



New books  
in September

Dear reader,

The Oscar and Zoe Covid trilogy has been a big success reaching tens of thousands of readers in four different languages. As parents and educators around the world are struggling to find the new normal, I thought you might find it useful if I shared some tips on how I read and work with students using stories.

Working with children and teens, I understood that when teaching morals, citizenship, and encouraging changes in behaviors, one method worked better than any other. It is as old as humankind and easy to use. Stories! Add to the mix open-ended questions, and a calm setting, and magic will happen. Students will be ready and eager to discuss, learn willingly and explore issues they are confronted daily. It is much easier to discuss a fictional character's problem than your own, but while doing so, you find your answers. With over 80 stories written for teens, I wanted to share my stories with other educators and approached the EPFL. This was when a magical collaboration started, and Oscar and Zoe were born.

Outside of writing I spend a lot of time in class. I love walking into a class and have the attention of students, as they lean in, faces eager, and I hear those words that are music to my ears, "Miss, will you tell us another story?"

I am passing the torch to you and asking you to share these stories. You are primary teachers and pros in storytelling. Have fun with them.

Best wishes,

*Allison Ochs*



# A few reminders when using Oscar & Zoe as a tool in the classroom

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- ♥ Set up the storytelling time as a peaceful moment.
- ♥ If possible, the students should move to a reading corner or a different setting. This helps to set the atmosphere and to create a special moment.
- ♥ Read the stories with all your narrative skills. The children should engage fully in the story.
- ♥ Before asking the questions, make sure you are **ready to listen!** Children can have some crazy ideas that may even seem absurd to us adults. Just make sure to remember that there is no right or wrong, and let the children explore safely. If at some point you don't know what to say, pause and wait. Children will often continue on their own when given the chance.



Oscar and Zoe do silly things; they show their emotions, make mistakes, and share a special friendship. There are many subjects to explore while reading Oscar and Zoe. Let your students explore embedded themes such as emotions, friendships, family, and problem-solving. We hope you will revisit the stories often.

## Emotions



Expressing, understanding, and learning to manage emotions is a recurring theme. From fear to boredom, we will continuously be learning about emotions. Don't hesitate to cut out Oscar and Zoe's different facial expressions and make mood boards and explore emotional vocabulary. Ask children to think about how they move from one emotion to another.



## Problem-solving

Oscar and Zoe are on a constant path to solve problems, from how to make a call to how to overcome fear. Can you figure out in every story which problem they faced?

## Friendship



Not only are Oscar and Zoe friends, but their parents are also best friends. As more Oscar and Zoe books come out, you will discover that even the best of friends can be frustrated with one another and learn to manage these frustrations.



## Sharing and family

Oscar and Zoe share a friendship, time, and joy, but there is plenty of family sharing time that brings the subject of family into these stories. These books are an excellent tool for children to share with their families to help encourage discussion at home. We hope children will be able to take them home and continue the conversation - a beautiful link between school and home.