



Discussion Questions: ***Because of Winn Dixie*** by Kate DiCamillo

1. Opal opens up to Winn-Dixie in the beginning of the story. Why do you think it's sometimes easier to talk to or be friends with a pet than with people?
2. Opal makes a lot of quick judgments about some of the characters in the book, such as the Dewberry brothers, Otis, and Amamda Wilkinson. But as she gets to know them, her opinions change. Have you ever judged someone too quickly? Did you eventually change your opinion? What made you change what you thought? Why is it important no to "judge a book by its cover"?
3. What decisions does Opal make in this story that end up changing her life? Have you ever made what seemed like a small, unimportant decision, but it turned out to be very important? Explain.
4. What made you laugh in this book? Why?
5. In what ways is Opal's mother a very important character in the book even though she never appears?
6. Why do you think Opal wanted to know ten things about her mother? Can you tell what her mother is like from the ten things her father describes to her? Do you think that ten things can really describe a whole person?
7. Opal asks Gloria Dump, "Do you think everybody misses somebody like I miss my mama?" What do you think? Does everybody miss somebody? Why? Who do you miss?
8. Gloria Dump says she thinks "the whole world has an aching heart." Do you agree that everyone has their own sadness? Why?
9. Do you think you'd like to eat a Littmus Lozenge? Why or why not?
10. After listening to Miss Franny's story about her great-grandfather, Opal says, "It was important to me to hear how Littmus survived after losing everything he loved." Why do you think that was important to Opal? What can we learn about ourselves when we listen to stories about other people's lives?

11. What do you think Opal and her dad, the preacher, get from having Winn-Dixie? Who or what in your life is like Winn-Dixie?
12. Opal believes that life is like a Littmus lozenge – that it's sweet and sad and all mixed up together and hard to separate out. Do you agree? Why or why not?
13. When Winn-Dixie is missing after the thunderstorm, Gloria Dump says to Opal, "There ain't no way you can hold on to something that wants to go, you understand? You can only love what you got while you got it." What do you think Gloria means? Do you agree with her thought? Why or why not?
14. What does the title *Because of Winn Dixie* mean to you?
15. At the end of the story, Opal seems to accept that her mother is not coming back. Why is this an important part of the story? What is something difficult in your life that you've had to accept?