

Flying with Amelia by Anne DeGrace
Book Club Questions

1. It is estimated that between 1831 and 1850 almost 650,000 Irish arrived in Canada to escape the Great Famine. Most Canadians today can trace their roots to somewhere other than Canada. What are the immigration stories—ancestral or more current—among the members of your book club?
2. *Static* opens with a scene of mummers arriving at a Newfoundland kitchen. Is this tradition new to you? What similar traditions exist in other cultures (this is fun to research) and what might be the attraction to these types of hijinks?
3. In *Home Child*, who is Adelaide as a real person in history? Why is Olive's old friendship with this woman so poignant, given Olive's present situation?
4. Who was Agnes McPhail, and what are her legacies? Why is her speech, paraphrased in *Angel*, an important message for Murphy and Helen as they navigate their futures?
5. The title chapter, *Flying with Amelia*, includes classic recipes from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Find some classic recipes for each Province and Territory. Bring them—or the dish itself. (Potluck opportunity!) While you're eating, discuss what happened to the On to Ottawa men.
6. Many Canadians are unaware that Canada housed German prisoners of war during WWII. Most camps were more secure than the one that formed the backdrop for *All of the Colours*. How do you think Canadian and German camps compared in terms of treatment of prisoners?
7. *To be Like You* profiles a difficult chapter in BC history. The Canadian Government's response to the "Doukhobor problem" remains controversial to this day. In the face of arson and terror perpetrated by a splinter faction of a pacifist immigrant group, how might the government of the day have responded better? What are the similarities and differences between the removal of these children and the Japanese-Canadian internment a decade before?
8. On March 25, 1969, Pierre Trudeau said: "the status of being a draft dodger doesn't enter at all into (Canada's) immigration policy." For James in *A Different Country*, it was not that clear-cut. How does this compare with policy for U.S. military deserters during the U.S. war in Iraq? What should Canada's responsibility be? And how much is (or should be) left to the discretion of the Border Services officers?
9. *Normal* deals with schoolyard bullying against a backdrop of political terrorism. We've all been bullied, been bullies, or simply been complicit through inaction,

as Maggie is. Discuss your own memories. When does bullying become terrorism?

10. In *The Language of Bones*, Nina can't shake the ghost of her sister. On Herschel Island, she is visited by ghosts who can't quite shake their own pasts. By the end of the chapter, Nina and the ghosts of Herschel Island have managed to find a degree of reconciliation in subtle ways. What are they?
11. Where were you in 1999, as many prepared for the Y2K "threat"? What were the potential issues as presented by the media, preparedness groups, and others? Did you, or anyone you know go to the extremes that Chantal does in *River Rising*?
12. Each chapter of *Flying with Amelia* contains links between characters, some overt—such as the relationship of William in the chapter *Static* to Daniel McGrath in *Across the Atlantic*—and some subtle, such as in the title chapter when Martin, resting under a tree during the On to Ottawa march, is given flowers by a little girl who hopes he might be her father, and who grows up to be Bernice in *To be Like You*. Compare the connections you found as you read *Flying with Amelia* with your group.