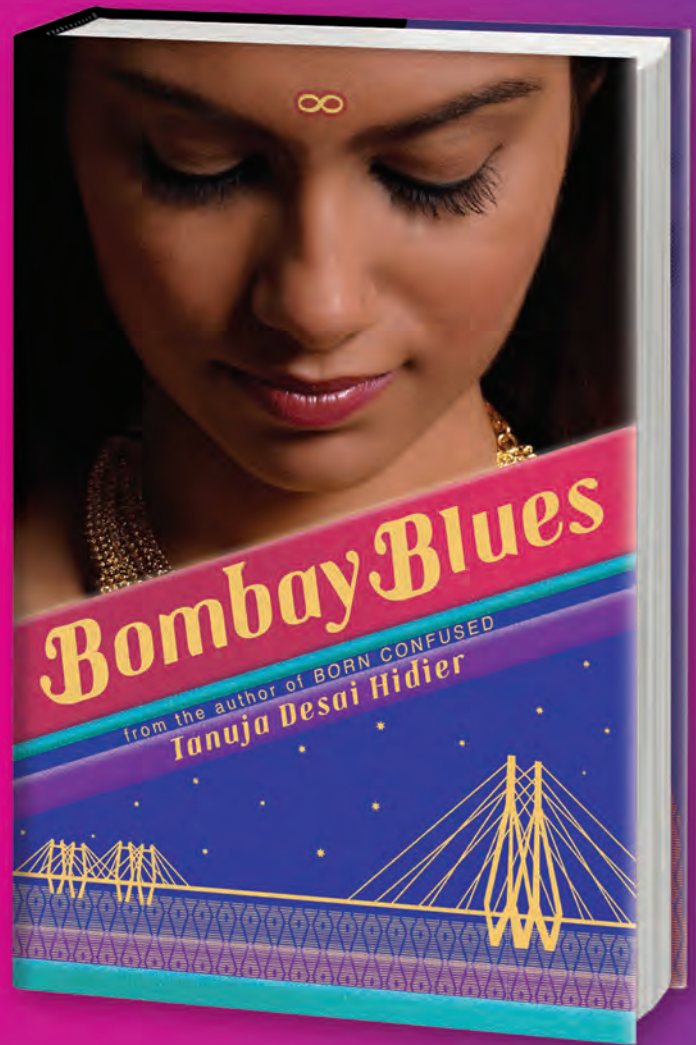
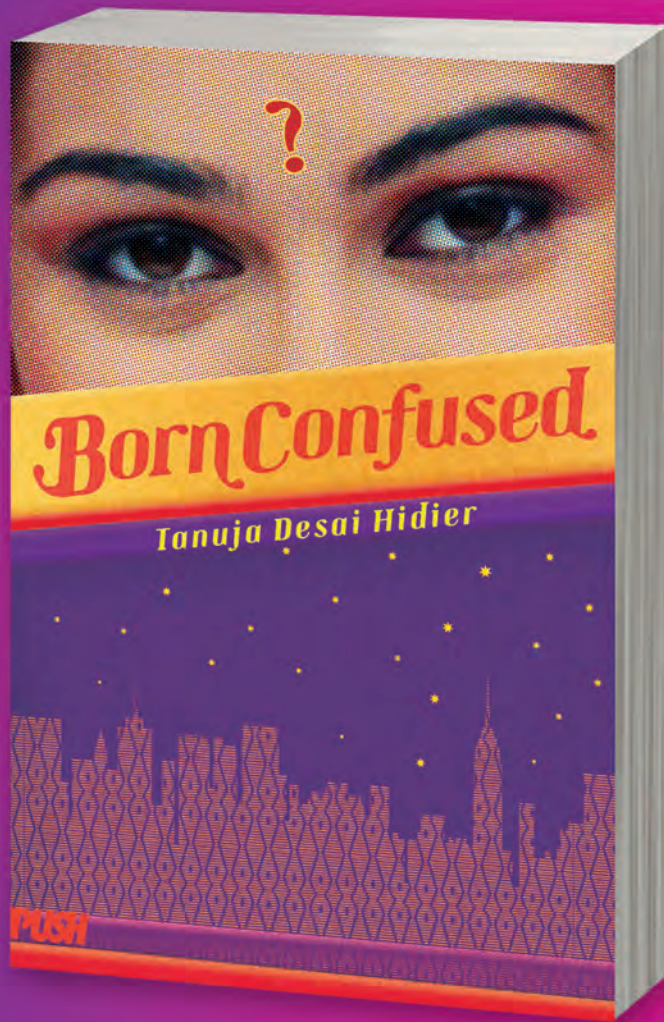


# DISCUSSION GUIDE

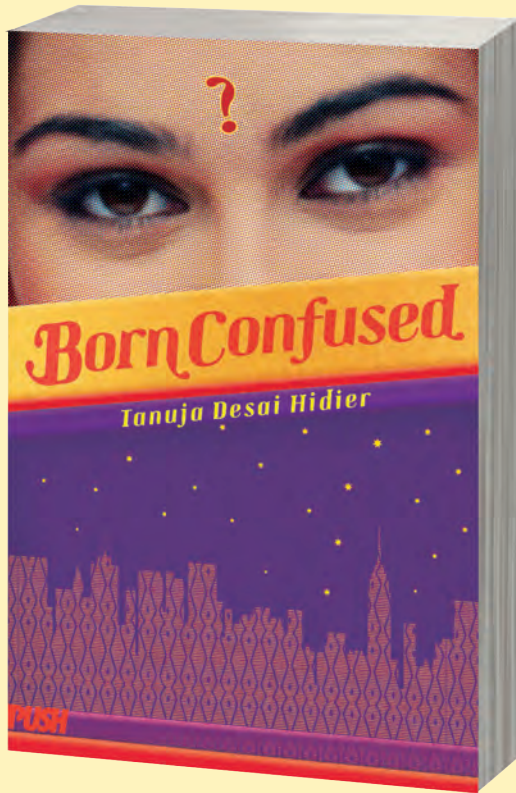
Grades 9  
and up

## Tanuja Desai Hidier's Novels



SCHOLASTIC

Meets Common Core State Standards—SEE INSIDE



## About *Born Confused*

Dimple Lala has spent her whole life resisting her parents' traditions, and now that she's turning seventeen, things are more complicated than ever. She's still recovering from a year-old break-up, and her best friend isn't around the way she used to be. Then, to make matters worse, her parents arrange for her to meet a "suitable boy." Of course, it doesn't go well . . . until Dimple goes to a club and finds him spinning a magical web of words and music. Suddenly the suitable boy is suitable because of his sheer unsuitability.

This is a story about finding yourself, finding your friends, finding love, and finding your culture — sometimes where you least expect it.

Hardcover: 978-0-439-35762-3 • \$19.99 (CAN \$21.99)  
Paperback: 978-0-545-66451-6 • \$10.99 (CAN: \$11.99)  
Ebook: 978-0-545-22994-4 • \$10.99 (CAN \$10.99)

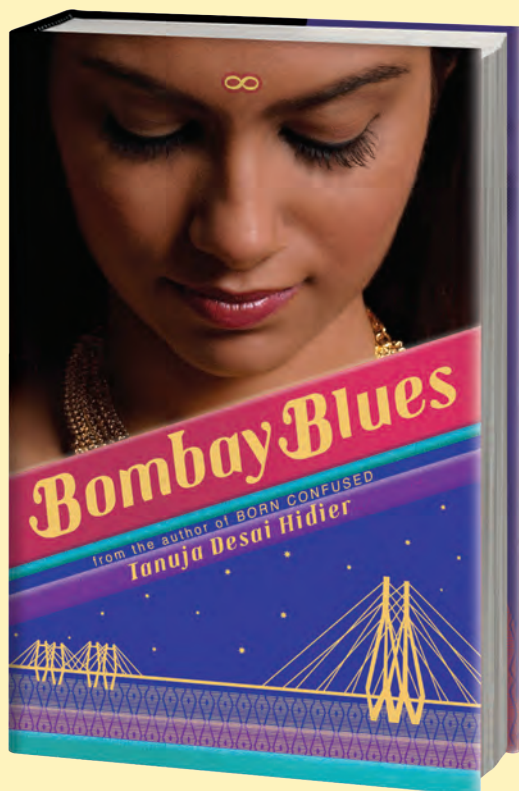
★ "Absorbing and intoxicating, this book is sure to leave a lasting impression."  
— *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

★ "The exuberant, almost psychedelic riffs will catch readers up in a breathtaking experience that is beyond virtually anything being published for teens today."  
— *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"Compelling and witty . . . gives voice to a new generation of Americans. A rare and daring portrayal." — *USA Today*

"At its surface, this coming-of-age story centers on a teenager trying to fit in. But Dimple isn't just an outcast as an Indian-American, she feels like a stranger in both countries, and this cultural undercurrent elevates the novel beyond typical YA fare."  
— *Entertainment Weekly*

"Complicated, chaotic, and absolutely charming . . . Think Jane Austen goes to Bollywood . . . Exuberantly insightful." — *Seventeen Magazine*



## About *Bombay Blues*

Dimple Lala thought that growing up would give her all the answers, but instead she has more questions than ever. Her boyfriend is distant, her classmates are predictable, and a blue mood has settled around the edges of everything she does.

It's time for a change, and a change is just what Dimple is going to get—of scenery, of cultures, of mind. She thinks she's heading to Bombay for a family wedding—but really she is plunging into the unexpected, the unmapped, and the uncontrollable. The land of her parents and ancestors has a lot to reveal to her—for every choice we make can crescendo into a journey, every ending can turn into a beginning, and each person we meet can show us something new about ourselves.

Hardcover: 978-0-545-38478-0 • \$18.99 (CAN \$19.99)

Ebook: 978-0-545-63387-7 • \$18.99 (CAN \$18.99)

★ “Hidier quietly revolutionized YA literature with *Born Confused* (2002), and this sequel indicates she’s intent on a repeat...Dense, lyrical...A journey worth making.”  
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“Once again, Hidier delivers an immersive blend of introspection, external drama, and lyricism.” —*Publishers Weekly*

## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

As a pre-reading activity for either novel, have students complete the following anticipation guide:

Ideas to Consider	Agree	Disagree
You should always honor your family and your culture.		
True love is unconditional.		
You should be true to yourself even if you disappoint others.		

After completing the activity, students should discuss their responses in small groups and/or as a whole group. Students should provide rationales for their answers. After students complete their reading, you may wish to return to this activity to see what additional thoughts and reflections students may have or to see if any students change their responses.

(R.L.9-10.2, R.L.11-12.2; S.L.9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1, S.L.9-10.2, S.L.11-12.2, S.L.9-10.3, S.L.11-12.3)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: BORN CONFUSED

1. Dimple, the story's protagonist, describes herself as having been born turned around and "getting it all wrong ever since" (p. 1). Discuss what she means by this statement. How would you characterize Dimple at the beginning of the story?
2. Dimple is a budding photographer. Discuss the role photography plays in Dimple's life. Consider in your response examples of how photography serves as an escape and sanctuary.
3. Compare and contrast Dimple and her best friend, Gwyn Sexton. How does Dimple describe Gwyn, and how does she see herself in comparison? Do others see the two girls as Dimple does? Support your answer with evidence from the story.
4. How does Dimple spend her birthday? What role does Gwyn play in events as they unfold? Do you think she's a good friend? Why or why not? Support your answers with evidence from the text.
5. Describe Dimple's parents' reactions when they learn she was on a date and was intoxicated. Are they disappointed in Dimple? How does Dimple feel about their response?
6. How does Dimple feel when she learns her parents want to arrange her marriage? What prompts them into action?
7. Why is Dimple's mother excited to see her old friend? What does the reader learn about her mother's past? How does Dimple aid her mother in capturing some "pieces of her past"?
8. Who is Karsh Kappor? What impression does he make on Dimple when they first meet? Trace the development of their relationship throughout the story, discussing key events that move the plot forward.
9. What is ABCD? How is Dimple introduced to it and what role does it play in the story?
10. How does Karsh become the center of conflict between Gwyn and Dimple? Using examples from the text, explain how both Gwyn and Dimple respond to the tension that builds between them.
11. Why does Dimple's mother want her to wear a bindi? Does Dimple choose to wear one? Why or why not?
12. Discuss the relationship between Dimple and her father. How does it evolve as the story progresses? Use events from the story to support your responses.
13. How has Dimple changed by the end of the story? What events in her life can you attribute to her growth? Does her friend Gwyn change? Why or why not?
14. Dimple is envious of Gwyn, but Gwyn is also envious of Dimple. Why does each girl feel that way? Do you think each girl's feelings are justified? Explain.

(*R.L.9-10.1, R.L.11-12.1, R.L.9-10.2, R.L.11-12.2, R.L.9-10.3, R.L.11-12.3; S.L.9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1*)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *BOMBAY BLUES*

1. Discuss the title of the story and the multiple meanings it holds for characters and readers.
2. Why do Dimple and her parents travel to Bombay? How does Dimple feel about the trip? How do her parents feel about it? How are Dimple and her parents received by their family once they arrive?
3. Why does Karsh meet Dimple in Bombay? Describe Dimple's relationship with Karsh when they first arrive. In what way does their relationship begin to change?
4. Describe several key events that impact Karsh and Dimple's relationship. If Dimple and Karsh did not go to Bombay, would they have stayed together? Explain your reasoning using evidence from the story.
5. What role do spirituality and religion play in Dimple's and Karsh's lives? How are their decisions impacted by their spiritual and religious beliefs? Are their beliefs different or similar? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
6. Both Dimple and Karsh have lost someone—Karsh loses his father and Dimple has lost her grandfather. Compare and contrast the ways in which each is impacted by the loss. Does one cope better than the other? If so, explain.
7. Characterize Cowboy using evidence from the story. How is he a mysterious character? Why do you think the author made the choice not to reveal more about his character?
8. Dimple matures in many ways throughout her time in Bombay. What does she know about herself at the end of the story that she did not know in the beginning?
9. Describe Dimple's relationship with her mother. What does Dimple learn about her mother, and how do they become closer?
10. Two subplots involving her sister-cousins are woven throughout Dimple's story: the wedding of Sangita to Deepak, and Kavita's love affair with Sabz. What do these stories have to say about the cultural identity of Indian women? Use evidence from the text to support your response.
11. What is Gilbert Hill and why do Dimple, her mother, aunt, and sister-cousins travel there?
12. Identify several themes that run throughout the story. Explain how the themes develop over the course of the book and how the author uses events and characters to develop them.
13. The author portrays a rich and vibrant Indian setting. Identify several passages that describe the use of more than one of the five senses, and discuss the way these descriptions enhance the passages. Identify several words from the passages that make the scenes particularly compelling. Why do you think the author wanted to create such a vibrant backdrop for the story?

(*R.L.9-10.1, R.L.11-12.1, R.L.9-10.2, R.L.11-12.2, R.L.9-10.3, R.L.11-12.3, R.L.9-10.4, R.L.11-12.4; S.L. 9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1*)

## EXPLORING BORN CONFUSED AND BOMBAY BLUES THROUGH REFLECTION, WRITING, AND RESEARCH

The following questions may serve as writing prompts or can be altered for small-group or whole-group discussion.

Choose one of the novels and describe the setting. How does Dimple fit in or not fit in to that place? Identify a passage that describes one of the locations in the book, and note which key words the author uses to create imagery. Discuss how these specific words contribute to the atmosphere of the novel.

Hidier uses a variety of settings for *Born Confused* and *Bombay Blues*. Name two to four places you believe to be most important in either story. With textual evidence, explain why they are essential to the overall story. In what ways, for example, do these places advance the plot? What do they reveal about the characters? Write an essay in which you explain what the setting and author's choice of words suggest about her attitude toward the culture/ community that she writes about.

Both stories are told in first-person point of view by the protagonist, Dimple. Discuss how the novels would differ if told from third-person point of view. Consider how one of the stories might differ if it were written in first-person point of view from another character's perspective (e.g., Kavita, Gwyn, Karsh, Sangita, Dimple's father, mother, or aunt). Discuss and/or write an essay that examines what might be gained by telling the story through an alternate voice.

Compare and contrast Dimple with either of her sister-cousins, Kavita or Sangita. Using evidence from the text, describe each cousin's personality. Study the development of the cousins' relationships. Discuss or write an essay that explains how the relationships between the sister-cousins evolve with time. Support your argument with evidence from the text.

Analyze and discuss how Dimple and Karsh mature over the course of the books. How do both characters discover their own identities?

Compare and contrast Dimple's and Karsh's worldviews and values. How do they complement each other? How do they create tension? Do Dimple and Karsh grow apart or grow closer by the end of *Bombay Blues*? Explain.

Describe Dimple's parents. In what ways have they adapted to living in the United States? Are they "good" parents? Explain your definition of "good" parents and how you decided whether or not Dimple's parents conformed to that definition.

If you could select one character from either novel to learn more about, who would it be? What is it about this particular character you find interesting or intriguing?

The titles of both books are suggestive of multi-layered themes. Considering either novel's title, discuss how it captures a variety of themes. Use evidence from the story to support your response.

Use the sentence stem "This is a story about..." to describe either *Born Confused* or *Bombay Blues* in three to four sentences.

Dimple mourns the loss of Dadaji, her grandfather. Discuss how his character affects Dimple and other family members. How does the family continue to feel his influence?

(R.L.9-10.1, R.L.11-12.1, R.L.9-10.3, R.L.11-12.3, R.L.9-10.5, R.L.11-12.5, R.L.9-10.6, R.L.11-12.6; S.L.9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1; W.9-10.1, W.11-12.1)

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES FOR BORN CONFUSED AND BOMBAY BLUES

### Artistic Expression

Dimple and Karsh are drawn together in some ways because they both have an artistic outlet—Dimple is a photographer and Karsh is a DJ. Assume that you are either Dimple or Karsh and would like to “tell your story” through pictures or music. Develop a portfolio of pictures or music that captures either Dimple’s or Karsh’s identity. Share highlights of the photo or musical portfolio with others and explain the choices you made using evidence from the story as support.

### Personification

Choose an inanimate object in the story and write a scene in which that object provides a different perspective from what is present. For example, during the scene where Dimple photographs Gwyn, Dimple’s camera might take on the ability to see; or during one of Karsh’s shows, a mic might take on the ability to tell the story. What might these objects have to say about the characters involved in the scene?

### Key Ideas

Identify one quotation from either novel that represents a key idea. Key ideas should transcend time, age, gender, and culture. In small groups, create a poster that will be displayed in the classroom. Place the quotation at the top along with an explanation of the quotation’s meaning and your rationale for choosing it. Don’t forget to give credit for the quotation at the bottom of the poster (provide author, title, date, publishing city/publisher, and page number in smaller print).

### Character Goals

At the end of each story, both Dimple and Karsh have grown immensely, as have many secondary characters. Assume the identity of either Dimple or Karsh at the end of either book, and list three to five goals you would like to achieve over the next three to five years. Under each goal, explain why you have chosen the goal; then list several steps you will take that will help you achieve the goals. You may also choose to do this activity with another character who has undergone change, such as Kavita or Sangita. An alternate assignment might be to choose a character who changes very little and establish goals for that character that would force a change in his/her behavior.

### Interdisciplinary Connections

Both New York City and India offer readers rich opportunities to research culture and geography. Choose the setting with which you are least familiar and, using one of the novels as a guide, identify customs and places you would like to investigate further. Share your research in one of the following ways: a media presentation, a paper, a formal presentation, and/or an online format, such as a wiki or a glogster poster.

(*R.L.9-10.1, R.L.11-12.1; S.L.9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1, S.L.9-10.2, S.L.11-12.2, S.L.9-10.4, S.L.11-12.4, S.L.9-10.5, S.L.11-12.5, S.L.9-10.6, S.L.11-12.6; W.9-10.3, W.11-12.3, W.9-10.7, W.11-12.7*)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



photo by Jon Sadleir

Tanuja Desai Hidier's groundbreaking previous novel, *Born Confused*, was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and became a landmark work, recently hailed by *Entertainment Weekly* and *RollingStone.com* as a contender for one of the best YA novels of all time.

For more about *Born Confused* and *Bombay Blues*, as well as her "booktrack" albums of original songs to accompany them, visit [ThisIsTanuja.com](http://ThisIsTanuja.com).

### Guide Correlates to the English Language Arts Common Core Standards

Reading Literature: R.L.9-10.1, R.L.11-12.1, R.L. 9-10.2, R.L.11-12.2, R.L.9-10.3, R.L.11-12.3, R.L.9-10.4, R.L.11-12.4, R.L.9-10.5, R.L.11-12.5, R.L.9-10.6, R.L.11-12.6

Speaking and Listening: S.L. 9-10.1, S.L.11-12.1, S.L. 9-10.2, S.L.11-12.2, S.L.9-10.3, S.L.11-12.3, S.L.9-10.4, S.L.11-12.4, S.L.9-10.5, S.L.11-12.5, S.L.9-10.6, S.L.11-12.6

Writing: W.9-10.1, W.11-12.1, W.9-10.3, W.11-12.3, W.9-10.7, W.11-12.7

Discussion Guide prepared by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant, adjunct professor of children's and young adult literature, and Editor of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> books in the H. W. Wilson *Junior Authors and Illustrators* series.

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