

BEACON STREET GIRLS®



girls
inc.®

Reading & Activity Kit
worst enemies/best friends



Photo credit: Joan Beard

**girls
inc.**

About Girls Incorporated

Girls Incorporated® is a nonprofit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and boldSM. With local roots dating to 1864 and national status since 1945, Girls Inc. has responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. In 2004, Girls Inc. reached nearly 800,000 girls through Girls Inc. affiliates, our website, and educational publications.

BEACON STREET GIRLS®

About B*tween Productions, Inc.

Through the Beacon Street Girls book series and website, B*tween Productions, Inc. is committed to empowering girls through literature and media. By reaching out to girls with health affirming messages and positive role models, B*tween Productions encourages girls to believe in themselves—irrespective of the challenges they face.

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visit: www.girlsinc.org and www.beaconstreetgirls.com



Photo credit: Joan Beard

Dear Friends,

In our culture filled with provocative media images and scantily-clad pop princesses, girls aren't given much time to be girls before they face enormous pressure to get on the express train to adulthood—where makeup, trendy clothes and crushes are the rules of the land.

At Girls Incorporated and B*tween Productions, we share the belief that girls need time to grow at their own pace, and they deserve positive role models, supportive girl communities, and healthy messages along the way.

That's why we joined forces to bring you this exclusive Beacon Street Girls® Reading Guide for strong, smart, and bold 9-13-year-old "tween" girls. When girls have outgrown dolls and toys, but are nowhere near ready for the mature messages trickling down from teenage brands, Beacon Street Girls books offer age-appropriate, contemporary stories about friendship, family, and middle school life.

Girls Inc. and B*tween Productions developed these fun, engaging activities and discussion questions to accompany *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*, the first book in the Beacon Street Girls book series. They address many important themes including friendship, civic engagement, and creative self-expression. We're excited to share them with you! We hope that you will use this guide with the girls in your center, and invite you to visit www.girlsinc.org and www.beaconstreetgirls.com to learn about more Beacon Street Girls activities and promotions for girls.

Sincerely,

Joyce M. Roché
President and CEO
Girls Inc.

Addie Swartz
President and CEO
B*tween Productions, Inc.



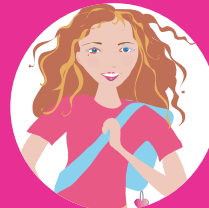
**girls
inc.**[®]

Girls Inc. Girls' Bill of Rights

- ★ Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes.
- ★ Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm.
- ★ Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success.
- ★ Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies.
- ★ Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world.
- ★ Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.

Meet the Beacon Street Girls...

five great girls who become best friends even though they are very different. When 12-year-olds Charlotte, Katani, Maeve and Avery discover a secret tower and a mysterious scroll, they are inspired to write their own friendship rules.

*Charlotte Ramsey**Katani Summers**Avery Madden**Maeve Kaplan-Taylor**Isabel Martinez*

**THE NEW TOWER RULES
CREATED BY THE NEWEST ORDER
OF THE RUBY AND THE SAPPHIRE**

Be it resolved that all girls are created equal!

1. We will speak our minds, but we won't be like obnoxious or anything.
2. We won't put ourselves down, even if we aren't super-smart, super-coordinated, or a supermodel.
3. We'll be loyal to our friends and won't lie to them even if they make a mistake or do something totally embarrassing.
4. We will go for it—how will we know what we can do if we don't try?
5. We will try to eat healthy and stay active.
How can you chase your dream if you can't keep up?
6. We won't just take from people and the planet.
We'll try to give back good things too.

AMENDMENTS:

1. We can add as many amendments as we like.
2. We will dare to be fashion individualistas—like we're all different so why should we dress the same?
3. Sometimes we'll veg out—just because we feel like it!
4. We should try to save money so if we ever want to, we can start a business or something someday.
5. We should have as much fun as we can.



Worst Enemies/Best Friends: **Reading and Activity Kit**

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❁ **Avery Madden:**

Born in Korea and adopted by her parents, Avery is passionate about all sports and animal rights. She is energetic, optimistic and impulsive.

❁ **Isabel Martinez:**

Her ambition is to be an artist. Warm and open-hearted, she was the last to join the Beacon Street Girls after moving from Detroit to Brookline at midyear because her mother needed treatment at Boston hospitals.

❁ **Charlotte Ramsey:**

A self-acknowledged “klutz” and aspiring writer, Charlotte is all too familiar with being the new kid in town. Her mother died when she was 4, and her father, a travel writer and teacher, has kept them on the move ever since.

❁ **Katani Summers:**

Sometimes known as Kgirl, Katani is the granddaughter of the school principal. Katani has a strong fashion sense and business savvy. Poised and graceful, she is devoted to her friends and family. Katani is not athletic and dislikes competing in sports.

❁ **Maeve Kaplan-Taylor:**

Her parents own the local movie theater, and Maeve wants to be a movie star herself. Bubbly and upbeat, she wears her heart on her sleeve; she is prone to crushes on boys. In school, her studies are made more challenging by her dyslexia.

❁ **Marty:**

Fun loving and adventurous, Marty is the adopted best dog friend of the Beacon Street Girls. Full of self-esteem, Marty was rescued by the Beacon Street Girls in a park across the street from Charlotte’s house and now lives up in the Tower.

❁ **Happy Lucky Thingy:**

Happy Lucky Thingy was the only thing that came over from Korea with Avery. Marty’s favorite chew toy was given to Marty by Avery when he was adopted by the Beacon Street Girls.

"I would change the funding for the arts. The football team gets five jerseys but we can't have new paintbrushes?"
~ Caree, 12

Dear Ms. Rodriguez,

I think junior high would be way better if dance music was piped in first thing during homeroom... **60 Minutes** did a story that showed teenagers have a hard time functioning before 10 a.m. And, they didn't even bother to test kids like me who have a hard time functioning before noon. But I can tell you one thing for sure. 7:50 a.m. is absolutely impossible for everybody at the school. I have personally seen people asleep, with disgusting drool coming out of their mouths many times during morning announcements (Henry, Dirk, Amber, FYI...)

Sincerely,
Maere Kaplan-Taylor

P.S. I would be more than happy to volunteer as a DJ.

{Worst Enemies/Best Friends}

"I would give everyone a chance to say out loud what they thought of the world!"
~ Katie, age 12

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Description:

This activity will challenge girls to identify a rule they would change and reflect as a group on why it is important to voice your opinions and work as a community to make positive changes. The activity is designed for girls who have completed Part One of *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

- Copies of *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*
- **Girls In Action** sheet
- **Rule You Would Change** worksheet
- Pens, pencils

1. Ask girls to take turns reading out loud from Chapter 16.

Note to Facilitators: Think about your group of girls. If you believe there are girls who might not be comfortable reading out loud, consider alternatives that encourage and support those girls while building their literacy and presentation skills at the same time. One suggestion might be to have the reading as a "pre-assignment" and during the group, girls have the option of reading out loud or talking through what they read for the pre-assignment. You could also pair girls to read an assigned section together so one girl is helping another.

2. Discuss the concept of rules.
3. Distribute the **Girls In Action** sheet. As a group, review the examples of how real girls have confronted issues and solved problems in their own communities.
4. Distribute the **Rule You Would Change** sheet. Ask the group to brainstorm and identify a rule they would like to change. Instruct each girl to write the rule in the "Rule" box at the top of her sheet.
5. Invite girls to fill in their responses to the questions, either in pairs or individually if you are working with a very small group.
6. Convene as a large group to discuss the responses.

Facilitator's Discussion Questions:


- ★ What makes a rule a good rule?
- ★ Can someone share an example of a good rule?
- ★ What makes a rule unfair?
- ★ Can someone share an example of a bad rule?
- ★ What rules did the **Girls In Action** change?






The Rule I Would Change Is:

When Ms. Rodriguez asked the students at Abigail Adams Junior High to think about a school rule they would change, the Beacon Street Girls had some very creative ideas! Here are some examples of proposed rule changes from the BSG. Avery thinks that everyone is an individual and therefore no one, when filling out personal information on a standardized test, should have to check the “other” box. Maeve thinks that they should be able to play good music before class starts, and Katani thinks that they should not have assigned seating the first week of class.

Directions:

Think about a rule *you* would like to change.
Write in the area to the right.



-  1. Why do you think this rule was created?
-  2. What are some reasons that this rule might need to be changed?
-  3. If this rule is changed, whom will it affect?
-  4. What will be the benefits of changing this rule?
-  5. What are some suggestions to change this rule?
Think about people who might be able to help you accomplish your goal.

Girls Who Changed the Rules!

Real Girls ...
Amazing Stories

Wow!

Girls Inc. of New Hampshire

Girls from Girls Inc. of New Hampshire wanted to make it easier for people in wheelchairs to get around their Girls Inc. building. With a video camera, they toured their building and highlighted the areas that were not easily accessible for people with disabilities. With the help of staff members, they prepared a presentation of what they found and made suggestions to a group of leaders in their community.

Some of the changes they suggested have already been made!

high five!

Girls Inc. of Waterbury, CT

Girls from Girls Inc. of Waterbury decided to do something about the frequent lack of paper towels or soap in their school bathrooms. The girls partnered with a school teacher, librarian, nurse, and health educator who helped them develop a presentation to the school assistant superintendent, who then helped them get a commercial on local television. The girls also wrote to Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, who lent her support to the campaign.

amazing!

Girls Inc. Girl Frock!

A group of Girls Inc. girls sat down with a group of magazine editors and media professionals to share their ideas about what changes they would like to see in magazines. The project? Create the ultimate magazine for girls! The result? Three strong, smart, and bold magazines: One-on-One, Girl+, and Girl (spelled upside down, to stress the idea that the magazine will flip gender stereotypes around!) - that speak to a diverse group of girls.

Photo credit: Joan Beard



The Tower is the secret meeting place of the Beacon Street Girls. Each of the girls has a special section in the Tower and they all feel a special attachment to the place where they first became best friends.

“With each step, I rose through an opening in the floor. It seemed as if I was stepping into the sky. The windows were full of moon and stars. After all the wishing and waiting, it was hard to believe that the Tower was even better than I’d imagined.”

{*Worst Enemies/Best Friends*}



A Home in the Tower

by Charlotte Ramsey

It's a home of my own.

It's a view from the top.

It's a place where the laughing
and talking don't stop.

It's a view of my town.

It's a view into space —

Books, journals, friends, stargazing —
all in one place.

The best thing about having good
friends in my home ...

I'm never unhappy.

I'm never alone.



Description:

This activity encourages girls to reflect on a space that is important to them and to create a visual representation of the space that captures its special meaning. The activity is designed for girls who have completed Part Two of *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

- Copies of *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*
- White paper
- Colored paper, pens, pencils
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines, etc.

Prior to the activity, girls can also be invited to bring in their own photos and personal materials to incorporate into the project.

1. Ask girls to take turns reading out loud from Chapter 28.

Note to Facilitators: *Think about your group of girls. If you believe there are girls who might not be comfortable reading out loud, consider alternatives that encourage and support those girls while building their literacy and presentation skills at the same time. One suggestion might be to have the reading as a “pre-assignment” and during the group, girls have the option of reading out loud or talking through what they read for the pre-assignment. You could also pair girls to read an assigned section together so one girl is helping another.*

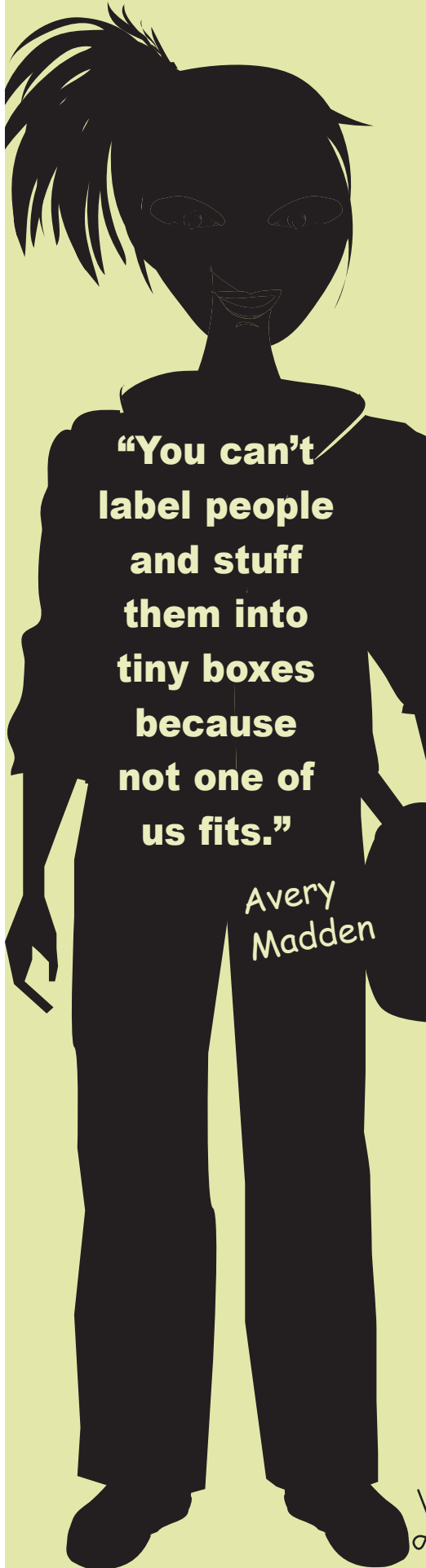
2. Discuss the different reasons why the Tower has so much power for the Beacon Street Girls.
3. Ask the girls to identify a space that is special to them.
4. With the art supplies provided, each girl can create her own collage of her special place.
5. Convene as a group and give each girl an option to talk about her collage and the process of creating it. The collages can be displayed in the room as a representation of a new special place meaningful to all girls that reflects their individual experiences.

Facilitator's Discussion Questions:

- ★ What are the different reasons the Tower is such a special place for each of the Beacon Street Girls?
- ★ What is a place that is special to each of you?
- ★ What qualities make it special? Is it a community space? A private space? Is it quiet and tranquil or buzzing with energy? What does it look like, feel like, smell like, sound like?
- ★ What was your favorite part of the collage activity? How did you choose what went into your collage? How does your collage represent the place that is special to you?

Cut along the dotted line. Give left section to students.





Cut along the dotted line. Give left section to students.

Description:

Using the *Beacon Street Girls* characters as a starting point for discussion, this activity helps girls to understand that first impressions can be deceiving, and teaches them the value of getting to know someone instead of making assumptions. It is designed to be used after girls have finished reading *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*.

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

- Copies of *Worst Enemies/Best Friends*
- **First Impressions** character worksheet
- Pens and pencils

1. Distribute the *First Impressions* character worksheet.
2. Invite girls to fill in their responses, either in pairs or individually if you are working with a very small group.
3. Convene as a large group to discuss the responses.

Facilitator's Discussion Questions:

- ★ How did the characters in the book overcome their first impressions of one another?
- ★ What happened when they did?
- ★ Can anyone share a real example of a first impression that turned out to be wrong?
- ★ What are the dangers of making judgments about other people based on first impressions?

Before they became the Beacon Street Girls, Charlotte, Avery, Katani and Maeve were not exactly the best of friends. In fact, they didn't even like each other—all because of **first impressions.**

Directions: Look at the list of first impressions. Write the character that matches the first impression in the "Character" column. Then think about what the Beacon Street Girls learned about that character by the end of the book. Write those qualities in the "Second Look" column.

first impression**character****second look** 

Rich Princess
Drama Queen

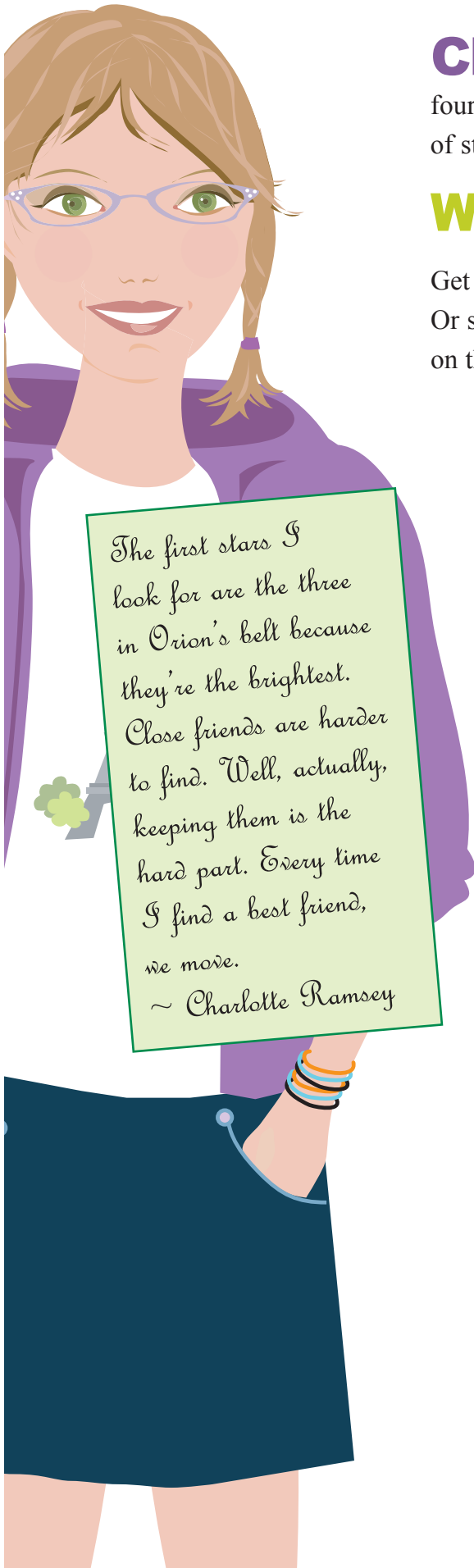
Miss Perfect
Cold

Sports Snob
Hyper

Klutzy
Fake

* * **Bonus** * *

Mysterious
Spooky



The first stars I
look for are the three
in Orion's belt because
they're the brightest.
Close friends are harder
to find. Well, actually,
keeping them is the
hard part. Every time
I find a best friend,
we move.
~ Charlotte Ramsey

Charlotte has moved every two or three years since she was four. She's got tons of experience being the new kid in class. She dreams of staying in one place, fitting in, and having best friends.

What's **your** take?

Get together with a group of girls and **talk about it!**
Or sign on to the Girls Inc. message boards and share your thoughts on the Beacon Street Girls forum!

- ✿ Have you ever been the new girl and unable to make friends?
- ✿ How did you make friends?
- ✿ What could you do to help a new girl get adjusted at your school?
- ✿ What advice would you give to girls who feel like they don't fit in?

YIKES!

As if being the new girl isn't bad enough ... Charlotte made the biggest cafeteria blunder in the history of Abigail Adams Junior High.

"I looked down to see my worst fear come to life. I, Charlotte Ramsey, without help, on the first day of school, in front of an absolutely full cafeteria, had zipped a tablecloth into my pants, and yanked four trays' worth of food, syrup and milk to the floor."

Can you relate?

Get together with a group of girls and

talk about it!

Or sign on to the Girls Inc. message boards and share your thoughts on the Beacon Street Girls forum!

❁ Have you ever seen another girl experience an embarrassing moment?

❁ Was there a time when you were embarrassed?

❁ Was there anything that made you feel better?

❁ What can girls do to support each other when embarrassing things happen?

❁ What advice would you give to a girl who feels embarrassed?