

# Creative Activities for Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

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## Introduction

**Book Title:** Because of Winn-Dixie

**Author:** Kate DiCamillo

**Year First Published:** 2000

### Summary:

"Because of Winn-Dixie" tells the heartwarming story of a young girl named Opal and her dog, Winn-Dixie, who help bring together a community in a small Florida town. Through her adventures, Opal learns about friendship, family, and forgiveness.

### Key Themes:

- **Friendship:** The story emphasizes the importance of forming friendships and how they can change lives.
- **Community:** Opal's interactions highlight the value of community and how support from others can bring healing.
- **Acceptance:** Characters learn to accept themselves and others, embracing differences.

### Main Characters:

- **Opal Buloni:** A curious and kind-hearted 10-year-old girl who moves to Florida with her father.
- **Winn-Dixie:** A lovable stray dog who becomes Opal's best friend and changes her life.
- **The Preacher:** Opal's father, who is a preacher and struggles with connecting emotionally.
- **Miss Franny Block:** The town librarian who shares many stories with Opal.
- **Gloria Dump:** A nearly blind elderly woman who becomes a wise and caring friend to Opal.

### Setting:

The story is set in a small town in Florida, primarily around locations such as the local grocery store, the library, and Gloria Dump's garden.

### Main Problems in the Book:

- Opal's struggle to bond with her emotionally distant father.
- The loneliness Opal feels after moving to a new town.

### Resolution of the Main Problems:

- Through Winn-Dixie and the friends she makes, Opal forges a closer relationship with her father and overcomes her loneliness.

## Instructional Sections

### 1. Comprehension Questions

1. What kind of dog is Winn-Dixie, and how did Opal find him?
2. Why did Opal and her father move to Florida?
3. Who is Miss Franny Block, and what did she do for a living?
4. Analyze why Opal thinks Winn-Dixie smiles. What does this reveal about her character?
5. List the sequence of events that led Opal to meet Gloria Dump.
6. True or False: Opal's father is a musician. Explain your reasoning.
7. Why did Opal decide to invite people to a party at Gloria's house? What impact did it have on the community?
8. Describe Opal's emotions when she thought she lost Winn-Dixie. How do these emotions highlight her growth throughout the story?

### 2. Discussion Prompts

- **Character Exploration:** How do the people Opal meets impact her understanding of family and friendship?
- **Story Expansion:** Imagine if Winn-Dixie had never wandered into Opal's life. How might her summer have been different?
- **Creative Connections:** What lessons can we learn from Opal's relationship with Winn-Dixie about handling loneliness or new situations?

### 3. Creative Activity Ideas

- **Drawing Activity:** Create a "Friendship Map" illustrating Opal's connections with different characters and how each affects her journey.

- **Role-Playing Exercise:** In pairs, students can act out a conversation between Opal and Miss Franny Block, inventing new stories Miss Franny might tell.
- **Think, Pair, Share:** Discuss with a partner what qualities make Winn-Dixie a special friend. Share personal experiences with special pets or friends.
- **Storytelling:** Write a short story from the perspective of Winn-Dixie describing his adventures with Opal.
- **Garden Collage:** Using craft materials, create a visual representation of Gloria Dump's garden, highlighting its symbolism in the story.

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