

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Sammie's friendship important to David? Why is David's friendship important to Sammie? In the first scene of the book, David vows to tell Sammie "my real, true feelings for her" (p. 3). Why do you think he doesn't follow through? Do you think it's easier to show your feelings or tell them?
2. Sammie calls her sisters Rachel and Becca "the Peas" and says her mother is a "wannabe Pea" (p. 17). What idiom is Sammie referencing with this nickname? What does this nickname tell us about how Sammie sees her sisters and her mother? Do you have a nickname? Who gave it to you? Do you like it? If you could pick your own nickname, what would it be and why?
3. Describe Luke. Why does David like him? Why doesn't Sammie like him?
4. After Haley calls Sammie stuck up, Sammie tells the story of what happened in sixth grade. Do you think she was right to give up on girls? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think David misreads Sammie's reactions to Luke in the cafeteria and in the fort? When David decides to show Sammie how he really feels on the bus, how does everything go wrong? Why doesn't David apologize to Sammie right away?
6. Why doesn't Sammie tell her mother what really happened on the bus? Why doesn't she tell her father? What other adults could Sammie have gone to for help?
7. When Sammie tries to talk to the Peas about what happened on the bus, Becca says, "Don't let those other girls push you around about Luke" (p. 139). What assumptions are she and Rachel making about the situation? Why? Do you think this advice and the other advice they give Sammie is good advice?
8. When David makes a Valentine picture book for, what does he hope will happen? What does Sammie realize about David when she reads his book?
9. What evidence is there that Luke is having a hard time fitting in and making new friends? Why doesn't David see this evidence?
10. How are the girls on the softball team different from Sammie's perception of "girls"?
11. Why is David surprised when Luke volunteers to work at the store with him? What kind of an employee is Luke? Does this make you sympathetic to him? Why or why not?
12. Why does Sammie's dad think it's a mistake for her to play softball? Do you think he's right? Do you think there are there times when parents should make decisions for their children?
13. In what ways does Pop respond as David expects when David tells him his real feelings about baseball? How does Pop surprise David?
14. At the mandatory baseball meeting, why do Corey and Markus think it's okay to flirt with Sammie and touch her? Why do you think Coach D "doesn't notice or doesn't care" about Corey and Markus's behavior towards Sammie? Have you seen or experienced situations like this in your school?
15. Why does Sammie blame herself when she can't push get free from Corey and Markus? In your opinion, why do victims often get blamed in instances of bullying or harassment?
16. How has Sammie changed over the course of the novel? How has David changed?

Extension activities

That's What Friends Do is told from both Sammie and David's different perspectives. In some cases, the same scene is told from both points of view. Choose any scene in the book and write it from a different character's point of view. Be sure to think about that character's motivations, and what s/he can and can't know. How is your scene different from what is in the book?

Both Sammie and David learn things they didn't know about their parents. Is there a time in your mom or dad's life that you don't know much about? (For example, middle school or how your parents met). Write up a 10-question interview, and interview your parent about this time in his or her life.

David draws a picture book and later comic strips that show important times in his friendship with Sammie. Choose any scene in the book and, using a simple 6-box comic strip template, draw a comic strip of that scene.

After David wins second place in the comic strip contest, he vows to tell Melvin Marbury the truth about how much Mr. Marbury's comic books meant to him. Is there a writer or graphic novelist or singer or other artist whose art has affected you? Write that person a letter telling them! Make sure you use proper letter-writing format and structure for your letter.