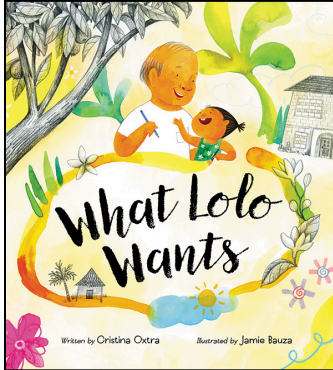




## Discussion and Activity Guide for All Ages



**Book Title:** *What Lolo Wants*

**Written by:** Cristina Oxta

**Illustrated by:** Jamie Bauza

**Publisher:** Kids Can Press

**Year:** 2024

**ISBN #:** 9781525308369

**Age Range:** 3 and up

### About the Book

This book tells the story of young Maria and her lolo (grandfather), who are part of a Filipino family. Every night, Maria and Lolo draw together. Lolo can draw anything: Lola (grandmother) cooking, sampaguita blooming, maya birds perching. One day, though, things start to change. Lolo does not feel well. Soon, Lolo begins to forget people's names, and he cannot find the words for what he wants. Maria tries to find some way to help Lolo communicate.

This sweet and moving picture book is a wonderful conversation starter about how to navigate through family changes by continuing to care and connect. It highlights a strong intergenerational bond between a young girl and her beloved grandfather. The rich and colorful illustrations are full of evocative details of daily life in the Philippines.

Tagalog (an indigenous language of the Philippines) words are incorporated into the text, and a translation guide is included at the front of the book.



## For Conversations With Children Under 12

Recommended for librarians, educators, caregivers/families, and other intergenerational groups that include children under 12.

### A Note for Adults Reading to Children

Conversations using this book can help build empathy and agency in families navigating changes or aging loved ones. This book also provides a positive representation of a multigenerational family living together in a home. The representation of Lolo experiencing the aging process is also important because of the stigma around aging, Alzheimer's, and dementia, and how challenging it can be to talk about these topics with children. This book compassionately and realistically grapples with the difficulties for individuals and their family members who must suddenly adapt to living with new limitations.

These kinds of family changes can be confusing for children, and they can bring up feelings of grief. Grieving is a personal thing, and while our cultures, beliefs, and community all shape how we cope with grief, everyone grieves differently. In children, big emotions associated with change and grief may show up in behaviors that seem out of the ordinary for them. Stories like this help children see the places where they can use their agency to help.

The setting of the book is in the Philippines, and children may not be familiar with where the Philippine islands are located. It is important to show children where the Philippines is on a map or globe in relation to where they live and to talk about similarities and any differences between the ecosystem, climate, culture, and foods they notice. It may even help to find some pictures of the landscape online to show children.

Use the translation guide in the front of the book to help children understand the Tagalog words in the story, which is an indigenous language of the Philippines. There are many languages spoken in the Philippines. Spanish-speaking readers may recognize some words and wonder about similarities. One example is the ice cream vendor who calls out, "Sorebetes!" which means ice cream in Spanish and is a word used for ice cream in the Philippines. Similarities in Spanish words in the Philippines are due to more than 300 years of Spanish colonization and occupation (1565-1898), which introduced thousands of Spanish words into Filipino languages.



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## Questions for Adults to Reflect on Before Reading with Children

Before you read this book, think about:

- Can you recall a special relationship you have had with an elder? Who was the person, and what did you learn from them? What made your relationship so special?
- What is your experience with aging family members? What were you taught growing up about how to engage with elders as they get older or as their abilities change? What questions, if any, do you remember having as a child?
- When big life changes happen that include a loss, what does grief look like, sound like, and feel like for you? How comfortable are you with expressing grief or being with someone who is grieving a loss?

## Introduce the Book to Children

*In this story, Maria and Lolo (her grandfather) have a special bond. Each night, they draw together. Lolo can draw anything for Maria: Lola cooking, sampaguita flowers blooming, and maya birds perching. One day, though, things start to change. Lolo does not feel well. Soon after, Lolo begins to forget people's names, and soon he cannot find the words for what he wants. Maria tries to find some way to help Lolo communicate. Let's find out what Maria does to help.*

## Discussion Questions

1. Describe the relationship Maria and Lolo have. Why is their relationship so special?
2. What are some of the things Lolo draws for Maria? What do we learn about their life in the Philippines and culture from the things Lolo draws?
3. The book mentions some of the foods important to Maria and Lolo. What foods are special in your family? How are they similar to or different from the foods in the story?
4. Maria loves Lolo's drawings so much that she tries to copy them. What are some things that you see adults in your life doing that you would like to copy or learn to do?
5. In the story, something changed, and Lolo did not feel well. Sometimes, as people get older, they begin to forget things or have trouble finding the words to communicate. Study the two-page spread that includes the line, "He no longer drew Lola frying sweet



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*plantains, the sampaguita blooming in the garden or the maya birds perched in the large guava tree."*

- a. How do you think Maria is feeling, or what do you think she's thinking?
  - b. How can you tell?
6. Has there ever been a big change that happened in your family?
    - a. What feelings did you have?
    - b. What questions did you wonder about?
    - c. How did you respond to the changes?
  7. Have you ever had a difficult time explaining your thoughts and ideas?
    - a. How did that feel?
    - b. How did you respond?
    - c. How did others respond?
  8. What were some of the things Maria tried to do to help Lolo that didn't work?
  9. Maria thought hard about how to help Lolo, and she came up with a solution. What do you think of that solution? What does this show us about Maria and her relationship with Lolo?
  10. Maria was proud of the drawing desk she made for Lolo. Tell about a time when you helped someone and felt proud.

## Activities for Deeper Connection

- **Journal and Reflect:** Invite children to write or draw about a relationship they have with an elder or special adult in their life. Older children can write a letter of gratitude to or a poem about their special adult. Younger children could create a small book or card for their special adult. Questions to guide this may include:
  - Describe how the person makes you feel.
  - What is it that you admire about this person?
  - What do you love to do or talk about together?
  - What have you learned from this person, either about yourself or the world?

Be sure to communicate with families to help children get their letters, booklets, or cards to the adults.



## ONE BOOK ONE MINNESOTA

- **Character Feeling Timeline:** With children, create a timeline of events from the book. Then, have them identify the feelings they think both Lolo and Maria feel during each scene. Discuss the ways their feelings are similar and the times they are different throughout the story.
- **From Lolo's Perspective:** Discuss with children that the book is written in third person, meaning a narrator is telling the story. It does, however, give us more of Maria's perspective on the story. Invite children to choose a scene from the book to rewrite or retell from Lolo's perspective, either using first or third person.
- **Values From Our Elders Mural:** Have children brainstorm values Lolo passes on (e.g., courage, kindness, tradition) and the values they've learned from elders in their lives. Create a collaborative mural with each child illustrating a value they have learned.
- **"Someone I Love" Portraits:** Children create portraits of themselves with a family elder or special adult in their life. Encourage use of symbolic colors, patterns, or cultural clothing.
- **Memory Jars:** Give children each a jar to decorate and provide materials for them to make it their own (including Mod Podge and crafting materials such as tissue paper, ribbons, buttons, stickers, etc.). Encourage children to add things that remind them of precious memories with special people in their lives. Children can write down places, quotes, or dates/descriptions that remind them of memories on small squares of colorful paper, and they can include objects, like a shell or rock found on a beach during a vacation, a ticket or bracelet to a show or event, or anything else that reminds them of the memory and fits inside the jar. The memory jars could be shared or used as a springboard for other storytelling activities.



## For Conversations Among Adults and Youth Older Than 12

Recommended for adult book clubs, young adults, and intergenerational groups that include youth 12 and older.

### Questions for Adults to Reflect on Before Reading with Children

Before you read this book, think about:

- Can you recall a special relationship you have had with an elder? Who was the person, and what did you learn from them? What made your relationship so special?
- What is your experience with aging family members? What were you taught growing up about how to engage with elders as they get older or as their abilities change? What questions, if any, do you remember having as a child?
- When big life changes happen that include a loss, what does grief look like, sound like, and feel like for you? How comfortable are you with expressing grief or being with someone who is grieving a loss?

### Introduce the Book

*In this story, Maria and Lolo (her grandfather) have a special bond. Each night, they draw together, and Lolo can draw anything for Maria: Lola cooking, sampaguita flowers blooming, and maya birds perching. One day, though, things start to change. Lolo does not feel well. Soon after, Lolo begins to forget people's names, and soon he cannot find the words for what he wants. Maria tries to find some way to help Lolo communicate, and she wonders if their shared love of drawing could be the answer.*

### Discussion Questions

1. Describe the relationship Maria and Lolo have. Why is their relationship so special?
2. What do we learn about their life in the Philippines and culture from the things Lolo draws? If you were to draw important symbols of your life and home culture for someone younger than you, what would you draw?
3. Maria loves Lolo's drawings so much that she tries to copy them. What are some things that you see adults in your life doing that you would like to copy or learn to do? Has anyone younger than you ever tried to copy something you've done?



4. Has there ever been a big change that happened in your family?
  - a. What feelings did you have?
  - b. What questions did you wonder about?
  - c. How did you respond to the changes?
  
5. Tell about a time when you had difficulty explaining your thoughts and ideas.
  - a. How did that feel?
  - b. How did you respond?
  - c. How did others respond?
  
6. Maria thought hard about how to help Lolo, and she came up with a solution. What does this show us about Maria and her relationship with Lolo?
  - a. Have you ever had an experience of loving someone so much that you were determined to help them?
  
7. Maria felt pride and a sense of agency after making the drawing desk for Lolo.
  - a. What helps you have a sense of agency or desire to help others?
  - b. Tell about a time when you helped someone and felt proud of how you showed up.
  
8. Share one word to describe how you're feeling after reading this book and engaging in discussion about its themes and messages.

## Activities for Deeper Connection

- **Journal Prompt:** Write about an important adult or elder in your life.
  - Describe how the person makes you feel.
  - What is it that you admire about this person?
  - What do you love to do or talk about together?
  - What have you learned from this person, either about yourself or the world?
  
- **Character/Elder Portraits:** Together, create a character portrait of Lolo. Then, using it as an example, invite everyone to create a character portrait of an elder or special adult in their life who's had a meaningful influence on them. When finished, offer time to share portraits. Some prompts to help create the portraits include:
  1. **Sketch the character/person.** Include facial expressions, important physical details and clothing, and body language.



2. **Add details from the story/their life.** Include objects, symbols, or colors to show about their life, family, culture, or dreams.
  3. **Add text/personal features.** Include 3-5 of the following around the artwork: personality traits, likes/dislikes, quotes, values or lessons, and what they want.
  4. **Title the portrait.** Think about the person's identity, role, legacy, or influence.
- **Text-to-Text Connections:** Pair *What Lolo Wants* with another book about a grandparent relationship, such as *Drawn Together* by Minh Lê or *Plan for Pops* by Heather Smith, or *Grandmother's Visit* by Betty Quan. Create Venn Diagrams to show the similarities and differences between *What Lolo Wants* and another book.
  - **From Lolo's Perspective:** Discuss that the book is written in third person, meaning a narrator is telling the story. It does, however, give us more of Maria's perspective on the story. Invite everyone to choose a scene from the book to rewrite it from Lolo's perspective, either using first or third person and as much detail as possible. The scene should include descriptive and figurative language to set the scene, allowing the reader to immerse themselves in the story. Educators may choose to do this to reinforce lessons on point of view or descriptive writing.
  - **Our Elders Anthology:** Invite everyone to write a short memoir about a relationship with an elder or special adult in their life, and compile the stories into an anthology for each person to receive a copy. Memoirs should include stories about an important event or experience AND what was learned from those experiences or how they shaped each person. Educators may want to use model texts to help guide the memoir writing process.
  - **Memory Jars:** Give young people each a jar to decorate and provide materials for them to make it their own (including Mod Podge and crafting materials such as tissue paper, ribbons, buttons, stickers, etc.). Encourage them to add things that remind them of precious memories with special people in their lives. They can write down places, quotes, or dates/descriptions that remind them of memories on small squares of colorful paper, and they can include objects, like a shell or rock found on a beach during a vacation, a ticket or bracelet to a show or event, or anything else that reminds them of the memory and fits inside the jar. The memory jars could be shared or used as a springboard for other storytelling activities.



**Connections to Anti-Bias Education and SEL Competencies**

**What is Anti-Bias Education?** *“Anti-bias education is a critical approach to teaching and learning that...helps children strengthen their identities as capable and empowered human beings. Through anti-bias education, children identify issues and inequities in their lives, ask questions, consider multiple perspectives and think about their lives critically, growing to actively resist prejudice and discrimination.”* (Derman-Sparks et al. Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change. Teachers College Press, 2015.)

**The AmazeWorks Anti-Bias Education (ABE) model promotes:**

- Empathy and understanding for self and others
- Healthy and complex identity development
- Respect across and appreciation of differences
- The ability to notice, name, and reject bias
- Responsiveness and taking action against bias, prejudice, and discrimination

Infused within Anti-Bias Education is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). **Social-Emotional Learning Competencies are:**

- Self-awareness - Build awareness of one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how they influence behavior.
- Self-management - Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one’s goals.
- Social awareness - Build awareness of one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values, and how they influence behavior.
- Relationship skills - Establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships, and effectively navigate diversity.
- Responsible decision-making - Make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

**What Lolo Wants: ABE and SEL Connections**

| Anti-Bias Education  | Social-Emotional Learning   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empathy and Understanding</b></li> <li>• <b>Healthy Complex Identities</b></li> <li>• Respect Across Differences</li> <li>• Notice, Name, and Reject Bias</li> <li>• <b>Responsiveness and Action</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self-Awareness</b></li> <li>• <b>Self-Management</b></li> <li>• Social Awareness</li> <li>• <b>Relationship Skills</b></li> <li>• <b>Responsible Decision-Making</b></li> </ul> |

## Connections to Minnesota State Standards

### Minnesota State Standards Connections

#### Social Studies (Anchor Standards by Strand)

##### Geography

- 5. Culture: Investigate how a sense of place is impacted by different cultural perspectives.

#### English Language Arts (Anchor Standards by Strand)

##### Reading

- 4. Read critically to comprehend, interpret, and analyze themes and central ideas in complex literary and informational texts.
- 6. Analyze influences on content, meaning, and style of text, including fact and fiction, time period, and author perspective and identity, including Dakota and Anishinaabe perspectives, in complex literary and informational texts.
- 8. Examine the impact of vocabulary, including words and phrases, on content, style, and meaning of complex literary and informational texts.

##### Writing

- 2. Write routinely for various purposes and disciplines, representing one's own personal perspective, identity, and voice.
- 6. Write narratives, poetry, and other creative texts with details and effective techniques to express ideas
- 7. Engage in inquiry-based learning and research processes to create texts and presentations for a variety of purposes and audiences.

##### Listening, Speaking, Viewing, and Exchanging Ideas

- 1. Exchange ideas in discussion and collaboration, as listener, speaker, and participant, A) including the voices and perspectives of Dakota and Anishinaabe people as well as other perspectives, identities, and cultures like and unlike their own, and B) expressing one's own ideas, stories, and experiences.
- 2. Communicate with others, applying knowledge of vocabulary, language, structure, and features of spoken language, considering audience and context.
- 3. Thoughtfully and safely access, analyze, and create written, oral, and digital content applicable to task, purpose, audience, and discipline.



### Literacy Connections

- Realistic fiction
- Identify details in the text
- Compare and contrast events
- Compare and contrast settings
- Compare and contrast characters
- Identify theme or main message
- Describe setting
- Describe characters/Character development
- Character point of view
- Use illustrations/pictures/photos to gain information
- Make inferences
- Make text connections (to self, text, the world)
- Describe major plot events
- Sequence events
- Vocabulary in context

## Additional Resource Guide

### Fostering Intergenerational Connections Through Oral History



This additional resource guide will help classrooms take *What Lolo Wants* even further while deepening intergenerational connections in children's lives. Through suggested research and guidance on creating oral histories to explore the idea of memory, the guide will connect educators, students, and elders to primary sources available through the Library of Congress.

*The additional resource guide is funded by a grant from the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Midwest Region program, managed by Illinois State University. Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.*

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**About One Book | One Minnesota:**

One Book | One Minnesota is a statewide book club that invites Minnesotans of all ages to read a common title and come together to enjoy, reflect, and discuss. One Book | One Minnesota is a program of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, as the Minnesota Center for the Book, sponsored by Blaze Credit Union. Additional funding is made possible through an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature.



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**About AmazeWorks**

The mission of [AmazeWorks](#) is to champion equity and belonging for all. We believe that everyone should see their families, identities, and lived experiences reflected in positive mirrors and windows into the lives of others who are different from them. AmazeWorks is happy to partner with Friends of the St. Paul Public Library's One Book | One Minnesota to offer this discussion guide because we all believe in the power of stories to inspire, educate, and connect us all.