

## A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio author Sharon M. Draper as she takes young readers on a tour of a young life full of real challenges, newsworthy triumph and terrible heartache.

Discover informational websites to explore topics and themes in depth.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the reading experience.

# Out of My Mind

By Sharon M. Draper



## About the Book

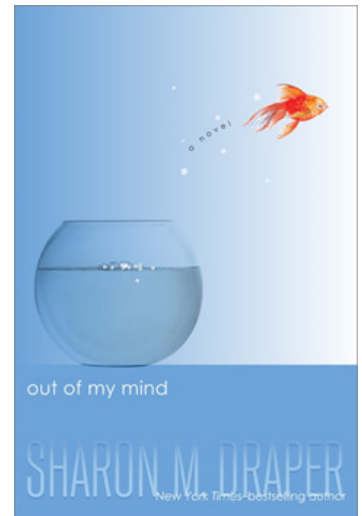
Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school-but NO ONE knows it.

Most people - her teachers and doctors included - don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows. But she can't. She can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write.

Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind - that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice... but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.

Simon & Schuster, 2010. ISBN 9781416971702. Ages 10 and up. 700 Lexile.  
<http://books.simonandschuster.com/Out-of-My-Mind/Sharon-M-Draper/9781416971719>

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library: <http://ohdbks.lib.overdrive.com>



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## About the Author



Sharon Draper lives in Cincinnati, where she taught high school English for 25 years. She has been active in the National Council of Teachers of English and the master teacher certification program, and was named National Teacher of the Year. She has been honored five times by the Coretta Scott King Award committee. **Copper Sun** and **Forged by Fire** both received the Coretta Scott King Award, **The Battle of Jericho** and **November Blues** were Coretta Scott King Honor books, and **Tears of a Tiger** won the John Steptoe Author Award for New Talent. **Copper Sun** was a 2009 & 2010 Choose to Read Ohio selection.

Among Sharon Draper's other books are **Stella by Starlight**, **Romiette and Julio**, **Darkness Before Dawn**, and **Double Dutch**.

## Author Resources

### Sharon Draper's official website

<http://sharondraper.com/>

### Author page on Simon & Schuster website

<http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Sharon-M-Draper/706340>

### Video interview with Sharon Draper about *Out of My Mind*, from UNC TV

<http://video.unctv.org/video/2278888925/>

### Interview with Sharon Draper from Bookbrowse

[http://www.bookbrowse.com/author\\_interviews/full/index.cfm/author\\_number/1854/sharon-m-draper](http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm/author_number/1854/sharon-m-draper)

### For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

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## Talk about it!

Topics to share when discussing *Out of My Mind* with young readers.

*Educators:* Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's New Learning Standards (Common Core) English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Examples are listed below; other standards also apply.

*Librarians, parents, and others:* These discussion questions are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. They are included for teachers who want to use this book in school. For more information, see the Ohio Dept. of Education website, <http://education.ohio.gov>. Click on "Ohio's New Learning Standards" in the Teacher Resources section.

The novel opens with a discussion of the power of words and language. How does this help capture the reader's attention? What predictions can the reader make about the narrator of the story? What inferences can be made about the thought processes of the narrator's mind? (RL.4-6.4; RL.5-6.6; SL 4-6.1)

In a world that does not work for her, what seems to cause the biggest frustrations for Melody? (RL.4-6.2)

Describe Melody's parents. How do they learn to communicate with Melody and help her to overcome everyday problems? Why are those efforts sometimes a complete failure? (RL.4-6.3; SL 4-6.1)

Describe Mrs. V. What role does she play in Melody's development? Why is she a necessary addition to Melody's life? (RL 4-6.3; SL 4-6.1)

What is significant about the story of Ollie the fish? How does Ollie's life mirror Melody's? Describe Melody's feelings when she is unable to tell her mother what really happened. (RL 4-6.3; RL.6.5; RL 4-6.6; SL 4-6.1)

Describe how the introduction of Penny as a character changes the family dynamics. Analyze Melody's complicated feelings about her little sister. (RL 4-6.3; SL 4-6.1)

How does the inclusion program change Melody's school experiences? Describe both positive and negative results of the program. Describe Melody's deep, unrealized need for a friend. (RL 4-6.1; RL 4-6.3)

What does Melody learn about friendship during the trip to the aquarium? Make a comparison between Ollie's life, the life of the fish in the aquarium, and Melody's life. (W 4-6.9; SL 4-6.1)

How does Melody's computer change her life, her outlook on life, and her potential? Why does she name it Elvira? (RL 4-6.1; RL 4-6.4; SL 4-6.4)

## Talk About it! (continued)

Why does Melody decide to enter the quiz team competition? What obstacles must she face and overcome just to get on the team? (RL 4-6.1)

What does Melody learn about friendship and the relationships of children working together as she practices and competes with the quiz team? What does she learn about herself? (RL 4-6.2)

Describe Melody's feelings before the trip to the airport, while she is there, and after she gets home. How would you have coped with the same situation? (RL 4-6.1; SL 4-6.1)

Discuss the scene in which Melody confronts the kids on the quiz team. What is satisfying about how she handles the situation? What else might Melody have done? (RL 4-6.3; SL 4-6.1)

Why is the first page repeated at the end of the book? How has Melody changed, both personally and socially, from the beginning of the book to the end? (RL 4-6.2; SL 4-6.1)

How would this story have been different if it had been written from a third-person point of view; from the point of view of Melody's parents, for example, or that of an outside observer? (RL 4-6.3; RL.4-6.6; SL 4-6.1)

*Discussion questions courtesy of Sharon Draper and Simon & Schuster. Used with permission. Find more discussion questions on Sharon Draper's website: <http://sharondraper.com/bookdetail.asp?id=35>*

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## Go Further!

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Out of My Mind**.*

Put yourself in Melody's chair. Write a paper that tells what it would be like to be Melody for one day. Write about your feelings and frustrations. (W 4-6.3; W 4-6.4)

Using only words, describe to a partner a picture you drew. Compare pictures and discuss the communication process. Do your pictures match? What was hard to communicate? How did this process make you feel? (RL 4-6.7; L.4-6.3; L.4-6.6)

Using online resources available to students through INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (<http://www.ohioweblibrary.org>), research the problems faced by children with cerebral palsy, especially those that are of school age. How does cerebral palsy affect the child socially, academically, and personally? (RI.4-6.7; W 4-6.2; W 4-6.7)

Using INFOhio/Ohio Web Library resources, investigate the possible causes of cerebral palsy, and what preventative measures, if any, can be taken by the mother. (RI.4-6.7; W 4-6.2; W 4-6.7)

As a class or group, look into current laws and practices for inclusion of children with disabilities into classrooms. What effect, if any, do such things have on a school community? (RI.4-6.7; W 4-6.2; W 4-6.7)

Describe the relationship between the able-bodied children and Melody. Would you describe it as a true friendship? When situations become monumental and overwhelming to young people, what is likely to happen? Explain. (RL 4-6.3; W 4-6.1)

Imagine it is the last day of fifth grade. Write a letter or create a conversation between Melody and one of these characters: Rose, Mrs. V., Catherine, Mr. D., Claire. (RL 4-6.3; W 4-6.3, W.4-6.4)

*Extension activities courtesy of Sharon Draper and Simon & Schuster. Used with permission. Find more activities, writing exercises, and research projects on Sharon Draper's website: <http://sharondraper.com/bookdetail.asp?id=35>*

## Behind the Book

The story behind *Out of My Mind*.

People often ask me, "What was your inspiration for *Out of my Mind*?" I reply, "All great stories emerge from deep truths that rest within us." But the real truth of a story often can be found in places that not even the author has dared to explore. I suppose the character of Melody came from my experiences in raising a child with developmental difficulties. But Melody is not my daughter. Melody is pure fiction—a unique little girl who has come into being from a mixture of love and understanding. *Out of my Mind* is the story of a ten-year-old-girl who cannot walk or talk. She has spirit, determination, intelligence and wit, and no one knows it. But from buildings that are not wheelchair-accessible to classmates who make fun of her she finds a strength within herself she never knew existed.

I was fiercely adamant that nobody feel sorry for Melody. I wanted her to be accepted as a character and as a person, not as a representative for people with disabilities. Melody is a tribute to all the parents of disabled kids who struggle, to all those children who are misunderstood, to all those caregivers who help every step of the way. It's also written for people who look away, who pretend they don't see, or who don't know what to say when they encounter someone who faces life with obvious differences. Just smile and say hello!

—Sharon M. Draper

*Behind the Book* courtesy Simon & Schuster; used with permission.

## Explore more!

Additional ideas and resources to use with *Out of My Mind*.

### **Out of My Mind resources on Sharon Draper's website**

<http://sharondraper.com/bookdetail.asp?id=35>

Includes a book summary, Q&A with Sharon Draper, reviews, and a study and activity guide.

### **NINDS Cerebral Palsy Information Page**

[http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/cerebral\\_palsy/detail\\_cerebral\\_palsy.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/cerebral_palsy/detail_cerebral_palsy.htm)

Basic information about cerebral palsy, and links to organizations and publications, from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

### **School Inclusion**

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/inclusion/>

Learn more about inclusion of children with disabilities in schools and communities, with this information from the Center for Parent Information and Resources.

### **National Academic Quiz Tournaments**

<https://www.naqt.com/index.html>

Find out about academic competitions at the middle school, high school, and college levels.

**Choose to Read Ohio**, a project of the State Library of Ohio the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:

<http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>.

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**STATE LIBRARY OF OHIO**

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