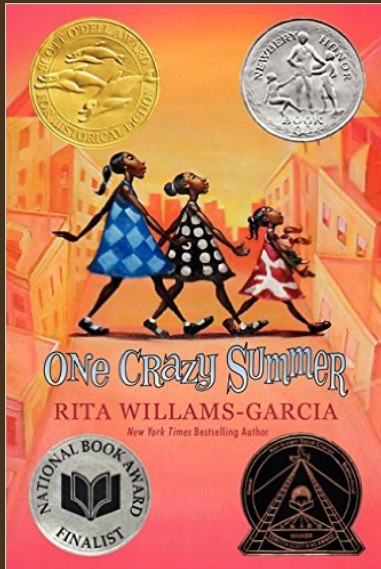


One Crazy Summer Reading Guide



Questions and Ideas for Consideration

Family/Mothers: In what ways does the story redefine or complicate notions of family, and especially what it means to be a good mother? Do you think Cecile was horrible? Did she have any reasons to behave the way she was behaving?

Civil Rights: How does the text offer a complex, nuanced, or interesting representation of California during the Civil Rights movement? How is this different than other images we see of Civil Rights in children's literature?

Black Panthers: How does this book challenge contemporary understandings of the Black Panthers movement and complicate this group's role and purpose? What contemporary relevancy does this have?

Responsibility: Consider Delphine's relationship with her sisters. What role does she play in their lives, and how does this affect ideas about childhood? How does Cecile's use of "Little Girl" fit this, and what role do names play in the story?

Searching and Hope: Do Delphine and her sisters find what they were looking for in Oakland? What is Cecile looking for? Do you think the story ends with hope?

Selfish: Why does Cecile tell Delphine it wouldn't kill her to be selfish? Do you agree?

Extension Activities

- Look up and describe other books that have been written about the Civil Rights and the 1960s. Then research the authors of these books and write about what you can learn about children's literature written about this historical time period.
- Do an internet search for "children" with various terms you associate with past events like Civil Rights. What do you discover about perceptions of children/childhood?
- Do some research into The Black Panthers and Malcom X, and how this movement differs from Martin Luther King's approach to Civil Rights. How does this book shift what you know about these elements of history, as well as contemporary Civil Rights activism movements like #BlackLivesMatter or #WeNeedDiverseBooks.
- How might you use or teach *One Crazy Summer* or other books about history in your classroom? Brainstorm some lesson plan ideas, and write about limitations or considerations for doing so.
- Look at the two sequels to the text—how does the story continue?
- Think about poetry's role in the story, and write a poem that shows something in a new way.
- Research Rita Williams Garcia and check her out at www.ritawg.com. What do you learn?

Resources and Critical Reading

"An Evolving Past: The Story of Historical Fiction and Nonfiction for Children" by Suzanne Rahn

Civil Rights Childhood: Picturing Liberation in African American Photobooks by Katharine Capshaw

If We Could Change the World: Young People and America's Long Struggle for Racial Equality by Rebecca de Schweinitz

"One Nation's History under Multiple Viewpoints" by Rita Williams-Garcia

Background and Context

Winner of the Coretta Scott King and Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, a Newbery Honor book, and a finalist for the National Book Award, Rita Williams-Garcia's *One Crazy Summer* describes the experiences of three sisters who visit their estranged mother, Cecile, in Oakland California. Set in 1969 at the right of the Civil Rights movement, the text offers a unique perspective to the Black Panther Party and explores the complexities of adult/child relationships and responsibilities. It has two subsequent sequels, *PS Be Eleven* and *Crazy in Alabama*.