

# A Teacher's Guide For

# ***GIVE AND TAKE***

*For use with Common Core Standards*

## About the Book



In *GIVE AND TAKE*, Twelve-year-old Maggie knows her new baby sister who smells like powder isn't her sister for keeps. Izzie is a foster baby awaiting adoption. So in a day or a week, she'll go to her forever family and all that sweetness will be gone. Except for those things Maggie's secretly saving in the cardboard boxes in her closet and under her bed. Baby socks, binkies, and a button from Bud the Bear. Rocks, sticks, and candy wrappers. Maggie holds on tight. To her things. Her pet turtle. Her memories of Nana. And her friends. But when Maggie has to say goodbye to Izzie, and her friend gets bumped from their all-girl trapshooting squad to make room for a boy, Maggie's hoarding grows far beyond her control and she learns that sometimes love means letting go.

## About the Author



Elly Swartz loves writing for kids, Twizzlers, and anything with her family. Her debut novel, *FINDING PERFECT* (FSG 2016) is about twelve-year-old Molly, friendship, family, OCD, and a slam poetry competition that will determine everything. In her second book, *SMART COOKIE* (Scholastic, 2018), you meet the spunky and big-hearted Frankie. Frankie’s all about family with a dash of mischief and mystery! And then on October 15, 2019, say hello to Maggie in *GIVE AND TAKE* (FSG). With the help of a foster baby named Izzie and turtle named Bert, Maggie learns that sometimes love means letting go. Elly lives in Massachusetts with her family and beagle named Lucy. If you want to connect with Elly, you can find her at [ellyswartz.com](http://ellyswartz.com), on Twitter @ellyswartz, on Instagram @ellyswartzbooks or on her webseries #BooksintheKitchen with author Victoria J. Coe.

*To attain specific Common Core grade-level standards for classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities in this guide to their classes’ needs. You know your kids best!*

## Pre-reading Questions

1. Spend time looking at each object on the cover. What do you think these objects relate, if at all, to each other, and to the title, Give and Take?
2. What does the title, Give and Take, mean to you?
3. What makes a moment worth remembering? Explain your answer.
4. Describe a memory in your life that is important to you.
  - a. What do you remember about that moment? Is it positive or negative?
  - b. Do you believe elements of that moment have been lost or forgotten?

- c. How can you be sure you'll continue to hold onto this memory?
5. Maggie thinks a lot about the concept of forever as it relates to family, friendships, teams, pets, memories. On page 70, she states that, "Forever ends tomorrow." What are your thoughts on the idea of forever? Can anything truly last forever? Should anything last forever?

## Post-reading Discussion Questions

**1. Forgiveness** is a theme throughout the story.

- a. Why is it so hard to forgive someone? Why do you think it was easier for some characters than it was for others.
  
- b. Each of the following pairs had moments in the book where they had to practice forgiveness. What advice would you give these pairs about forgiveness?

Pairs	Advice
Maggie and Mom	
Maggie and Grandma	
Maggie and Dillon	
Maggie and Charlie	
Maggie and Sam	

- c. Once you complete your thinking, share your thoughts with our global Give and Take community via [Flipgrid](#). If you are using the Flipgrid app, the Flip Code is: 927d3e87.

**2. Anxiety.** Maggie's big heart came with a heap of anxiety. For Maggie, this anxiety took the form of hoarding. The same anxiety that has crept into the lives of so many kids. The more we talk about it. The more we share their experiences on the page. The more we breakdown the stigmas and stereotypes associated with mental health. And the sooner all kids, can feel seen, heard, and respected.

- a. Why do you think it was difficult for Maggie to talk Dr. Sparrow and her friend Belle about her anxiety and her collection of things under her bed? Why do you

think people, in general, feel scared or overwhelmed when talking about mental health?

b. On page 146, Maggie says, “What’s wrong with me?” Let’s flip it. Anxiety does not define her. Or anyone. So, what’s right with Maggie? Make a list. Then make your own list or video or letter to yourself of all the wonderful, right things about yourself. This is your reminder that you’re strong, empowered, and not alone.

c. Once you complete your thinking, share your thoughts with our global Give and Take community via [Flipgrid](#). If you are using the Flipgrid app, the Flip Code is: 7660dc5e.

**3. Love.** GIVE AND TAKE is about loving big because it is the most beautiful gift we have to give. Maggie learns that loving Izzie, the foster baby her family cares for, is not about being remembered. Fostering Izzie is one of those moments.

a. Think about times in the book when Maggie either gave or received the gift of love. Consider other characters Charlie, Grandpa, Mason to get you started. What effect did these moments have on her life?

b. Think about times in *your* life when you either gave or received love for the sole purpose of loving. What effect did these moments have on *your* life?

c. Once you complete your thinking, share your thoughts with our global Give and Take community via [Flipgrid](#). If you are using the Flipgrid app, the Flip Code is: 80b84a69.

## Enrichment Activities

**1. Describing emotions.** Maggie feels very deeply. Throughout the story, she shares her emotions. For instance, in Chapter 18, Maggie’s says, “Happiness wraps around me like Nana’s Afghan.” Locate the moments in each chapter listed below where Maggie feels a strong emotion. How does she describe that feeling? Now share how you would describe that feeling.

Chapter	Feelings	Maggie’s description	Your description
Chapter 5	love		
Chapter 5	sadness		
Chapter 18	happiness	“Happiness wraps around me like Nana’s afghan.”	
Chapter 22	anger		
Chapter 23	guilt		
Chapter 43	fear		
Chapter 52	confusion		
Chapter 56	appreciation		

## 2. Mindful Moments.

*“I prepare a speech in my head that I’m going to deliver to my parents about another foster baby. About me getting better. About having a heart big enough to love a lot and brain healthy enough to let go.” p.267*

It is well-documented that practicing mindfulness not only improves memory but also fosters a healthy mind. In a world filled with manicured moments memorialized in Snap stories, filtered selfies on Instagram and curated videos for TikToc, people, like Maggie, are so focused on collecting objects, images, followers, and likes, they lose the moment. So it’s time to become more mindful and let go like Maggie.

This is a three-part activity.

Part 1: Pick one moment outside of school today that you’d like to remember. This can be anything ~ eating dinner, snuggling with your pet, playing sports, listening to music, riding the train, sitting alone, getting a haircut, reading a book. Put aside your phone and be truly present. Give that moment your full attention for at least 5 minutes. Immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that you are experiencing both internally and externally. If you find yourself becoming distracted, that’s okay, just bring yourself back to the moment. Remember, no judgment. Let the feelings and thoughts and observations just wash over you.

Part 2: When you return to class, spend time reflecting on that mindful moment in narrative, poetic, or artistic form.

Part 3: Share your reflection from Part 2. Consider how mindfulness helped you imprint this moment in your head and heart?

Part 4 (optional) Once you complete your thinking, share your thoughts with our global Give and Take community via [Flipgrid](#). If you are using the Flipgrid app, the Flip Code is: 361c3006.

### **3. Beyond Poetry**

In Chapter 20, Ms. López introduces a unit called, *Beyond Poetry: How and why people use poetic language in the world*. As a class, keep an ongoing list of as many similes, metaphors, hyperboles, alliterations, puns, and personifications you discover in songs, advertisements, newspapers, menus or anywhere out in the world.

### **4. Go On, Change the World! Journaling Activity**

Maggie journals to organize her thoughts, navigate her anxiety, heal her heart, and set goals. Her dad gives her this journal with the name of his podcast “Go On, Change the World!” written on the cover. He shares that, “we can all make the world brighter. One little thing at a time.” p. 55 I believe you, like Maggie, can make the world a brighter place. And journaling is the perfect tool to explore your ideas, organize your thoughts, and discover.

LCSW Bonnie Thomas, a licensed children’s counselor specializing in art and play therapy in private practice at Indigo North Counseling, LLC in Southern Maine, in collaboration with author Elly Swartz, has created a journaling activity. Feel free to download the “Go On, Change the World!” journal labels from my site to use with this activity. Below are some prompts to get you started. For a full list, head over to the Give and Take page on my site and click on the Journaling Activity.

- a. Like Maggie in Give and Take, here’s my list of “Today’s ideas to change the world.” (p.55)
- b. “The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.” — Oliver Wendall Holmes. (p. 100) What does this quote mean to me?
- c. Maggie’s dad is interested in inventions and scientific advancements that could change the world. My ideas to change the world:
- d. Acts of kindness I’ve done for others:

- e. I believe:
- f. I stand up for or want to stand up for:
- g. My acts of bravery and courage:
- h. People I can turn to when I need help or support:
- i. Ways to quiet my anxiety:

## 5. Music

Music serves as a soundtrack to Maggie’s life. She uses it to help heal her heart and navigate her anxiety. Pick a song from Maggie’s playlist below and share how that song reflected the way Maggie was feeling at that moment in the story. You can even listen to the songs on the GIVE AND TAKE playlist on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2A1soM8b3vYhUtrTJCcedf>

What songs would you include in your soundtrack? Dive in and make a playlist.

Alabama Shakes—“I Found You”  
Grace Potter—“Time Keeper”  
Carole King—“Up on the Roof”  
Train—“Calling All Angels”  
Indigo Girls—“Closer to Fine”  
Bob Dylan—“Blowin’ in the Wind”  
Marvin Gaye—“Mercy Mercy Me”  
Bob Dylan—“Mr. Tambourine Man”  
Julia Brennan—“Inner Demons”  
Counting Crows—“You Can’t Count on Me”  
Jimmy Buffett—“Breathe In, Breathe Out, Move On”

## 6. STEM

**a. Coding.** Maggie’s friend Ava is a coder. [Take your first steps and learn how to code today.](#)

**b. Systems.** Maggie, with the help of Dr. Sparrow, develops a chart system that helps Maggie let go of the items in her collection under her bed, in her closet, and in her school locker. Develop a model or system to solve a problem in your life, school, neighborhood, or the world around you.

**c. Moon.** Maggie shows Baby Izzie that the moon connects us all. [Chart and study the phases of the moon.](#)

**d. Gardening.** Maggie’s grandfather has a garden in his backyard. Start your own garden and track and chart its progress.

**e. Ecosystems.** Maggie finds and ultimately keeps Bert the Turtle. But she has to research Bert to ensure she has what this Eastern Painted Turtle needs for a happy home. Pick an animal. Research its habitat and what it would need for a happy home. View the [Animal Project Directions](#) to learn more.

**f. Design Thinking.** Bert goes missing and needs to be found. Discover what it takes to be an engineer and use the design thinking process to help Maggie find Bert. [Be an emerging engineer and create a solution for Bert!](#)

## Quotable Moments to Consider and Discuss:

“Maggie, sweetheart, you can’t save everything,” she says.” p.35

“In a small voice he says, “I forgive you. But I’m still a little sad about it.” p.60

“But I don’t love in tiny doses,” I said, my cheeks wet.” p.81

“That’s the second weird thing I’ve learned about love. The first is that it smells like powder. The second is that it grows. Even if you don’t water it. Which is different from everything in Nana’s garden.” pp. 116-17.

“Truth is, life’s filled with give and take. Details fade. Or even erase entirely. But love never leaves. It carves into your heart. It’s a forever thing.”p.133

“Is it worse to know you’re lost and be scared, or to not know you’re lost and never find your way back?” I ask. p.253

“Just believe. That’s all,” he says.

*Is the universe even listening?*

“Is believing in something really enough?”

“Sometimes it has to be. Sometimes believing in something is all we have.” pp. 260-61.

Choose a quote and share your thoughts with our global Give and Take community via [Flipgrid](#).

If you are using the Flipgrid app, the Flip Code is: 5f956e5a.



**CCSS ELA - Language L5-7.1, L5-7.2, L5-7.3, L5-7.5**

**CCSS ELA - Reading: Literature RL5-7.1, RL5-7.4, RL5-7.5, RL5-7.6**

**CCSS ELA - Speaking and Listening SL5-7.1, SL5-7.4, SL5-7.5**

**CCSS ELA - Writing W5-7.1, W5-7.2, W5-7.4, W5-7.7, W5-7.8**

*This guide was written by author Elly Swartz and educators Rayna Freedman and Anna Kontos.*

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