



**MINI  
STUDY GUIDE  
for ELA**



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Thanks to John Strahinich for copyediting this study guide.

## Foreword

This guide offers a variety of questions and activities to support the teaching of the chapter book, *She's Just Too Funny*. Teachers and parents may choose to use all of the materials in this booklet or to select specific questions and activities to meet children's needs and school or grade requirements.

The author, a former teacher, has written books and texts for most of the major American publishers during her thirty-year career in education publishing. She also has an extensive background in assessment from her academic work and teaching experience. She received an M.Ed from Harvard University, where she studied under Jeanne Chall at the Harvard Reading Laboratory.

## Warm Up Activities

These activities offer a quick orientation to *She's Just Too Funny!*

**PREVIEW** Encourage children to preview the book. First, have them read the title and study the cover photograph. Next ask them to skim the table of contents, read chapter titles, and quickly check out each illustration. Then have them make predictions based on their preview

**PREDICT** Ask: What do you think the main character is like? What can you guess about the setting? What do you think happens in this book?

**SET A PURPOSE** Have children set a purpose for reading. Ask: What do you want to find out? Encourage them to be as specific as possible.

**DISCUSS** Ask: Would you like to be around somebody who is *just too funny*? Give your reasons.

# Chapter Questions

(Possible answers are in parentheses.)

## **Chapter 1**

1. What is the setting of the first chapter? (It takes place in the cafeteria.)
2. Who is telling jokes at lunch? (Brandon Hamm is telling jokes.)
3. Why does Mel miss the joke? (She is looking at her dinosaur fossil.)

## **Chapter 2**

1. What does Mel find on the way home? (She finds some snails.)
2. What do the snails and the fossil show about Mel? (She is curious; she is interested in science.)

## **Chapter 3**

1. Why does Mel call Joy? (She invites her for a sleepover before their day at Trailside.)
2. What does Mel learn from Joy? (Joy is going to a party, and Mel is not invited; Joy has forgotten about their plans; Joy thinks Mel is too serious.)

## **Chapter 4**

1. How is Mel feeling at Trailside? (She is feeling sad about Joy and sorry for herself.)
2. Why does Danika keep asking Mel if she is okay? (Mel is not taking part in the activities at Trailside, and does not seem like herself.)

## **Chapter 5**

1. What books does Mel get for herself at the library? (She gets joke books.)

2. Why does the librarian suggest a new book about worms? (She thinks Mel would like a science book.)

## **Chapter 6**

1. Why is Mel's mother worried? (She is not able to reach Mel; Danika had called, because she thought Mel was sick.)

2. Why does Mel need a pencil? (She wants to copy some jokes.)

## **Chapter 7**

1. Dad thinks people are born with good timing, or not. Mom says practice makes perfect. What do you think? Give your reasons. (Answers will vary. Some people are much better than others at telling jokes, but practice is usually helpful.)

## **Chapter 8**

1. Mel's family laughs politely at her joke. What does that mean? (They are trying to be nice, even though Mel is not great at telling the joke.)

2. What does Mel wish? (She wants to be really funny.)

## **Chapter 9**

1. What is a category? (It is a group.)

2. What kind of categories does Mel list? (She lists groups that jokes might fit into.)

## **Chapter 10**

1. What categories do Mel's jokes belong in? (She tells food jokes and animal jokes.)

## **Chapter 11**

1. Why does Dad say her first joke was perfect for the start of their vacation? (It was about an elephant going on vacation.)

## **Chapter 12**

1. Do you think Mel's family enjoyed her jokes during their vacation? (Answers will vary. Her family laughed, but they wanted some quiet time, too.)

## **Chapter 13**

1. Do you think Brandon Hamm gets what he deserves when Mel tells a joke on him? (Answers will vary. Brandon has teased other people, and now he likely understands how it feels; teasing is hurtful)

## **Chapter 14**

1. Why do some kids follow Mel to the playground? (They want to hear her tell jokes.)

2. Mel is not supposed to give out her phone number. Why does she do it anyway? (She probably enjoys being popular for a change.)

## **Chapter 15**

1. Why doesn't Mel finish her homework? (She spends too much time talking on the phone and practicing jokes.)

2. Why isn't being popular as much fun as Mel had imagined? (She has to pay too much attention to what other kids think.)

## **Chapter 16**

1. Why doesn't Mel get to sign up for judo? (She is too late getting home.)

2. What lies does Mel tell her mother? (Mel says she will tell her friend that she cannot talk on the phone; she also tells her mother that she only has a little homework left.)

## **Chapter 17**

1. Why doesn't Mel turn in her book report? (She has not even finished reading the book.)
2. What happens after Mel is rude to Mrs. Browning? (Mrs. Browning gives her a zero.)

## **Chapter 18**

1. Why do the kids at Mel's table keep laughing when told to stop? (They could not stop, because Mel was so funny.)

## **Chapter 19**

1. Why do you think kids stopped calling Mel on the phone? (They were afraid of getting in trouble for laughing so much at her jokes. They could not stop laughing.)
2. Why was Joy wearing earplugs? (She did not want to hear Mel's jokes, because she could not stop laughing when she heard them.)

## **Chapter 20**

1. What did Mel do when Mrs. Browning started asking about volcanoes? (She kept telling jokes.)
2. What did Mrs. Browning do? (She sent Mel to the principal's office.)

## **Chapter 21**

1. Who came into Mr. Holland's office while Mel waited there? (Her mother came there.)



## **Chapter 22**

1. While waiting in the office, what does Mel think she would do if she could time travel backwards? (She would take back the jokes she had told in science class and her rudeness to Mrs. Browning.)
2. What does Mel's mother say to her on the way home? (She says nothing.)
3. What finally makes Mel cry? (Her mother shows her that the snails were dead, because she had not taken care of them. Seeing what had happened makes her finally cry.)

## **Chapter 23**

1. Why is the phone bill so high? (Mel has been texting a lot.)

## **Chapter 24**

1. What does Mel wish on? (She wishes on the Milky Way.)
2. What is Mel's wish? (She wishes not to be too funny.)

## **Chapter 25**

1. What does Mel think about when she wakes up? (She thinks about all the things that had happened in the past week or so.)
2. What had Mel learned about being popular? (Being popular is not the most important thing in the world.)
3. What had Mel learned about being serious or funny? (She can be more than one thing.)

## **Chapter 26**

1. Mel's father said, "I think we've got our daughter back." What does he mean? (Mel seems more like she was before she got in trouble.)

# Book Questions for after Reading

(Possible answers are in parentheses.)

1. How does Mel change? What does she learn?

(She understands that she needs to make amends for some of her actions. She learns to be true to herself. She knows now that popularity is not the most important thing in the world.

She learns that she can have fun without causing trouble. She learns that she can be more than one thing; she is still changing.)

2. A theme is a kind of lesson. What lessons does this book teach?

(Do not worry so much about what others think. Be true to yourself. People can change.)

3. What words best describe Mel? Give your reasons.

(Mel is many things: interesting, curious, funny, and serious. She enjoys science and having fun. She loves reading and learning about nature and animals. She usually wants to be polite and kind.)

(At the library, we learn that Mel takes out so many books, the librarian knew her and she did not have to use her card to take out books. We get the idea that she often reads about nature. She collects snails, and takes care of a turtle. Soon after she was rude to her teacher, and she gets in trouble, she realizes that she needs to apologize. She does not want to keep getting in trouble at school.)

4. Could this story take place at your school? Why or why not?

(Answers will vary.)

5. What is a mean joke?

(A mean joke insults another person. A mean joke may be a tease that picks on some characteristic of a person, such as the way the person looks or any quality that is different from most other children. A mean joke makes somebody else feel badly.)

# Book Activities – Just for Fun

1. Copy Mel's list of categories on page 34. Ask children to put each story joke into a category.
2. Put each story joke on an index card, or run off the list of jokes at the back of the booklet, and cut and glue each one to an index card. Give a card for each child to practice and tell.
3. Keep joke books in your library for children to peruse or borrow.
3. Have children create a book cover for a joke book.
4. Have children choose one joke from the book, from the list at the back of this booklet, or from another source. Ask them to use the joke to create a cartoon or other picture.
5. Suppose Mel was keeping a diary. What would she write about the story events? Have children write a diary entry that Mel might have written. They should describe the story event or events from one day. What happened? What was Mel thinking and feeling?
6. The story takes place over about two weeks. Have children create a calendar or chart that shows what happened each day.

Where does a peacock go when it loses its tail?  
(A re-tail store!)

What is even smarter than a talking bird?  
(A spelling bee!)

Why do hummingbirds hum?  
(Because they forgot the words!)

What do you give a sick bird?  
(Tweetment!)

What is a cat's favorite song?  
(Three Blind Mice!)

Why did the lion spit out the clown?  
(Because he tasted funny!)

What did the cat have for breakfast?  
(Mice Crispies!)

Why did the chewing gum cross the road?  
(It was stuck to the chicken's foot!)

Why did the turkey cross the road?  
(It was the chicken's day off!)

Why did the turkey cross the road twice?  
(To prove he wasn't chicken!)

When do ducks get up?  
(At the quack of dawn!)

What does a duck like to eat with soup?  
(Quackers!)

What did the duck say after he went shopping?  
(Put it on my bill!)

What happens when a frog parks in a no-parking space?  
(It gets toad away!)

What do you get when you cross a frog and a bunny?  
(A ribbit!)

Why are frogs so happy?  
(Because they eat what bugs them!)

What is a frog's favorite music?  
(Hip hop!)

How did the frog die?  
(It croaked!)

What do you say to a frog who needs a ride?  
(Hop in!)

Why did the dog cross the road?  
(To get to the "barking" lot!)

When does a dog go "moo"?  
( When it is learning a new language! )

What happens when it rains cats and dogs?  
(You step in a poodle! )

How do you know carrots are good for your eyes?  
(Because you never see a rabbit wearing glasses!)

What's a rabbit's favorite game?  
(Hopscotch!)

What does a turtle do on it's birthday?  
(It shellebrates! )

What is a mouse's favorite game?  
(Hide and squeak)



These are some of the books that I read for inspiration while I was working on *SHE'S JUST TOO FUNNY!* and on this study guide for the book.

- FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK, by Marvin Terban (Clarion, NY, 1992)
- KING HENRY THE APE ANIMAL JOKES, compiled by Charles Keller (Pippin Press, NY, 1989)
- NUTTIEST KNOCK-KNOCKS EVER, by Matt Rissinger and Philip Yates (Sterling, NY, 2008)
- TOMFOOLERY, by Alvin Schwartz (Lippincott, NY, 1973)
- YOU MUST BE JOKING!, compiled by Paul Brewer (Cricket Books, Chicago, 2003)