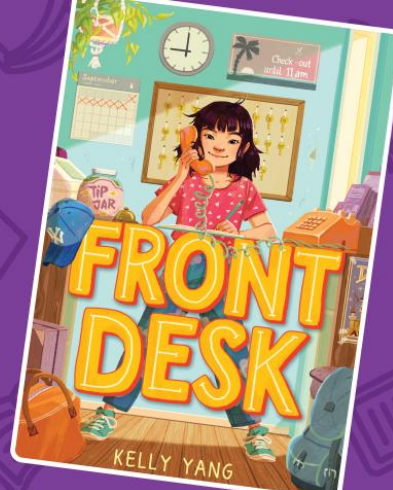


Family Reads



**Use these questions to start a discussion with your family about *Front Desk*.
Feel free to use only what works for your family!**

1. At the beginning of *Front Desk*, Mia's mom says their family came from China to America "[b]ecause it's freer here." (p. 4) What examples from the book support this statement? What examples from the book suggest otherwise?
2. Mr. Yao says his son "speaks good English" because he was born in the United States. (p. 6) What does it mean to speak "good English" and why is it important to Mr. Yao? Why might being born in a country impact someone's ability to speak that country's language? What are ways someone could learn a language? What are some benefits of understanding multiple languages? How would you interact with someone whose level of fluency was different from yours?
3. Mr. Yao tells Mia's parents that they could tell who were "bad guys" by "how they look." (p. 10) How would you respond to someone who judged you based on your appearance?
4. Mia's parents celebrate their first day at the motel by brewing tea they had brought from China. What are some special foods from your culture that your family enjoys? What foods do you enjoy for celebrations and on holidays? What makes these foods and traditions important?
5. Mr. Yao says good employees "know their place." (p. 62) What does he mean? What does Mia think about this? What are some characteristics that make a good employee? In what ways are Mia and her parents good employees?
6. Mia, her parents, their fellow immigrant friends, and Hank experience a lot of unfair treatment. At one point Mia's mom says "we're immigrants . . . Our lives are never fair." (p. 68) In what ways are Hank, Mia's family, and other immigrants treated differently, and why? What does Mia think about this? What do you think? How should people who receive—or see other people receive—unfair treatment respond?

7. Mia and her dad discuss the value of a penny that was printed with a mistake. He says, "A mistake isn't always a mistake . . . Sometimes a mistake is actually an opportunity." (p. 76) What does this mean? Can you think of any of your own experiences that you thought were mistakes but were actually opportunities?
8. Mia and Lupe discuss how some people are mean to them because they are both "poor" and "brown." (p. 81) Being both "brown" and "poor" is an example of intersectionality, which is when different social categories intersect to impact someone's experiences, often in a negative way. What are other examples of how race, gender, economic status, or other characteristics intersect to negatively impact someone's life in *Front Desk*?
9. Lupe explains to Mia that Americans are riding two different roller coasters, "one for rich people and one for poor people." (p. 81) What are some examples from the text that illustrate Lupe's statement? What would need to change in order for all Americans to "ride" the same "roller coaster"?
10. After Mr. Lorenz reports that his car was stolen, the police officers who visit the Calivista take Hank aside to ask him additional questions. Hank later tells Mia, "This kind of thing happens to me . . . To all black people in this country." (p. 100) What are some other examples of discriminatory treatment of Black people in *Front Desk*?
11. Mia's parents and some of the other immigrant Chinese characters had more professional jobs that demonstrated their education when they were in China, but they work very different jobs upon moving to the United States. What examples from the book show why they continued to live in the United States despite their significant career shifts?
12. Mia wants to become a writer, but her mother thinks it's more practical to be good at math. Why does Mia's mother think it's important for Mia to be good at math? How does Mia react to her mother's comments? How would you react?
13. Mia writes a lot of letters to different people. Why does she write to each person? What does she accomplish with each letter?
14. Jason and Mia do not get along the first few months they know each other. How do they change throughout the book? What is their relationship like by the end of the book?