



**Gary Schmidt** is the author of numerous young adult novels, including *Orbiting Jupiter*, *Trouble*, *Wednesday Wars*, which won a Newbery Honor, and *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, which won both a Newbery Honor and a Printz Prize. He is a professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Many of his books are about or set in Maine.



Schmidt attended Gordon College in Massachusetts and graduate school at the University of Illinois, earning a Ph.D. in medieval literature. He has been a professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for more than twenty-five years. Gary lives on a one hundred-fifty-year-old farm in Alto, Michigan, where he splits wood, plants gardens, writes, and feeds the wild cats that drop by.

*Biographical info from hmhbooks.com*

All bird images are courtesy of John J. Audubon's *Birds of America*.

Cover page: Snowy Heron, or White Egret

Author page: Blake-bellied Darters

Let's Talk: Arctic Tern

Let's Dig Deeper: Barn Owl

Common Core Standards: Smew, or White Nun



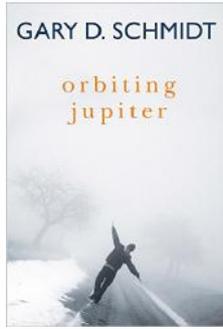
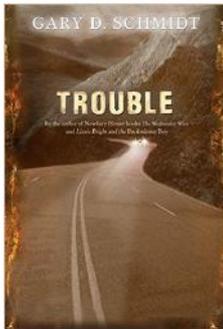
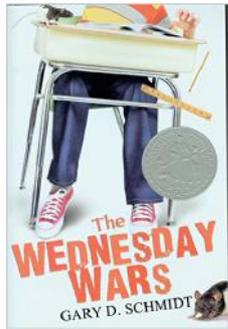
1. Doug has a habit of saying, "So what," about a lot of different things. Why do you think that is?
2. At what point in the story do Doug's walls start to come down?
3. Why is Doug's brother mean to him even though he knows what it's like to be hurt in the same way?
4. Doug often identifies himself as a chump. Why might he think this about himself?
5. What were some of the biggest surprises in the book?
6. What does being "okay for now" mean?
7. Who are the major helpers in Doug's life? Who did he help, and how?
8. How did Doug change over the course of the story?
9. Doug becomes very passionate about learning new drawing techniques and understanding how Audubon included so much in one painting. What resonates the most with you when you look at the paintings? What do you find most interesting?
10. If you could continue the story, where would it go from here?

*For more discussion questions, visit:  
<http://www.hmhbooks.com/schmidt/OkayForNow-educatorsguide.pdf>*



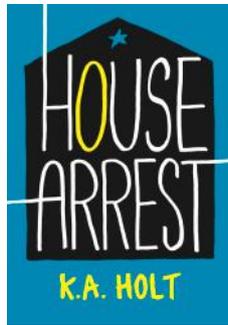
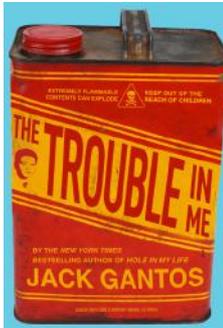
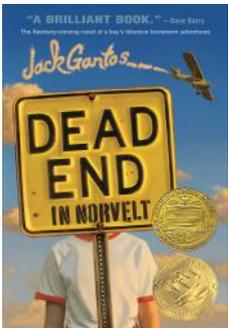
1. Research what your town was like in 1968. Was there a library in town? What were the most popular stores or markets? What kinds of jobs did people have? What did people do for fun?
2. Explore the world of John J. Audubon's *Birds of America*. Vote as a class to choose a bird as your mascot. <http://www.audubon.org/birds-of-america>
3. Someone vandalized the Book Return box outside the library - It's time to investigate! Group students in pairs and designate one student an interviewer and the other student as a character (Doug, Lil, Mr. Powell, etc.). Student interviewers will ask questions of students who act out the characters, and then summarize their notes. How do the characters' reactions differ from each other?
4. Listen to Gary Schmidt read an excerpt from *Okay for Now*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P99w1MTAiCY>
5. Watch an interview with Gary Schmidt about *Okay for Now*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzRcN2HKG4Q>
6. Pick a song that you think each character would like, and create an *Okay For Now* playlist. For an even greater challenge, pick songs released before 1968!
7. Summarize the story visually by creating a storyboard. Using anywhere from six to 24 panels, break down the story into its major plot points and illustrate them.
8. Create a Literary 3x3 for the book: <https://www.haikudeck.com/literary-3x3-education-presentation-fyHsn6sa6t#slide0>

For more ideas and activities, including a trivia game, visit:  
<http://www.hmhbooks.com/schmidt/OkayForNow-educatorsguide.pdf>



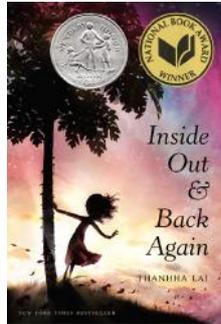
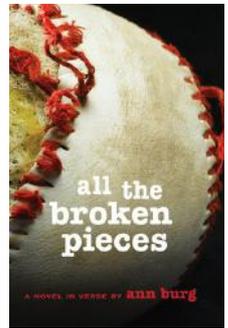
*Other books by Gary Schmidt*

The Wednesday Wars  
 Trouble  
 Orbiting Jupiter



*If you liked Okay for Now, you'll like:*

Dead End in Norvelt, by Jack Gantos. Gr. 5 - 8.  
 The Trouble in Me, by Jack Gantos. Gr. 7 & up.  
 House Arrest, by K.A. Holt. Gr. 6 - 8.



*Other novels set during the Vietnam War era:*

All The Broken Pieces, by Ann E. Burg. Gr. 6 - 8.  
 Shooting the Moon, by Frances O'Roark Dowell. Gr. 5 - 8.  
 Inside Out and Back Again, by Thanhha Lai. Gr. 4 - 8.



**Grade 5**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

**Grade 6**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

**Grade 7**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

**Grade 8**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.