About JLG Guides

Junior Library Guild selects the best new hardcover children’s and YA books being published in the U.S. and makes them available to libraries and schools, often before the books are available from anyone else. Timeliness and value mark the mission of JLG: to be the librarian’s partner. But how can JLG help librarians be partners with classroom teachers?

With JLG Guides.

JLG Guides are activity and reading guides written by people with experience in both children’s and educational publishing—in fact, many of them are former librarians or teachers. The JLG Guides are made up of activity guides for younger readers (grades K–3) and reading guides for older readers (grades 4–12), with some overlap occurring in grades 3 and 4. All guides are written with national and state standards as guidelines. Activity guides focus on providing activities that support specific reading standards; reading guides support various standards (reading, language arts, social studies, science, etc.), depending on the genre and topic of the book itself.

JLG Guides can be used both for whole class instruction and for individual students. Pages are reproducible for classroom use only, and a teacher’s edition accompanies most JLG Guides.

Research indicates that using authentic literature in the classroom helps improve students’ interest level and reading skills. You can trust JLG to provide the very best in new-release books, and now to enhance those selections by giving your school the tools to use those books in the classroom.

And in case you think we forgot the librarians, be sure to check out the Library Applications page, shown on the table of contents in each guide.

From all of us at Junior Library Guild, we wish you and your students good reading and great learning . . . with JLG Selections and JG Guides.
Table of Contents

About the Book and Author ........................................................................................................... 4
Prereading Activities ..................................................................................................................... 5

Chapter by Chapter

Chapters 1–5 .................................................................................................................................. 7
Chapters 6–9 .................................................................................................................................. 10
Chapters 10–13 ............................................................................................................................. 14
Chapters 14–18 ............................................................................................................................. 18
Chapters 19–24 ............................................................................................................................. 21
Chapters 25–28 ............................................................................................................................. 25
Chapters 29–37 ............................................................................................................................. 28

Wrap Up ....................................................................................................................................... 30

Library Applications .................................................................................................................... 32

Suggestions for Further Reading ................................................................................................. 33

Correlations to National Standards ............................................................................................. 34

A school may reproduce copies of the pages in this book for use in its classrooms or library. Any other reproduction is strictly prohibited.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored, or recorded in any form without written permission from the publisher. For permissions questions, contact Junior Library Guild.
About the Book and Author

Summary:
Everything is perfect in the town of Candor, Florida. Teens respect their elders, do their chores, and enjoy homework—because they’re controlled by subliminal messages. Only Oscar, the son of the town’s founder, knows how to get kids out—for a price.

JLG Reviewers Say:
• The book’s dystopian vision is a darkly humorous take on parental ambition and the self-improvement culture.
• The story is tightly plotted, with surprising twists and a shocking resolution.
• Oscar’s struggle against the messages with which he’s bombarded is never-ending; every moment is a test of his focus and willpower. His intelligence and duplicity make him an especially intriguing character.
• Candor marks the debut of a talented new author.

Pam Bachorz says, “Candor was inspired by the six years I lived in a planned community in central Florida. I longed for any sign of imperfection amongst the plastic picket fences and massive beds of flowers. No wonder, then, that my main character Oscar makes his mark with graffiti at the end of the first chapter!

“One night, I was walking the dog and the mosquito truck passed us. The plume of ‘harmless’ spray covered me. What if, I wondered, the spray had Prozac in it? What if that explained why everybody in our town was so friendly and happy? From there it wasn’t a huge jump to brainwashing."

“I think that people often choose to move to a beautiful place in hopes that it will make their lives beautiful, too—but, of course, we never leave our troubles behind. What if, though, we could buy our way into wonderful new lives? How many people would merrily pay a premium if they were guaranteed perfect new lives with obedient children whose only wish is to get into an Ivy League school—and to do the dishes without complaint? And what happens when those children find out that their parents have been messing with their brains?”

www.pambachorz.com
Prereading Activities

Understanding Genre: Dystopian Fiction
Reread the summary of and author’s note about Candor by Pam Bachorz on page 4. Then answer the questions below.

1. Go to the Internet and look for a description of dystopian fiction. What are the characteristics of dystopian fiction?

   Possible response: Dystopian fiction is about characters struggling to live in oppressive societies. Often the characters lack human rights and seem unable to escape their conditions in which they live.

2. Why is Candor an example of dystopian fiction?

   Possible response: Candor is an example of dystopian fiction, because the people in this novel are being controlled by subliminal messages and cannot leave the town without threat of death or insanity.

3. Why is Candor an ironic name for a town in which people’s minds are controlled?

   Possible responses: Candor means “honesty or the quality of being straightforward.” This is an ironic name for a town in which people are fed subliminal messages, which effect people without them knowing it.

4. Everything is supposed to be perfect in Candor, Florida. Why does this make Candor ironic subject matter for a dystopian fiction novel?

   Possible response: Dystopian fiction focuses on imperfect societies. It is ironic that a “perfect” society is really very imperfect.
Prereading Activities

Making Predictions
Reread the summary for *Candor*. Then make predictions based on evidence from the text and/or from your prior knowledge or personal experience.

1. Do you think Oscar can continue helping kids escape Candor without being discovered? Why?

   I predict: Answers will vary.
   Possible prediction: Students may be divided about whether or not Oscar’s success in aiding escapes will continue.

   Based on what evidence?
   Oscar is good enough at what he does that he can demand payment for it. However, Oscar’s story must have a conflict, so some students may predict an escape attempt will backfire.

2. If Candor is a bad place to live, and Oscar knows how to get people out of there, why do you think Oscar stays?

   I predict: Answers will vary.
   Possible prediction: Perhaps Oscar is too affected by the subliminal messages to get himself out of Candor, or perhaps he doesn’t want to leave.

   Based on what evidence?
   It seems unlikely that Oscar would voluntarily stay in a place where people’s minds are controlled. However, the summary says he’s paid when he helps others escape—perhaps that is why he stays.

3. Set a purpose for reading based on your predictions above.

   Possible purpose: I want to find out how Oscar helps kids escape, how he is paid, and why he has not left Candor himself.
Before You Read
Literary Devices: Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound like—sounds! Onomatopoeia is created by both real and made-up words. For example, squawk and bang are dictionary words that imitate sounds, or an author might fabricate a word, such as ker-plash or whew-eee, to imitate something he or she has heard.

1. Below are examples of onomatopoeia used in Candor. As you read, find each example on the page indicated. Then, on the line provided, tell what makes the sound. (Note: Not all answers are found on the same page as the word—read on until you find the answer.)

   a. ca-chunk, ca-chunk, ca-chunk (page 1) Nia’s skateboard going over cracks in the sidewalk
   b. hissing (page 1) sprinklers
   c. screeching (page 1) frogs
   d. rattle-rattle-rattle (page 2) Nia shaking a spray paint can
   e. rap-rap-rap (page 11) Mandi’s pen, as she taps it on her clipboard impatiently
   f. beep-beep-beep (page 22) The alarm system on the Roxbury house
   g. snifflles (page 27) Sherman crying

2. Why do authors use onomatopoeia in their writing? How does it affect the reader?

   Possible answer: Authors use onomatopoeia to create images that pull readers into the story.

After You Read
Checking Predictions

Before reading, you made a prediction about whether or not Oscar would be able to continue helping kids escape Candor. What have you read that supports or refutes your prediction?

Answers will vary. By all appearances, Oscar has helped many kids escape in the past, and he seems to be continuing to do that. However, some students may think Sherman, Oscar’s latest client, presents a danger to Oscar’s business, because Sherman is not as discreet as Oscar would like him to be.
Analyzing the Writing: Setting, Imagery, and Mood

1. As the story opens, how does imagery appealing to readers’ sense of hearing contribute to Candor’s eerie mood?

Possible answer: The only sounds that can be heard are hissing sprinklers, screeching frogs, a mosquito truck, and the unusual sound of someone outside. This evokes the image of a place that is unnaturally still, almost lifeless.

2. How do the homes in Candor contribute to Candor’s image of being the perfect place to live?

Possible answer: All the homes have lit porches, flowerbeds, and picket fences that never need maintenance, because they are plastic. Also, the homes are expensive and built to order.

3. In what ways are the residents of Candor more like scenery than people? How do they contribute to Candor’s creepy quality?

Possible answer: Candor’s residents are practically interchangeable. They all dress the same and act the same. Only very new residents show signs of individuality.

Responding to the Story

1. Why does Oscar have to “pick his battles” when fighting the Messages?

Possible answer: Fighting the Messages takes a lot of energy, even for Oscar, who has Messages of his own that he uses to counteract those he gets from his dad.

2. Campbell outlawed palm trees in Candor, even though they naturally grow there. What was his reason for doing so, and what does this say about his character?

Possible answer: Campbell outlawed palm trees, because he wanted Candor to be a place that felt like home to everyone. This is more telling of what feels like home to him than to others, as well as to what lengths he’ll go to impose even his values on people living in Candor.

3. In what ways is Sherman a foil, or contrast, to Oscar’s character, and how does this make him a danger to Oscar?

Possible answer: Unlike Oscar, Sherman has no inner censor; he is completely open and seemingly unable to keep a secret or follow direction. Sherman threatens Oscar’s sense of control and ability to continue his covert operation.
4. Oscar says that people who are aurally addicted die when they stop getting Messages. Why might this be?

Answers will vary. Oscar said that Messages make all of people’s decisions for them. Perhaps people die without Messages, because they forget how to think for themselves, in even the most basic ways.

5. Why might artists be particularly threatening to Campbell’s vision of a perfect society?

Possible answer: People create art to express emotions and individuality. Campbell prefers a society in which everyone thinks logically and unemotionally.

6. On page 35, Oscar says that he has to help Nia. Why do you think he feels this so urgently? Does Oscar feel this way about all potential clients, or is there something about Nia that makes her particularly worth saving?

Answers will vary. Oscar doesn't feel compelled to save everyone; usually he expects something in return. It seems likely he wants to help Nia, because he's attracted to her.

Science Connection

Subliminal Messages
In Candor, people are made into “perfect” versions of themselves through the use of subliminal messages that are hidden in music. Subliminal messaging and its effect on the subconscious mind have been studied since the late 1800s.

Find out how these messages work, what forms they can take, how effective they are, and why they have sparked controversy in the past.

Write a brief report on your findings to share with your classmates.
Chapters 6–9:
Truth or Consequences
pages 40–72

Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Oscar will get Sherman out of Candor safely?

Possible response: Sherman’s escape seems destined for failure. In Chapter 4, Sherman carelessly talks about the escape in front of potential home buyers and lacks tact in dealing with Oscar. Oscar may decide not to help Sherman, or Sherman may get himself caught.

Literary Devices: Simile and Metaphor
Both simile and metaphor are types of figurative language that writers use to evoke images in readers’ minds. Both similes and metaphors compare two unalike things that are alike in a specific way. Similes always include the word like or as. Metaphors compare two unlike things without using like or as.

Complete the chart below by telling whether each example of figurative language is simile or metaphor. Then find the example on the page indicated and use context clues to tell what two things the figurative language compares and what the figurative language means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figurative Language</th>
<th>Simile or Metaphor?</th>
<th>Comparison and Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s like [Nia has] become a Message, stuck in my brain. (page 40)</td>
<td>simile</td>
<td>Nia is compared to a Message; Nia has control over Oscar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And then their brains unraveled. (page 51)</td>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>Their brains are compared to something woven that has come apart; their brains stopped functioning correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it’s nice to do what the Messages say. It’s like sinking back in a warm bath, eyes shut, arms floating, and letting the water cover my face. (page 51)</td>
<td>simile</td>
<td>Listening to Messages is compared to taking a bath; listening to Messages is relaxing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Art] is just chalk. (page 61)</td>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>Art is compared to chalk; art is temporary and harmless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low hiss sounds by our feet. Like a snake. A big one. (page 62)</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>The hiss of a hose is compared to a big snake; the hose made a dangerous noise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether or not Oscar would get Sherman out of Candor safely. What evidence confirmed or refuted your prediction?

Possible answer: Sherman was caught running away before he even truly left home.

Analyzing the Writing: Ambiguity and Complexity
Sometimes, instead of explaining everything in a text, the author creates complex (complicated) or ambiguous (unclear) situations that cause readers to question and analyze characters and their motives.

1. On page 51, Oscar says that Campbell cried when the Lockarts died, but he didn’t change anything about the way he ran Candor. What questions does this raise, and what might be their answers?

   Answers will vary. Students may wonder why Campbell cried. Was it because the Lockart deaths reminded him of the destruction of his own family? Was it because he felt grief for the Lockarts or some responsibility for their deaths? The fact that he changed nothing in Candor afterward could be explained a couple ways: Perhaps Campbell was too invested in Candor to shut it down. Or, perhaps he didn’t hold himself or the Messages responsible for the deaths.

2. On page 71, Oscar’s mom abruptly leaves the family and tells Oscar not to follow her. What questions does this raise, and what might be their answers?

   Answers will vary. Though it’s easy to understand why she left Campbell, it’s difficult to understand why she would leave Oscar in a situation that was unlivable for her. Did she believe in the good of the Messages but just couldn’t lose the memory of Winston? Was she too grief-stricken to care about anyone but herself? Or, did she believe that taking Oscar with her would put him in danger? (Perhaps Campbell told her the effects of aural addition.)

3. Do you think Oscar has the same questions about his parents that you do? How does this affect your feelings about his character?

   Possible answer: Yes, Oscar probably does have these questions. Knowing this helps readers sympathize with Oscar’s character and better understand why he struggles in relationships.
Getting to Know the Characters:  
Character Traits as Shown By Actions

On page 69, Campbell says to Oscar, “We both know you’re my clone.” Oscar disagrees, but there’s actually some truth to this statement. Complete the chart below by reading each trait and then telling what each character does to show he possesses the trait.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Trait</th>
<th>Oscar’s Actions</th>
<th>Campbell’s Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He has good business sense.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He has a thriving business selling escape plans to Candor kids.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He has a thriving business selling Candor property to rich adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He believes that everyone leaves; therefore, profiting from someone is better than becoming attached.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He uses this as an excuse to take advantage of clients, rather than getting to know them.</td>
<td>Possible answer: It appears he may use this as an excuse to brainwash his son and use him as a Sales tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He values self-control.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He goes to great lengths to subvert the Messages and avoid being caught in his rebellion.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He monitors his food intake and doesn’t allow himself to become emotional or think about the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He can be callous and even vicious when crossed.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He views Sherman as a problem and the possibility of Sherman being hurt in the woods as a solution.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He has given Oscar reason to fear he would send Oscar to the Listening Room for disobeying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He needs predictability or situations in which he knows what the rules are and how he can be successful.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He feels thrown by his strong attraction to Nia and wants to go back to being charming and studious.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He created a whole community whose values and goals mirror his own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He believes he knows better what is good for people than they know for themselves.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He feeds clients Messages that he thinks they need to hear.</td>
<td>Possible answer: He feed clients Messages that he thinks they need to hear.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What experiences do Oscar and Campbell share that help explain some of their negative behaviors? Why do you think they reacted to these experiences the way they did?

Possible answer: Both Oscar and Campbell experienced Winston's tragic death and Mom’s sudden departure from the family. Their grief over these experiences could account for their need to focus on things in their lives that they can control.
Responding to the Story

1. Oscar has set up a plan for his own escape. Why do you think he doesn’t put it into action?

   Answers will vary. It is unclear why Oscar doesn’t just leave. Maybe he doesn’t want to quit his lucrative business. Perhaps he feels some moral obligation to stay and help others escape. Or, maybe he stays for his dad; though he fears Campbell, he also trusts Campbell, values his approval, and believes Campbell is the only person he has.

2. What is the significance of the drawing Nia gives to Oscar?

   Possible answer: Instead of drawing an idealized version of Oscar, she drew Oscar as he really is: nervous, worried. Oscar feels like, for the first time since he moved to Candor, someone sees him as he really is.

3. Oscar says that he and his father don’t want all the same things. How is Oscar’s attraction to Nia proof of this?

   Possible answer: Nia is different from Oscar, and this is part of what he likes about her. She also sees Oscar as imperfect, which is refreshing to him. Campbell prefers that people see him as infallible, and he wants a world in which everyone thinks the way he does.

Social Studies Connection

Business and Marketing

In Chapter 9, we learn a lot about Campbell’s philosophies for running a successful business, some of which include the following:

- There’s no such thing as too much business.
- We must focus on the future.
- People want something when they see someone else using it.
- Everyone wants to be part of a crowd.

How does Campbell put these ideas to work when selling homes in Candor? Also, what examples do you see in real-world advertising of these same ideas at work? Discuss your observations with a peer.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
At the end of Chapter 9, Campbell tells Oscar to befriend Nia. Do you think that having to be friends with Nia will complicate Oscar's plan to help her escape or make it easier?

Answers will vary. Oscar is afraid his dad will be watching him and Nia, and some students may say this is a sign that Nia's escape will be more complicated now. However, others may think that Oscar being forced to hang out with Nia is a lucky break. Now it won't be odd for them to be seen together, which may make it easier for them to orchestrate Nia's getaway.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether or not Oscar would have a harder time orchestrating Nia's escape, now that Campbell wants he and Nia to be friends. Was your prediction correct? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Oscar's escape plan for Nia has become more complicated, but not for the reasons he thought; he has decided he wants to keep her in Candor.

More Metaphors
Complete the following chart by going to each page number indicated and finding a metaphor on the page, as directed. Then write what two things are being compared and what the metaphor means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Comparison and Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 76</td>
<td>“A fresh swell of guilt fills my gut.”</td>
<td>Guilt is compared to rippling movement on the surface of the sea; new guilt causes stress that upsets his stomach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 94</td>
<td>“It’s nobody’s fault when romance dissolves.”</td>
<td>Romance is compared to something that loses its shape and disappears; it’s nobody’s fault when romance ends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 95</td>
<td>“It’s been a river that’s been running through my head for days.”</td>
<td>A Message is compared to a river; the Message never leaves his mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 100</td>
<td>“Her eyes drink in the art like she’s been in a desert.”</td>
<td>Her eyes are compared to a thirsty human or animal; she looks at the art in a way that shows she has missed it a great deal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the Writing: Symbolism

Symbolism is using one thing to represent another (such as a dove to represent peace). In literature, authors often use symbols to reveal emotional subtext or the truth about an event or situation. An example of this in Candor is the scene in which Oscar and Nia view art together in the potting shed. How they identify with their favorite paintings is telling of who they are as people and what role each plays in the novel.

1. Reread the third- and second-to-last paragraphs on page 98. Assume Oscar relates to this painting, because it is symbolic of his relationship with Nia. If Nia is the girl in the painting, what in the painting represents Oscar, and what might it show about Oscar’s relationship with Nia?

   Possible response: The bird held on a leash by a mean but beautiful girl represents Oscar. This may show that Oscar feels trapped by his attraction to Nia.

2. Reread Paragraphs 2–5 on page 100. Nia likes the painting of Judith, a biblical hero who saved her people from foreign rule by getting the foreign leader to trust her and then killing him. How might Nia be like Judith?

   Possible response: Like Judith, Nia may have the independence and strength to save herself from someone who controls her. She may also be a danger to someone who trusts her.

3. Reread Paragraphs 2–6 on page 101. Both Nia and Oscar relate to the tiny man in this painting. What are the differences in the way they relate to him?

   Possible response: Nia sees someone who is running away, and Oscar sees someone who is going home, someone who is stuck “three inches away from somewhere else.”

4. Assume these three paintings together help form a narrative about what will happen to Nia and Oscar in the rest of the story. What might the paintings foreshadow?

   Possible response: The paintings may foreshadow that Oscar will remain trapped in Candor, due to his attraction to Nia, and he may even die, while Nia will find a way to escape.
Getting to Know the Characters

In *Candor*, Campbell Banks is the *antagonist*, or adversary, of the story.

1. An antagonist is often a character with particular power over people and is difficult to defeat. His or her primary goal is to destroy something or someone. How is this descriptive of Campbell?

   Possible response: Campbell is nearly impossible to defeat, because he has ways of knowing and seeing everything in Candor, and he has the power to control people’s minds. His goal is to destroy those qualities in people that make them imperfect, their emotions and sense of individuality.

2. Sometimes the antagonist thinks he or she is the hero of his or her own story. In what ways might Campbell view his actions as heroic?

   Possible response: Campbell thinks he is saving people from themselves, by feeding them Messages that focus on success and clean living. He thinks he is protecting people from the pitfalls of living in an unpredictable world.

3. One of Campbell’s Messages is, “Never take advantage of someone else’s need.” How is this Message a sign of hypocrisy and a lack of true benevolence in Campbell?

   Possible response: Often the people who come to Candor do so because their lives or their children’s lives are in a state of upheaval. Campbell entices them to live in Candor as an antidote to their problems and then brainwashes them in ways that allow him to profit from their misery. Were his motives purely benevolent, he would not charge millions for people to live in Candor, and he would not keep a monopoly on the business of selling property there.
Responding to the Story

1. What does Oscar mean when he says that Winston’s absence feels like a broken promise?

   Answers will vary. As a younger brother, Oscar probably expected to grow up with an older
   sibling who would be a mentor to him in some way. Oscar also expected he would always
   have a family. Winston’s death feels like a betrayal, because it unfairly robbed Oscar of
   expectations he was not wrong to have.

2. On pages 84–86, Nia reveals that she created an unhappy life for herself by rebelling against
   her parents, simply for the sake of rebelling. Oscar advises her to do what she wants, instead
   of worrying about whether or not her parents will like it. Does Oscar follow his own advice?
   Explain your answer.

   Possible response: Oscar helps kids leave Candor and devises Messages that counteract his
dad’s. However, Oscar doesn’t really do what he wants to do. He lives in fear and controls his
true desires so that he won’t be discovered as someone with free will.

3. In literature, a character’s contact with water often symbolizes a transformation. How is Oscar
   transformed after swimming in the pool with Nia?

   Possible response: He is transformed into someone who wants a relationship; he no longer
   wants to avoid attachment to Nia.

4. What does Oscar suspect is the reason Mandi broke up with him?

   Possible response: He thinks Mandi broke up with him, because Campbell has been feeding
   her and everyone else the message that she and Oscar don’t belong together anymore.

5. Oscar decides not to tell Nia about the Messages, because he wants to keep Nia with him.
   How is this like something his father would do?

   Possible response: Campbell uses Messages to keep Oscar with him.

Social Science Connection

The Subconscious

The power of the subconscious mind is at the center of Candor’s plot. It forms the basis for the
conflict of the story and also affects the motives and actions of all its characters. Psychology is
the study of the human subconscious. Find out how long the subconscious has been an area of
study and whose ideas have influenced modern-day psychology the most. Write a brief report to
share what you learn with your classmates.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Oscar will continue to keep the Messages a secret from Nia? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary. Most students will hope Oscar tells Nia the truth before she finds out on her own. However, Oscar has already decided twice to put off telling her about the Messages.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier you made a prediction about whether or not Oscar would continue to keep the Messages a secret from Nia. Was your prediction correct? Why or why not? Answers will vary.

Possible response: My prediction was correct; Oscar did continue to keep the Messages a secret from Nia, and it backfired. Nia found out the truth from Sherman.

Analyzing the Writing: Foreshadowing
Foreshadowing consists of hints or clues in the text about what will happen later in the story. Lightning and thunder often foreshadow difficulties for the main character and call attention to events that change the course of the story.

1. In Chapter 14, a lightning storm starts during Brick Day. What does Brick Day symbolize for the residents of Candor?

Possible response: Brick Day symbolizes proof that the residents belong to a community.

2. How does Oscar feel about helping his father on Brick Day, and why does he feel this way?

Possible response: Oscar is proud to help his father on Brick Day, in part because Brick Day reminds him of his mother and the new beginning his family made in Candor years ago.

3. There are loud cracks of thunder after events on pages 112 and 114. What are the events?

Possible response: Nia asks Oscar to leave with her, but he stays with his father. Then Oscar accidentally reveals to his father that he knows about the Messages.
4. At the end of Chapter 14, what choice does Oscar make, and what might this foreshadow?

Possible response: Oscar chooses to go with his father. This may foreshadow that he will stay in Candor with his father instead of leaving with Nia.

**Getting to Know the Characters: The Fool**

Sherman is example of a character type called *The Fool*.

1. *The Fool* is usually someone who criticizes the society in which he or she lives and is a blunderer with an uncanny ability to survive. How is this descriptive of Sherman?

Possible response: Sherman criticizes Candor's use of Messages to brainwash people. He also completely botches the escape plan Oscar has set up for him, but then manages to avoid being sent to the Listening Room.

2. *The Fool* also has a crude or childlike quality that disguises a talent for understanding the truth of a situation. Sherman first shows this ability when he tells Oscar, “For someone who’s fighting the system, you share care a lot about this place.” Then he shows this ability again, on page 137. What accusation does he level at Oscar?

Possible response: He accuses Oscar of being imperfect and using Messages to keep Nia in a relationship with him.

3. *The Fool* sometimes has questionable morals. What does Sherman do that shows he is not a completely honorable person?

Possible response: He gets his parents to arrange for Mandi to be brainwashed into being Sherman's girlfriend.

4. The Fool is often an endless source of frustration for the protagonist as well as a catalyst for change in the protagonist’s story. How does Sherman embody these qualities?

Possible response: Sherman always shows up when Oscar least wants him around and is nearly impossible to get rid of. In Chapter 17, he changes Oscar’s story by exposing Oscar as a liar and manipulator to Nia.
**Responding to the Story**

1. What do bricks symbolize for Oscar, and what does Oscar say would happen if the bricks surrounding the flagpole froze?

   **Possible response:** Bricks symbolize his family’s history, as well as happier times. He says that if the bricks around the flagpole froze, they would break, and his family’s history would be gone.

2. When Oscar sees Sherman with his mother at the Brick Day ceremony, he wonders what kind of mother would want a teenage son who still holds her hand. Why do you think a mother would want that? Do you think Sherman’s mother is anything like Oscar’s father? Explain your answer.

   **Answers will vary.** It seems that Sherman’s mother doesn’t really want Sherman to grow up; she wants to keep him with her. Likewise, Campbell wants to keep Oscar with him. This is apparent in the Messages Campbell broadcasts about making family a priority, obeying one’s parents, and finding everything one needs in Candor.

3. At the beginning of the novel Nia wanted nothing to do with Oscar. However, now she’s completely in love with him. Do you trust that her feelings for Oscar are real, or do you think she may have been brainwashed into loving Oscar? Explain your answer.

   **Possible response:** It’s impossible to know to what extent Nia’s feelings for Oscar are real. We know, now, that Campbell has no qualms about using Messages to arrange relationships and breakups. We also know he wanted Nia and Oscar to be friends. So, it’s plausible that he could have used Messages to enhance Nia’s feelings about Oscar.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Oscar will continue to try to make amends with Nia? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Nia seems adamant that she will never accept Oscar into her life again, so
Oscar may give up on her. However, from early in the story, Oscar has felt compelled to help
Nia. So, he may continue to care for her and try to regain her trust.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Earlier, you made a prediction about whether or not Oscar would continue to try to make
amends with Nia. What have you read that supports or refutes your prediction?

Possible response: Oscar still loves Nia even though she is brainwashed, and he has vowed to try
to fix her.

Responding to the Story
1. To what extent do you think adult residents of Candor know the side effects of the Messages?
What has Campbell done to ensure that the Messages appear always to be a good thing?

Possible response: Most adult residents probably do not understand that the Messages can
have side effects. This is evidenced in the shock and horror Sherman’s parents feel when he
must go to the hospital after being in the Listening Room. Campbell makes the Messages
seem like they are always beneficial by making the Listening Room appear to be a spa.

2. The doctors that work at the hospital understand that the Listening Room is harmful to
people’s minds. Why do they continue to work in Candor, knowing the harm that Messages
do there?

Answers will vary. Perhaps some of these doctors are researchers who are working with
Campbell to study the effects of the Messages and try to diminish bad side effects. Either
they believe the Messages are ultimately good, or they are just as bad as Campbell; they see
the Messages as a profit opportunity and don’t care much about the people harmed by them.
3. The bird is a recurring image in *Candor*. First Nia’s drawing reminds Oscar of a bird that doesn’t know how to stop flying. Then a bird on a leash appears in a painting Oscar shows Nia. Now, Sherman and Nia are fearful of birds, as a side effect of being too long in the Listening Room. What do you think these birds symbolize? Explain your answer.

Possible response: The birds symbolize freedom and flight. As Nia draws, she is like a bird that is always free. The bird on a leash is like Oscar whose freedom has been taken away. Sherman and Nia’s experience in the Listening Room was designed to make them fearful of using their free will, so the image of a free bird is menacing to them.

4. On page 176, Oscar says, “I stare up at the stars. They’re farther away than the ones on my ceiling. But they’re more beautiful, because they are where they belong.” How does this observation relate to what Oscar now understands about Nia?

Possible response: He realizes that Nia can never be as beautiful a person in Candor as she was in the outside world, because she needs to be where she is free from being manipulated or molded.
## Analyzing the Writing: Making Inferences

When readers make *inferences*, they use information from the text along with their own knowledge to answer a question they have about the text. Complete the chart below by writing a question and inference for each event provided. The first one is done for you. Answers will vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campbell insists that Oscar go to the hospital to have his foot checked, even though Oscar doesn’t want to go. (page 163)</td>
<td>Possible question: Does Campbell have more than one motive for wanting Oscar to go to the hospital? What might it be?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Campbell may want Oscar to go to the hospital both to have his foot checked and to have his memory of Nia at the grocery store erased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nurse refers to a patient as a “pizza delivery for Dr. Stevens” that is “overbaked.” (page 165)</td>
<td>Possible question: What does it mean to be “overbaked”?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Patients who are “overbaked” are people who suffer side effects from being in the Listening Room too long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Reeb says Sherman is his second Listening Room patient this week. (page 167)</td>
<td>Possible question: Who was the other patient?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Nia was the other patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nia stopped being perfect for a few seconds, and Oscar wants to see if he can make this happen again using M&amp;Ms. (page 176)</td>
<td>Possible question: How can the effects of the Listening Room be counteracted with M&amp;Ms?</td>
<td>Possible inference: The M&amp;Ms might trigger sense memories that bring back detailed information to Nia about who she really is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman is looking for “slippery shiny silver secrets.”</td>
<td>Possible question: Does Sherman remember about the Messages, even though he has been to the Listening Room?</td>
<td>Possible inference: Yes; the Listening Room doesn’t erase everything about a person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Getting to Know the Characters: Internal and External Conflict**

An *internal conflict* is a problem a character experiences within him- or herself, such as indecision or grief about a loss. An *external conflict* is a problem caused by actions taken against a character by others in the story or forces in nature, such as weather or animals.

In the chart below are examples of conflict Oscar experiences in Chapters 19–24. Complete the chart by telling whether each conflict is internal or external and then explaining your answer.

**Note:** Some conflicts can have both internal and external causes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Internal, External, or Both?</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nia has spray painted hints that she knows about the Messages at the fountain, the welcome sign, and the flagpole.</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Nia exposing her knowledge of the Messages might lead to Oscar’s knowledge about the Messages being found out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nia and Sherman were sent to the Listening Room.</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Oscar feels guilt, because he is to blame for what happened to Nia and Sherman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar still loves Nia, even though she’s not the same person.</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Oscar’s love of Nia is an emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi and Sherman catch Oscar with M&amp;Ms.</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Mandi and Sherman might report Oscar for breaking Candor rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar has lost all but two M&amp;Ms.</td>
<td>Internal and External</td>
<td>Internal: Sherman and Mandi caused Oscar to lose the M&amp;Ms. External: Oscar’s hope of fixing Nia’s memory dwindles when the M&amp;Ms are lost.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before You Read

Making Predictions
Mandi knows something about Oscar that he doesn’t want anyone to find out. What do you think she will do with this information?

Answers will vary. At the close of Chapter 24, she said she would want Oscar to pay her back later for keeping his secret. So either she will blackmail him, or she will decide to go ahead and tell what she knows about Oscar.

After You Read

Checking Predictions
Before reading you made a prediction about what Mandi would do with what she knows about Oscar. What happened that confirmed or refuted your prediction?

Possible response: Mandi threatened to blackmail Oscar with what she knows, but Oscar regained control of the situation. So, instead, they struck a deal: Oscar would help Sherman if Mandi would get Nia to talk to Oscar.

Analyzing the Writing: Relationships and Their Effect on Plot
1. Why does Oscar decide to help Sherman for Mandi?

Possible response: Oscar decides to help Sherman for Mandi, because he feels like he owes Mandi something, for having been Oscar’s girlfriend for two years.

2. Why does Oscar think he owes Sherman something, and what does he give to Sherman?

Possible response: Oscar thinks he owes Sherman something, because he had Sherman sent to the Listening Room. He tries to make Sherman happy by with Messages saying Sherman is worthy of Mandi.

3. Sometimes Campbell suspects Oscar is up to something, but he always comes around to believing Oscar is infallible. Why do you think this is?

Answers will vary. There are many possible reasons. One is that Campbell believes himself infallible and unable to be fooled by Oscar. Another could be that Campbell loves Oscar and...
for this reason, always believes the best about Oscar. Still another possibility is that Campbell
doesn’t want to believe Oscar would try to fool him, because he would have to punish Oscar
by sending him to the Listening Room (which he may not want to do, knowing what the side-
effects of the Listening Room are).

Getting to Know the Characters: Character Traits
Even though the Messages brainwash people, each character has core traits that the Messages
can’t fully affect.

1. What character traits does Nia still possess, even though she has been to the Listening Room?
   Possible response: Nia is still able to decide for herself who she will or won’t trust, and she
can still be sarcastic and willful.

2. What traits do Oscar’s Messages to Sherman strengthen in Mandi, and how have these traits
   always been apparent in Mandi’s personality?
   Possible response: Mandi has always been authoritative and a bit mean. Campbell’s Messages
helped curb these traits, but Oscar’s Messages to Sherman strengthened them, by telling
Mandi she is worthy of what she wants.

3. The way Messages affect people seems to depend a bit on how individuals interpret them.
   With that in mind, think about Oscar. From the beginning of the story, he has felt compelled
to help Nia. Could this be due to a Message Oscar interpreted in a different way than
intended? What character trait may have influenced his interpretation? Explain your answer.
   Possible response: We know that Campbell wants Oscar to help Nia fit in at Candor and that
he arranges relationships among children for parents. Perhaps he gave Oscar a Message to
“help Nia,” that Oscar interpreted as “help Nia escape.” Oscar’s rebelliousness against
Candor and attraction to Nia are traits that may have influenced his interpretation.

Responding to the Story
1. Oscar says that Sherman is “like a stain that just keeps spreading.” What does he mean by
this?
   Possible response: Sherman is like a stain that keeps spreading, because his knowledge about
the Messages continues to wreak havoc in Oscar’s life, in new and unanticipated ways.
2. Though Oscar doesn’t take free will away from clients who have escaped Candor, he still knows how to influence them. What does he do, and where do you think he learned this trick?

Possible response: Oscar uses money to influence clients who are no longer in Candor. He learned to do this from Campbell, who isn’t shy about spending money to get what he wants. For example, in Candor’s early years, he paid residents to do outdoor activities during times of day, to help market Candor as a healthy, community-oriented place.

3. Nia threw away her art, after the Messages started taking hold. However, Mandi kept all of her pageant gear. What does this say about Mandi?

Possible response: Mandi is strong willed and focused, and she may have been pretending a little at how well the Messages worked on her.

4. In these chapters, a struggle between Oscar’s good and evil sides is apparent. What is evidence of his good side beginning to overcome his evil side?

Possible response: Oscar considers getting Mandi sent to the Listening Room, as a way of keeping himself safe from being found out, but then decides against it. Then he considers he might owe Mandi and Sherman something and decides to try to settle that debt.

Science Connection

Sense and Memory

In Candor, Oscar tries to make Nia remember her old self by triggering memories attached to the senses of touch and taste. (He hopes the feeling of her feet in the grass and the taste of M&Ms will help her recall who she was before she was brainwashed.)

Find out more about how people associate memories with tastes, feelings, sounds, sights, and smells, as well as how actors use sense memories to help them get into character. Share your findings with your classmates.
Before You Read
Making Predictions
Do you think Campbell is convinced of Oscar’s innocence? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary. At the end of Chapter 28, Campbell was convinced enough of Oscar’s innocence to let Oscar leave the hospital. However, Oscar is directly connected with three people now who know about the Messages and have gotten special treatment because of it. Campbell may act like he doesn’t suspect Oscar, when he really does.

After You Read
Checking Predictions
Based on what you read, did you predict accurately about Campbell’s belief in Oscar?

Answers will vary. Possible response: Yes; I was correct about Campbell being convinced of Oscar’s innocence. He was surprised to find Oscar trying to run away, and he would not have been, if he had truly suspected Oscar of anything.

Responding to the Story
1. In Chapter 29, Oscar experiences another water transformation. What does Oscar realize while in the pool behind Nia’s house, and how does the realization change him?

Possible response: Oscar realizes that he is just like everyone else and that he doesn’t want to fight against Candor anymore. He decides to give up his façade of being perfect and stop helping people for money. He thinks the only way to fix anything is to change everything.

2. As Oscar prepares for an escape from Candor with Nia, what are signs that he has become less focused on himself?

Possible response: Oscar agrees to be friends with Sherman, he wonders about the happiness of his old clients, and he is concerned with keeping Nia safe, above all else.
3. Did Oscar win or lose his battle against the antagonist in this story? Explain your answer.

Possible response: Oscar lost his battle against Campbell, but he won the battle against his inner demons.

4. Over the course of the story, the extent to which Oscar has free will is called into question. Though his actions and feelings are his own, they are greatly influenced by Messages Campbell used to make Oscar his clone and control Oscar’s relationships with people. However, Oscar does something toward the end of the story that is undoubtedly a show of free will. What does he do, and how does it prove he is different from Campbell?

Possible response: Oscar ensures Nia will escape Candor safely, which is unlike anything Campbell would do, because Campbell never voluntarily allows people to leave him.

3. Do you think Oscar can regain his free will after being in the Listening Room? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Oscar is studious, and his nature is to want free will—that is what led him to discover how to use Messages for himself in the first place. So, it’s possible that over time and with help he could work his way back to being the person he was.
Wrap-up

Reviewing Predictions
Turn to page 5 of this guide to review your first predictions. How accurate were they?

Answers will vary.

Making Connections
1. Have you ever had to change everything in order to fix something that had gone wrong in your life? What did you change?

Answers will vary.

2. Describe a time when you had to put someone else’s needs ahead of your own.

Answers will vary.

Thinking About the Genre: Dystopian Fiction
1. This dystopian fiction story is about a hero who struggles against both inner demons and evil forces that are outside of him. What other stories you know that have a hero like Oscar?

Answers will vary. Characters such as Hamlet, Darth Vader, and Spiderman are examples of heroes who have a dark side.

2. Do you think it would be possible for a dystopian society such as the one depicted in Candor to exist in the real world? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.
**Thinking About Theme**

1. Oscar’s rebellion ends up having little effect on Campbell and the way Candor is run. However Oscar’s fight was still important. Why is this?

   Possible response: Oscar needed to conquer that which was evil in himself. His fight enabled him to save his own soul.

2. What are the problems of living in a society in which one person’s ideals effect everyone else who lives there?

   Possible response: As individuals, all of us are fallible and all of us need different things in order to be happy. If only one of us gets to decide what is “normal” or “right” then we run the risk of creating an unvaried society in which some people’s rights are abused.

3. Why is free will so important?

   Answers will vary. Possible response: Free will is what allows people to discover and be who they really are. Without free will, we don’t know our own minds and we can’t fend for ourselves.

4. Though many of Oscar’s actions come close to casting him as a bad character, his motives for these actions are usually understandable. For example, it’s easy to identify with Oscar’s need to protect himself and desire to keep Nia with him. What does this say about the nature of evil?

   Answers will vary. Possible response: Having good reasons for doing something that is wrong doesn’t change the fact it is wrong. Evil can be tempting, because it appears to be an easy fix for problems. This is why people struggle with it so much.
Library Applications

Musicians
In Candor subliminal messages are fed to people through classical and jazz music. Ask students why they think Pam Bachorz may have chosen these genres as the delivery system for Candor’s Messages. (For example, it may be because both classical and jazz music are noted for being soothing to some listeners.) Then invite students to use the media center to listen to music by the jazz musicians referenced in Candor (John Coltrane and Charlie “Bird” Parker), as well as other jazz and classical musicians, such as Thelonious Monk, Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig Van Beethoven, and others. As they listen, have students think about how these music styles may have influenced other popular music genres, such as rap, metal, alternative, and blues.

The Fool
Discuss with students that The Fool is a character archetype that originated in dramatic literature and that is particularly noted for appearing in most of William Shakespeare’s plays. Invite students to read a play such as A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, King Lear, or As You Like It, and then write a Response to Literature that compares and contrasts the play’s fool with Sherman from Candor.

Dystopic Literature
Help students form a reading club in which they select a favorite novel of dystopic fiction to discuss in with the group. Some recent examples that you may already have in your library may include:

- The Uglies Trilogy by Scott Westerfeld and Rodrigo Corral
- The Hunger Games and Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins
- The Maze Runner Trilogy by James Dashner
- The Ask and the Answer and The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness
- Works by Ray Bradbury
- Works by Kurt Vonnegut
- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
- Works by Arthur C. Clarke

See Suggestions for Further Reading for more examples.
Suggestions for Further Reading

Fiction books:

## Correlations to National Standards
### For Grades 9–12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Standard Number</th>
<th>Standard Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.1</td>
<td>Reading for Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.2</td>
<td>Reading for Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.3</td>
<td>Evaluation Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.4</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.5</td>
<td>Communication Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.6</td>
<td>Applying Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.7</td>
<td>Evaluating Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.8</td>
<td>Developing Research Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Arts: English</td>
<td>NL–ENG.K–12.12</td>
<td>Applying Language Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NS.9–12.1</td>
<td>Science as Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NS.9–12.5</td>
<td>Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>NS.9–12.6</td>
<td>Personal and Social Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS–EC.9–12.4</td>
<td>Role of Incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>NSS–EC.9–12.7</td>
<td>Price and Quantity Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>NA–T.9–12.2</td>
<td>Acting by Developing, Communicating, and Sustaining Characters in Improvisations and Formal or Informal Productions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>