapter ten. Marie Kondo is a consultant who helps people organize and declutter their homes. One of her strategies is only to keep objects that spark joy and cultivate gratitude. Read more about Marie Kondo's method ([KonMari.com](https://www.konmari.com)), then use her process to organize your backpack, locker, or desk. Make sure to take before and after pictures of the organized area. Afterward, reflect on the process. How did you feel before you got started? How did you feel while you were organizing? How did you feel once you finished? Was the process harder or easier than you expected?
6. Inspired by a photo slideshow from Michael's bar mitzvah, Zara creates a slideshow of family memories and an accompanying photo album as a gift for Naano and Nana Abu's fortieth wedding anniversary. Collect photos of your family to create a slideshow highlighting your life or the life of a grandparent or parent. Use a timer to create a slideshow that displays twenty photographs for fifteen seconds each, and share your project with your class, friends, family, or club, explaining the significance of the photos you selected.

## BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

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In *Zara's Rules for Living Your Best Life*, Hena Khan presents the third installment in a series about Zara Saleem, a girl who approaches life by creating plans and rules to solve any problem she encounters. In this case, the problem is a spring break that seems doomed to failure when her mother informs her that she and her brother will have to spend each day with their grandparents instead of their neighborhood friends. To make matters worse, Zara's once energetic grandfather is staying in his pajamas watching television and napping all day now that he has retired. The solution is clear: she needs to get them active and engaged in activities they enjoy. To help her grandparents live their best lives, she'll need to create Camp Zara.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Where would you travel to if you could plan your perfect spring break? What would you want to do if you planned your ideal spring break but had to stay at home?
2. Zara's "number one neighborhood rule for having fun" is that everybody must be included. Why would including everyone make things more fun? What challenges might there be to including everyone in an activity? How could you creatively solve those challenges?
3. Zara is disappointed to learn she won't be able to spend spring break with her friends. Her mother explains that she will be allowed to stay home alone when she is twelve. Most states do not have a law stating the recommended age for a child to stay home unsupervised, and those that do list ages ranging from six to fourteen. Discuss what you think is the right age to be allowed to stay home alone. Explain the reasons for your answer.
4. When Zara and Zayd arrive, Naano has their favorite breakfast foods, like parathas and halwa, prepared. When you visit family members, are there particular foods or treats they like to serve? Why do you think food is a common way for people to express their love?
5. Describe Zara and Zayd's first day with their grandparents. What is disappointing about the day? What causes Zara to be concerned about her grandfather, Nana Abu?
6. When Naomi tells Zara about all the fun things she is doing in day camp, how does Zara respond? Do you think it was hard for her not to be jealous? What idea did Zara come up with by listening to Naomi and being happy for her?
7. Consider Zara's Rules for Camp Zara (chapter six). Explain why each rule would be important. Would you change or add anything to these rules?
8. After the first day of Camp Zara has limited success, who does Zara call for help? Who is the trusted adult that you can call on when you need help or advice about a challenge you're facing?
9. In chapter ten, Naomi tells Zara about her bad experience on the zip line at camp. How does she plan to confront and overcome her fear and anxiety? Describe an experience where you were afraid to do something or tried something new. How did you feel before you tried this new thing, and were you able to complete the activity? How did you learn to navigate your fear and discomfort?
10. What does Zara realize about her grandfather's interests and skills during their high tea celebration? What idea does this give her?
11. What does Zara call "the best day of spring break so far" (chapter fourteen)? What made this such a good day?
12. Explain how Nana Abu's birdhouse leads to his family learning about the senior center. Why do you think Nana Abu and Naano are hesitant about visiting the senior center? How does Zara help them overcome their hesitancy?
13. Naano and Nana Abu take Zayd and Zara to the masjid, or mosque, for Jumua prayers. In Islam, Friday prayers are communal, meaning people come together to pray and worship. Early in chapter seventeen, Zara describes their visit to the

mosque with her grandparents. In addition to prayers, what else happens while she is there? Why do you think communal activities, where people come together and meet in person, are important?

14. What helps Naano and Nana Abu feel comfortable at the Senior Center? What can this teach you about helping people feel like they belong and are needed?
15. What would Nana Abu and Naano's life have been like if Zara and Zayd had not stayed with them over spring break? What do Naano and Nana Abu learn from their grandchildren? What did Zara and Zayd learn from their grandparents?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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1. *Zara's Rules for Living Your Best Life* begins with Naomi suggesting building a marble roller coaster as a spring break activity. Rube Goldberg is an artist and inventor whose creations have inspired Rube Goldberg competitions that involve using everyday materials (like marbles) to build elaborate machines. Read more about Rube Goldberg here ([RubeGoldberg.org](http://RubeGoldberg.org)), then work with a team to create your own Rube Goldberg machine.
2. In chapter one, Hena Khan describes the neighborhood clubhouse, which the children made from a converted toolshed. Design your own ideal clubhouse by creating a floor plan of the space. The Glazer Children's Museum has a short video that explains the basics of floorplan design: [YouTube.com/watch?v=HI\\_ZMJt9PQw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HI_ZMJt9PQw). What would you include in your clubhouse, and why? Who would be invited, and what would you do in your clubhouse?
3. Naano and Nana Abu sometimes speak Urdu, the language they spoke in Pakistan. While Zara does not speak Urdu, she says, "I understand Naano well enough to figure out she's saying something like, 'I'll show you fun'" (chapter four). Make a list of all the Urdu words and phrases you find in the book and create an Urdu-to-English dictionary. First, use context clues to guess what the words mean, and then look up the translation to see if you are correct.
4. Naano teaches Zara and Zayd to play a card game from Pakistan called Rung, or Court Piece, in chapter five. Research Pakistani children's games and pastimes to discover new things to play with your friends. Start by looking up instructions for how to play Rung. There are even sites that let you play online!
5. As an activity for Zara and Zayd, Naano plans a high tea. High tea is a tradition in many parts of the world. Originating in England, it is popular in countries including America, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and even Dubai. Research the rules of etiquette, menus, and traditions that afternoon tea celebrations have in common, then work with your friends or classmates to plan a special afternoon tea celebration.
6. Most communities have at least one senior center. Brainstorm ways that your class can connect with your local senior center. You can send cards or letters to celebrate holidays, help with a service project, or learn more about a previous decade via Zoom or in person with a senior.
7. Find out more about your family history by interviewing an older family member or person in your life. Find out what their interests are and ask about their favorite memories. Then write an essay about the person that you interviewed. At the end of the essay, answer this question: "If you could spend one day doing any activity with your person, what would you want to do and why?"

# PRAISE

FOR BOOKS BY

## Hena Khan



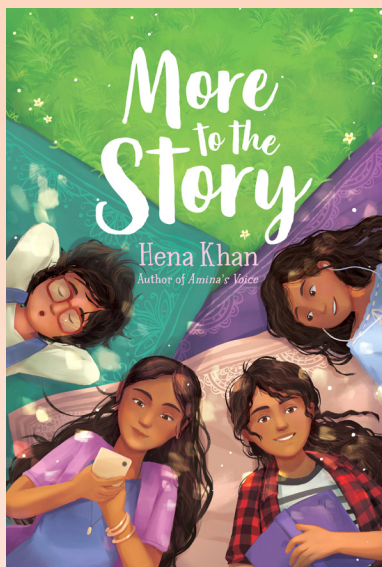
★  
“A universal story of self-acceptance and the acceptance of others. A welcome addition to any middle grade collection.”

—School Library Journal



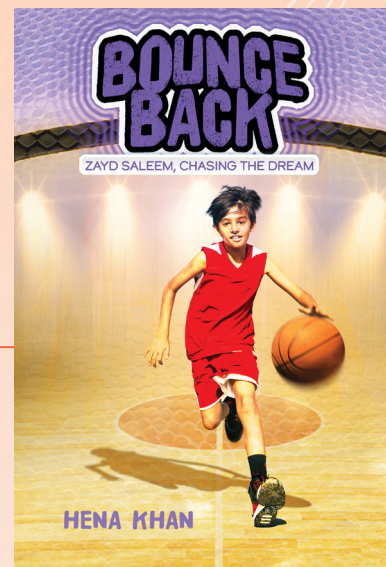
★  
“Khan excellently weaves together complex issues of feeling torn between two parts of one’s identity...Highly recommended for all collections.”

—Booklist (starred review)



★  
“Nimble incorporates details of modern life and allusions to Alcott’s classic...into a tale that is, fittingly, strongest in the moments when family dynamics are on display.”

—Publishers Weekly



★  
“Zayd is a welcome character for young readers, who learns that one can be a team player even when facing personal challenges.”

—Booklist

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hena Khan is the author of several books, including *Amina’s Voice*; *More to the Story*; *Power Forward*; *On Point*; *Bounce Back*; *It’s Ramadan*, *Curious George*; *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*; and *The Night of the Moon*. Her most recent middle grade novel, *Amina’s Song*, is the sequel to the award-winning *Amina’s Voice* and explores how it feels to grow up between two countries and two cultures. Hena lives in her hometown of Rockville, Maryland, with her husband and two sons. You can learn more about Hena by visiting her website at [HenaKhan.com](http://HenaKhan.com).