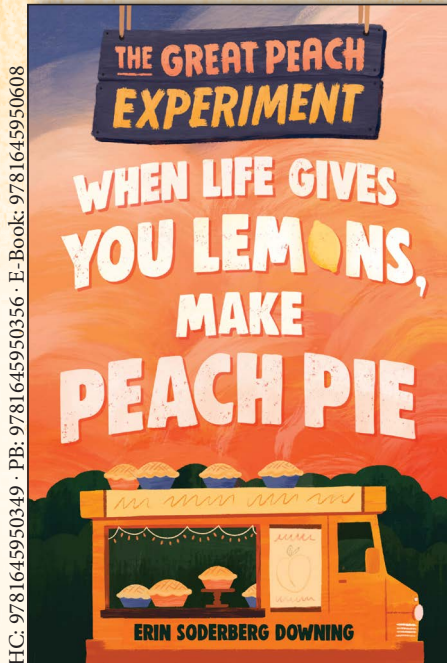


PIXEL INK

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



*The Great Peach
Experiment 1:
When Life Gives You
Lemons, Make Peach Pie*
by Erin Soderberg Downing



*The Great Peach
Experiment 2: The Peach Pit*

“Simply sparkles with life.”—Kirkus Reviews

ABOUT THE BOOK

Mix together a used food truck, a road trip that doesn't exactly go as planned, and a *lot* of pie, in this sweet middle-grade series starter brimming with humor, heart, and a family to fall in love with.

After a tough year, Lucy, Freddy, and Herb Peach are ready for vacation. Lucy wants to read all of the books on the summer reading list. Freddy wants to work on his art projects (when he isn't stuck in summer school). Herb wants to swim every day.

Then their dad makes a big announcement: one of the inventions their mom came up with before she passed away has sold, and now they're millionaires!

But Dad has bigger plans than using the cash on fun stuff or investing it. He's bought a used food truck. The Peaches are going to spend the summer traveling the country selling pies. It will be the Great Peach Experiment—a summer of bonding while living out one of Mom's dreams. Summer plans, sunk. And there's one more issue Dad's neglected: none of them knows how to bake. . . .

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- Lucy is the oldest of three Peach children and is known as “the fixer.” Discuss whether this is a description that the family assigned to Lucy, or whether it’s how she sees herself. How is this a big responsibility for a twelve-year-old? What is the one thing that she cannot fix? Explain how Lucy resembles her last name—she appears “perfect on the outside,” but a “mushed-up mess” on the inside (p. 1).
- Walter Peach is a scientist at a university and tries to solve every problem using scientific method. How does this approach keep him from connecting with his children? How does he use work to deal with grief after his wife dies? Walter tells the children that he is taking time off, and they will spend part of the summer traveling throughout the Midwest in a food truck. How does he think this will honor their mother’s memory?
- Explain why Lucy doesn’t quite trust her dad. Discuss her reaction when she learns that the university forced him to take a sabbatical. Then her dad reveals that he has been on sabbatical for a while and had used the time for researching food trucks. How does this secret cause greater disbelief and make Lucy skeptical of the entire plan? Debate Walter’s possible reasons for not revealing this information when he announced the family adventure. Why doesn’t he want Freddy and Herb to know about the forced sabbatical?
- Describe ten-year-old Freddy and eight-year-old Herb. Why is Freddy considered “a plum in a whole family of Peaches” (p. 25)? Cite evidence that he is the most optimistic Peach. How does Herb always appear hopeful? Which of the three Peach children is the most excited about their summer adventure? What goals do the Peach children set for their travels? How do their goals reveal their personalities? At what point do the children realize that this adventure is about their dad and not about the family?
- When does Freddy become a “leader” on this food-truck adventure? At what point does Lucy begin enjoying the adventure? How is she surprised by this?
- Define the term “game changer.” Discuss what Lucy means by “figuring out some way to paint her dad back into the picture would be a game changer” (p. 165). Describe the moment in the novel when the children figure out how to “paint him” in. How does Walter Peach almost bail out just when the children think they have changed him? Who and what pulls him back in?
- Describe the exact moment in the novel when Walter Peach really sees his children and what each of them contributes to the family. Debate whether this is the turning point in the novel. At what point do the children realize that they really want to win the food truck contest? Discuss whether Walter is surprised by his children’s creativity, ingenuity, and determination to win. In what ways do they win?
- Throughout the novel, Lucy writes letters to Great Aunt Lucinda. How do the letters contribute to the plot and character development? Describe the fond adventures that Great Aunt Lucinda gave Walter Peach when he was a boy. Why has he never told his children about these times? Discuss Great Aunt Lucinda’s generosity to the family at the end of the novel. How is this gift a hint to another great adventure for the family?
- Mom’s favorite saying was “When life gives you lemons, make iced tea.” Discuss the “lemons” the Peaches encounter on their adventure. How do they manage to turn their adventure into “iced tea”? Explain how the food truck adventure helps Walter, Lucy, Freddy, and Herb deal with their grief. How does becoming a “complete” family honor their mother’s memory?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erin Soderberg Downing has written more than fifty books for kids, tweens, and young adults, including series like *The Quirks and Puppy Pirates*. Her debut series with Pixel+Ink is *The Great Peach Experiment*, and the first book is *When Life Gives You Lemons, Make Peach Pie*. Erin, a former children’s book editor who also worked at Nickelodeon, lives in Minneapolis with her husband, three hilarious kids, and their two dogs. Visit Erin online at erinsoderberg.com and on Twitter @erinsoderberg.