

# Out of Tune

## OUT OF TUNE by Gail Nall – Teacher Guide



Describe Shiver's behavior toward Maya at the start of the book. How does this affect Maya's view of her?

Family is important in this book. How does Maya view her family at the start of the book? How does her relationship with her family change by the end of the book?

Why does Maya not tell Jack that she's moving? Hypothesize some possible reasons.

How does Gail Nall establish setting in this book? Specifically, how does Maya feel about life in the RV? Pull out specific words and phrases she uses to express this.

Compare and contrast how Maya first views Shiver and how that view changes by the end of the book. Use specific examples from the book to support each view. What causes Maya to change her view?

What is motivating Maya to audition for Dueling Duets? List all the reasons and then comment about whether or not you think each is realistic.

How does the character of Maya change from the beginning to the end of the novel? Track her progress at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the book. Use specific examples to support your views.

What is Maya's relationship with her parents like? Explain using specific examples from the book to support your view.

How does Shiver's relationship with her mom differ from Maya's relationship with her own mother? Compare and contrast both characters' relationships with their mothers.

Describe the relationship between Shiver and Gert. Why is Gert so important to Shiver? What does she represent and provide?

Maya feels as if she has no control over what's happening in her life. What makes her feel this way? What other characters feel as if they have no control over their lives? Identify these characters and explain what they feel they have no control over. Have you ever felt this way?

Sometimes what we imagine in our minds is a lot worse than the truth. Find specific instances in the book where Maya feels this way. Then evaluate whether her fears are real or imagined.

Throughout the book, Maya feels as if her parents have ignored her dream. Where is the irony in that? How have they *not* ignored her dream?

In Chapter 4, after Maya's family runs into Gert and Shiver, Maya's mom comments, "It's almost as if there was a reason for all of this – your dad losing his job and everything." By the end of the book, what do each of these characters gain from Maya's dad losing his job:

\*Maya

\*Bug

\*Their parents

\*Shiver

In Chapter 5, when Shiver asks Maya about her book, *Everything Y'all Wanted to Know About Country Music – And Then Some*, Maya tells her it's nothing, "I hold the book close to me so she can't read the title. I don't know why, really. Maybe because I'm pretty sure she'd call me a hick for liking country. Or maybe I just don't want to share my most important dream with someone like Shiver." Why do you think she didn't want to share the book with Shiver? How would sharing her most important dream with Shiver at this point possibly have changed the plot?

In Chapter 11, when Maya's mom makes Maya get rid of all the belongings that she's brought onto the bus, her mom says, "I know how hard this is, but try to think of it like this. It's just things, Maya...It's not your life." Maya doesn't believe that, because she feels all her items "a reminder of something good and happy." Make an argument for both characters. How is Maya's mom right? How is Maya right? Who do you agree most with and why?

In Chapter 16, Remy tells Maya that, "After a while, I found out that I feel more at home here than at our house in Denver." Maya doesn't understand that, wondering, "How can you feel at home without your actual house?" Explain why Remy feels this way and how Maya's view on this way of thinking changes at the end of the book.

In Chapter 17, Remy tells Maya that, "Normal life is overrated." Do you agree with this? Why or why not? Where do we see examples in the novel supporting this way of thinking?

Why do Remy, Bug, and Shiver decide to come with Maya on her plan to ride to Cody? What motivates each of these characters?

Remy, Bug, and Shiver all contribute something that helps Maya get to Cody. What contribution does each make?

In Chapter 19, Maya thinks, "I kind of wish I could have both – music career and my family, Remy and Kenzie, and Nashville and the mountains. But I can't. I have to choose, and really, there's no choice. I have to follow my dreams. And sometimes I get so homesick it feels like all the lonely and the sad have filled up the place where my heart used to be." Do you believe in her way of thinking here? Why or why not.

In Chapter 20, when talking about family, Shiver tells Maya, "All of them love you and actually want to spend time with you. Some people don't get any of that." Explain what Shiver means

by this comment and find other moments in the book that foreshadow the truth about Shiver and her mother.

In Chapter 26, Maya has to decide whether she should help Shiver get to the hospital, which means she'll miss the bus back to Nashville. She thinks, "I'll have come all this way for nothing...And then it's like the sun pops out in the middle of the night. *Not for nothing*. Not if I help Shiver get to the hospital to see Gert before visiting hours are over. All this trouble *will* be worth something. It just won't be something for me." What does this say about her character? Do you think she would have made this choice at the start of the book? Why or why not?

Maya's dad calls their life in the RV "a new normal." Compare and contrast Maya's old normal with this new normal. Do you think that it's possible for Maya to have a new normal?

At the end of the book, Maya realizes that home is not always in the most traditional form. How is home redefined in *Out of Tune*? Provide specific examples to support your view.

The climax of a story is the point where the main character makes a choice and there is no turning back. What do you think is the climax of this book? What are the repercussions from this choice?

What challenges does Maya overcome by the end of the book? What does she learn from these challenges?

Who do you believe is the antagonist in this book? Is there an antagonist?

Identify both internal and external conflicts that Maya encounters throughout the book. How does she overcome each them?

We read books for enjoyment, but sometimes we discover that books can teach us things. What has *Out of Tune* taught you? Describe in detail.

Describe Maya and Bug's relationship. Explain ways in which they need each other.

What is Kenzie's role in the story? In what ways is she important?

How do Maya's parents' understanding of her change at the end of the book? How do they view her running away to Cody? Why?

How do the characters face change in this book? Identify a minimum of three characters and discuss the changes they are going through and how these changes affect each of them with specifics from the book.

*Out of Tune* is told in Maya's point of view. How does that help add to the story? How would the story be different if it had been told in a different character's POV? Select another character and discuss the changes to the story if he/she had told it. (Bonus: Select a scene from the book and re-tell it from that character's POV)

Who are the secondary characters in the book? Identify a minimum of three and discuss why they are important to the story.

The title of the book is *Out of Tune*. Analyze and explain the meaning of this title. Why is it important in the story? Support with specific examples from the book. What are some other possible titles for the book? Come up with a new one and explain why you chose it using specifics from the book to support your view.

Select one of the following themes from *Out of Tune*:

- \*Family
- \*Following your Dreams
- \*Home
- \*Change
- \*Friendship

Where do we see examples of your chosen theme? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Cite specific textual examples to support your responses.

Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

Come up with a theme or central idea in the book that is not mentioned above. Where do we see examples of it? How does this theme develop throughout the book and how does it affect the outcome? Cite specific textual examples to support your responses.

Additional Question: Can you think of any other stories, poems, movies, or songs that have this same theme? Describe them.

What character are you most like in *Out of Tune*? Explain why you chose this character using specifics from the book and your life.

What character from *Out of Tune* would you most likely be friends with? Explain why using specifics from the book.

Maya is willing to do anything to make her dream a reality. Do you have a dream that you feel the same way about? Describe.

**Common Core Standards addressed by the discussion questions in this guide: CCSS ELA-Literacy RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.10, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.10, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.10, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.10.**

