

# NO FIXED ADDRESS

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**EDUCATOR'S GUIDE**



# Discussion Guide

*No Fixed Address* opens with Felix agreeing to tell his story to Constable Lee, on the November night before he is due to go to the hotel. The story then shifts back in time to the previous summer. How does this affect your expectations as you read the book? Can you think of other examples of stories (whether from novels, films, or television) that are told in this way?

Felix tells the story of Astrid's childhood and her life till now. What events from her past do you think have contributed to her situation in the novel? What could she have done differently, if at all?

The narration is from Felix's point of view. Why did the author, Susin Nielsen, choose to tell the story this way?

Felix makes lists in his mind as a coping mechanism for his difficult and lonely life—for example, in the chapters “A

Brief History of Homes” and “Astrid’s Guidebook to Lies.”  
What do the different kinds of lists suggest?

The reader isn’t told the full story of Felix’s dad, Daniel, until halfway through the book. Why do you think Felix takes so long to tell the reader about him?

Discuss Dylan and Winnie. In what ways are they similar and different?

Felix finds Winnie deeply annoying when he meets her at school, and tries to avoid including her in plans. How do his feelings toward her change throughout the book?

*No Fixed Address* has many characters who turn out to be very different from what Felix or the reader thinks at first. Compare one main character and one minor character and the ways in which they defy expectations when we learn more about them.

Discuss the themes of shame and guilt in *No Fixed Address*.

*No Fixed Address* takes a look at the lives of the “hidden homeless”—people without a permanent home who must find alternatives. If you were Felix, what aspect of your precarious existence would you find hardest to deal with?

# Resources

*No Fixed Address* is a story about the “hidden homeless”—people with no permanent home who instead find a place to stay with friends or family, or live in their cars, or who might be on a waiting list for public housing and are meanwhile living in shelters, motels, or other government housing. Not having a home to call one’s own makes life very challenging: it can be harder to find a job or a school, or to make commitments; there are often financial and social burdens. Not having a proper bed or bathroom can affect physical and mental well-being. Many people who live such precarious lives feel embarrassed and want to hide the fact that they are in difficulty.

If you have been affected by the issues in this book, or if you would like to find out how you can help people without homes, the following organizations may be able to provide advice:

Raising the Roof: [raisingtheroof.org](http://raisingtheroof.org)

Kids Help Phone: [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)

If you would like more insight into the housing crisis in Vancouver, you can watch a fine documentary made by Charles Wilkinson, Tina Schliessler and Kevin Eastwood: “Vancouver: No Fixed Address” (title jinx!) by going to <https://www.knowledge.ca/program/vancouver-no-fixed-address>.