

Got Fudge?



Celebrate the
35th anniversary of
Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
and the rest of the Fudge series!

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Judy Blume's Fudge Books DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does Peter find his brother Fudge annoying? What strategies do Peter and his parents use to deal with Fudge? Are they successful? What would you do?
2. All of the Fudge books (except *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*) are told from Peter Hatcher's point of view. What special insights does Peter have into these stories? How would they be different if Fudge told the stories? Jimmy Fargo?
3. Sheila is afraid of many things, including dogs, spiders, thunderstorms, and swimming. How does she express her fears? What does she try to overcome them?
4. Sheila sometimes lies about her fears to others and herself, yet when she and her friends are completely honest in the *Slam Book*, everyone's feelings are hurt. Is honesty always the best policy?
5. Why doesn't Peter want to move to Princeton? How does his house in Princeton compare with his apartment in New York City? How is his suburban life different from his city life?
6. Fudge's pet is a myna bird named Uncle Feather. Why did Fudge choose this kind of pet? What special tricks can he do? What problems does he make for the Hatchers?
7. How does Peter feel when he finds out that his family and the Tubmans are sharing a house for their vacation? Why doesn't he tell his friend Jimmy? How does Jimmy feel once he arrives?
8. At the end of *Fudge-a-Mania*, Peter and Sheila are almost related, yet they promise to always hate each other. Why do you think they do this?
9. Peter thinks that Fudge is obsessed with money. What does that mean? How does Fudge demonstrate his obsession? How do his parents feel and what do they do?
10. When Cousin Howie and his family come to New York, Fudge gets to spend time with his cousin Mini. What "Fudge-like" adventures does Mini have? How does Fudge feel about Mini?



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MEET JUDY BLUME

Born February 12, Judy Sussman grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, the daughter of a dentist and a homemaker. As a child she enjoyed reading and making up her own stories. She trained to be a teacher at New York University. She has two children—a daughter Randy, and a son Larry. As a young mother, Judy turned her creative energies to writing. She took a course in publishing for children and, in 1969, her first book, *The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo*, appeared.

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (1972) is dedicated to her son Larry, whose toddler antics inspired some of Fudge's adventures. Sheila Tubman, the star of *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great* (1972), shares some of Blume's childhood fears, including dogs, swimming, thunderstorms, and the dark. *Superfudge* (1980) is set in Princeton, New Jersey, where Judy and her children lived for a while. A summer home that Judy and her husband once rented in Southwest Harbor, Maine, serves as the setting for *Fudge-a-Mania* (1990). The final book of the series, *Double Fudge* (2002), was written for Judy's grandson, Elliot, who shares Fudge's fascination with money.

Over the years, Judy Blume's novels have won many awards, including the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters (2004), the American Library Association's Margaret A. Edwards Award (1996), and numerous state children's book awards. Today Judy and her husband, nonfiction writer George Cooper, make their home in Key West, Florida, New York City, and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

WEB SITES:

Penguin's Judy Blume Site:

http://us.penguingroup.com/nfi/Author/AuthorPage/0,0_1000004318,00.html

Check here for biographical information, an author interview, and information about all of Blume's books.

Double Fudge Web Site:

<http://www.doublefudge.com/>

Developed especially for the latest Fudge book, this site includes information about Blume, each of the Fudge books, character profiles, Sheila's Fudge-World Trivia game, a secret name generator, and downloadable screen savers.

The Fudge Books:

<http://www.kidsreads.com/series/series-fudge.asp>

This section of the KidsReads.com site includes information about the author, titles, characters, and fast facts, plus word scrambles and trivia games.

Judy Blume's Home Base:

<http://www.judyblume.com>

Blume's official Web site features a biography and photos, answers to questions, tips on writing, a list of books, related web links, and more.

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Judy Blume FUDGE-a-Mania 2

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

- * Using a map of Manhattan, locate: 1. the Hatchers' apartment on West 68th Street, 2. Central Park, 3. the zoo, and three other places mentioned in these books. What are some other famous sites in their neighborhood? Using maps of Tarrytown, New York; Princeton, New Jersey; Southwest Harbor, Maine; or Washington, D. C.; locate some of the other sites mentioned in these books.
- * The Hatchers own several pets in these stories: a turtle, a myna bird, and a dog. Choose a pet that you would like. Write a letter to your parents convincing them that you would be a responsible pet owner.
- * Like Sheila does, create a newspaper for your classroom or group. Include stories based on some of the events that happen in these books.
- * Re-enact the scene in which Sheila explains to Mouse why she can't take the family dog, Jennifer, for a walk. What is the real reason Sheila doesn't want to be with Jennifer? What else might she have said to Mouse without lying? Replay the scene incorporating these changes.
- * Uncle Feather is a myna. Investigate these birds. Where do they come from? What do they sound like? What special needs do they have? Share your results with the group.
- * Fudge thinks he wants to marry Sheila so that he won't be scared at night. Mitzi convinces him that all he needs is Monster Spray. Devise a recipe for your own Monster Spray and describe it. Create an advertisement that explains what it can do and how it will protect you.
- * Fudge sometimes mixes up words. He thinks he wants to be a "bird breather" instead of a bird breeder; he also thinks he has been asked to be the "ring bear" (really ring bearer) at his grandmother's wedding. Make a list of words that Fudge confuses and explain what they really mean. What words did you confuse when you were younger?
- * Mitzi's favorite book is Lore Segal's *Tell Me a Mitzi*, which contains stories about a girl named Mitzi. Create a story about a character with your name.
- * Mr. Fargo's paintings are a style called abstract art. Find out more about abstract art. Then create your own painting using this style.
- * Create an illustrated ABC book that includes important elements from one or more of the stories. A, for example, might stand for Anne Hatcher, Peter and Fudge's mother.
- * Design your own money. Explain the symbols and pictures on the bill and tell why they are important for your currency.

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

In addition to their appeal as entertaining, humorous stories, Judy Blume's Fudge books provide solid links to core curriculum. Listed below are some curricular standards, with notes on series themes and connections.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

- * Read with understanding and fluency
- * Read and understand literature
- * Write to communicate
- * Listen and speak effectively
- * Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information

These novels are rich in language and new vocabulary; note Fudge's fascination with new words, Grandma Muriel's expressions and idioms, the story Fudge creates about himself, and the use of Peter as narrator for most of the series.

FINE ARTS:

- * Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced
- * Frank Fargo's abstract artwork, in particular the Baby Feet paintings, makes a nice segue into an investigation of this style of art.

MATHEMATICS

- * Measure and compare quantities using appropriate units, instruments, and methods

From his earliest days Fudge has a fascination with counting (Cheerios), and later develops an obsession with money.

SCIENCE

- * Understand fundamental concepts, principles, and interconnections of life sciences.

Animals play a prominent role in this series. The Hatchers have many pets, including a turtle, dog, and myna bird, and visit the National Zoo in Washington, D. C.; Peter and his friend Alex start a worm business in New Jersey; and, Sheila is deathly afraid of both spiders and dogs.

SOCIAL SCIENCE:

- * Understand economic systems
- * Understand geography
- * Understand social systems (culture, traditions, roles and interactions of individuals in a group)

Fudge's obsession with money prompts him to learn about currency and how it is made. Blume offers vivid setting descriptions of New York City; Tarrytown, New York; Princeton, New Jersey; Southwest Harbor, Maine; and Washington, D. C. The novels offer insight into the cultures of these different communities.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

- * Develop self-awareness and self-management skills
- * Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills
- * Demonstrate decision-making skills

Blume's characters all have distinctive personalities with individual strengths and weaknesses and social skills that develop over the course of the series. Sheila can be bossy and has been known to lie in order to cover up her fears but she has wonderful organizational skills; the ego-centric Fudge is prone to tantrums but also savvy enough to recognize his behaviors in Cousin Mini; and the long-suffering Peter, ever observant and mature for his age, sometimes finds good behavior a challenge in light of the antics of his well-meaning family.

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