

Discussion Guide: *The Weight of Everything*

1. How does Sarah's mother's death impact Sarah's daily life six months later?
2. From Sarah's point of view, her dad's love for her and Steven seems to have died with Sarah's mom. What has given Sarah this impression? Why do you think Sarah's dad is behaving this way?
3. Why is Sarah initially wary of David? What does this show about her priorities and about her emotional state right now?
4. What ended Sarah's friendship with Brad in sixth grade? Contrast Brad's behavior with the ways David shows Sarah that he likes and cares about her.
5. How does David treat Steven, and what does this reveal about his character?
6. When Sarah decides to make her art project about the CIA coup in Guatemala, she reflects, "How has any of this impacted me personally? It hasn't, I don't think." In what ways *has* this history shaped her life without her being aware of it?
7. How do Frida Kahlo's and Diego Rivera's activism influence Sarah? How does Sarah's mom's work connect with Kahlo's and Rivera's work?
8. Why does Sarah decide to break up with David? What eventually convinces her to try again with him?
9. What changes does Sarah's dad make to show that he's serious about dealing with his grief in a healthier way? How does Sarah's life begin to change as a result?
10. Mr. Porter wants Sarah to follow the school's policy of "political neutrality." What is Sarah's counterargument? Do you think it's possible—or desirable—to separate art and politics?