



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Virtual Module: Front Desk

This module is written for staff to facilitate in real time using a video conferencing platform to connect with youth. This module will work best virtually if youth have a copy Front Desk by Kelly Yang at home. This book is available as a paperback or an ebook, and the first chapter is posted online.

Ages

10 & Up

1

week

Summer Brain Gain READ

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

How To Use This Module

This module is written for staff to facilitate in real time using a video conferencing platform to connect with youth. This module will work best virtually if youth have a copy *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang at home. This book is available as a paperback or an ebook, and the first chapter is posted online.

Book Summary

Front Desk by Kelly Yang, tells the story of Mia Tang, a fifth grade girl who moved to the United States from China with her parents. Mia's family struggles with poverty and discrimination as they manage a motel in Anaheim, California in the 1990's. *Front Desk* is based on the true story of the author's childhood. Themes include immigration, racism, bullying, family, and the power of advocacy.

Safety Disclaimer

It is recommended that staff first review the book to make sure it is appropriate and receive parent/caregiver permission before discussing as needed. Some of the topics to be discussed may be triggering or upsetting for some youth. While facilitating the activities, be diligent in creating an emotionally safe environment for youth in which they feel supported and respected. Be an active listener and pay attention to cues that could be red flags for safety concerns. Be sure to follow your Club's policy for Mandated Reporting if a youth discloses anything related to abuse, neglect, or their personal safety while sharing.

Literacy Strategies

During this module, readers will...

- Read Aloud
- Make Predictions
- Make connections between the text and their own lives
- Use critical thinking skills
- Provide textual evidence for an argument

Extensions

If your Club wants to explore other books on this topic, we recommend: *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga *Refugee* by Alan Gratz

Kelly Yang created discussion guides and support for facilitators reading this book for youth. She also published videos in which she answers questions for readers. [Find those resources here.](#)

To further extend the concepts covered in this book, you could interview immigrants about their experiences with immigration or host a virtual screening and discussion of a movie about immigration.

INTRODUCTION

Overview	In this module, youth will read <i>Front Desk</i> by Kelly Yang and will engage with the text through independent reading, reader's theatre, and reflection. Because Mia and the weeklies love Monopoly, youth will create and play games, and in honor of Mia's advocacy through letter writing, they will write letters addressing issues that matter to them.
Guiding Questions	What aspects of Mia's family life does she hesitate to share with others? Why? How does Mia advocate for important causes by writing letters?
Culminating Activity	Youth will create two products: a board game that incorporates elements of <i>Front Desk</i> and an advocacy letter about a topic they feel passionate about.
Day 1	Meet Mia Tang Youth will read Chapter 1 of <i>Front Desk</i> , connect Mia's life to some of their own experiences, and complete a crossword puzzle based on the first chapter.
Day 2	Secrets and Lies Youth will read about and act out Mia's first day of school and then discuss the passage.
Day 3	Create a Board Game Youth will create their own board games. When possible, they'll connect elements of <i>Front Desk</i> to the game.
Day 4	Game Time! Youth will play a game together and discuss how playing games together can help people become closer friends.
Day 5	Writing Letters Youth will read and discuss some of the letters Mia writes to advocate for herself, her family, or her friends. Then, youth will write a letter speaking up about something that matters to them.



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Front Desk

MEET MIA TANG

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

1

WARM WELCOME & GROUP AGREEMENTS **(5 MINUTES)**

Say, "Remember our group agreements: We are going to Check our Tech, Speak up, Listen to others, and Be kind when online."

Ask, "How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements in this virtual space?"

Ask, "Is there anything we should add to this list of commitments?"

2

COMMUNITY BUILDER: LIFE SOUNDTRACK **(15 MINUTES)**

Ask, "If your life right now had a soundtrack, what song would be playing today? Why?"

Give youth a chance to share aloud through video conferencing or by typing in a group chat.

3

MAIN ACTIVITY SEE PAGE 2 **(30 MINUTES)**

4

REFLECTION **(5 MINUTES)**

What?- What did we learn about Mia, the protagonist of *Front Desk*?

So What?- Why is it helpful to learn about characters we relate to easily AND characters whose lives are very different from our own?

Now What?- Now what do you think will happen when Mia's family starts running the motel?

5

CLOSING & CHECK OUT **(5 MINUTES)**

Recognize youth for completing the first chapter of *Front Desk*

Encourage youth to keep reading *Front Desk*. **Challenge** them to read up to page 38 before your next session.

Provide members with clear instructions for the next time you will meet.

MEET MIA TANG

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

3

MAIN ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

Introducing Youth to the Activity

Say, "Today we're going to start reading a book called *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang. We'll read the first chapter together, and then I'll encourage you all to continue reading on your own."

Step-by-step Directions

Step 1: Introducing *Front Desk*

- **Ask** youth to look at the cover of *Front Desk* and predict what the book will be about.
- **Ask** youth to either open their books to the first chapter or use this link to access the first chapter online.
- **Facilitate** a "popcorn reading" of Chapter 1 by letting youth volunteer to read paragraphs aloud.

Step 2: Chapter 1 Crossword

- Share the link(s) to the online crossword puzzle or the link to a printable version

Step 3: Relating to Mia

- **Ask**, "On a scale of 0-10, where 0 means "not at all" and 10 means "completely" how much do you relate to Mia's life?"
- **Invite** a few youth to share why they could or could not relate to Mia.

SECRETS AND LIES

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

1

WARM WELCOME & GROUP AGREEMENTS **(5 MINUTES)**

Say, "Remember our group agreements: We are going to Check our Tech, Speak up, Listen to others, and Be kind when online."

Ask, "How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements in this virtual space?"

Ask, "Is there anything we should add to this list of commitments?"

2

COMMUNITY BUILDER: INTERESTING FACTS **(15 MINUTES)**

- **Say**, "On Mia's first day of school, her teacher asks everyone to go around and share something interesting about themselves. We're going to do the same thing now. Who would like to start?"
- **Facilitate** the activity so that each youth shares one interesting thing about themselves.

3

MAIN ACTIVITY SEE PAGE 2 **(30 MINUTES)**

4

REFLECTION **(5 MINUTES)**

What?- Have you ever been tempted to tell a lie about your life or keep parts of your life secret? If so, why?

So What?- Have you ever been hesitant to tell people things about your family? Why or why not?

Now What?- Do you think Mia will ever be more honest about her family and her life? Why or why not?

5

CLOSING & CHECK OUT **(5 MINUTES)**

Recognize youth for their honesty and sharing information about themselves.

Encourage youth to keep reading *Front Desk*.

Provide members with clear instructions for the next time you will meet.



SECRETS AND LIES

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

3

MAIN ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

Introducing Youth to the Activity

Say, "Let's read the section of *Front Desk* in which Mia goes to her new school, Dale Elementary, for the first time."

Step-by-step Directions

Step 1: Reader's Theater

- **Say**, "We're going to read Mia's first day of school like it's a play and we're acting out, so I'll need volunteers to be each of these characters:"
- Narrator, Mrs. Douglas, Allen, Bethany, Mia, Jason, Fifth grader, Lupe."
- Share your screen or share a link to this [Reader's Theatre script](#):
- Assign roles and encourage all other youth to follow along on page 38 of *Front Desk* while your actors read aloud from the script.

Step 2: Discuss the Scene

- **Ask** the following questions to help youth reflect on the scene:
 - What does Mia notice about the other kids when she walks into her classroom?
 - How would you feel in a classroom where everyone seemed different from you?
 - What does Mia do when it's her turn to share an interesting fact?
 - Why do you think she does this?
 - How does Mia feel about her family and their lifestyle?
 - Mia tells Lupe that she has a golden retriever and a pool. Why does she say this?
 - Why does Jason not want anyone to know where Mia lives and works? Why does he tell her to act like she doesn't know him?

Step 3: Two Truths and a Lie

- **Say**, "Let's play a game called "Two truths and a lie." In this game, you make three statements; two of them should be true, and one should be a lie. After you've shared all three statements, the group will try to guess which statement was a lie."
- **Start** the game by sharing three statements yourself. Make sure two are true and one is a lie. Ask the group which statement they think is a lie. After they've deliberated for a while, share the correct answer.
- **Ask** who would like to go next and facilitate the game.

CREATE A BOARD GAME

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang, Art Supplies

1

WARM WELCOME & GROUP AGREEMENTS **(5 MINUTES)**

Say, "Remember our group agreements: We are going to Check our Tech, Speak up, Listen to others, and Be kind when online."

Ask, "How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements in this virtual space?"

Ask, "Is there anything we should add to this list of commitments?"

2

COMMUNITY BUILDER: FAVORITE GAME **(15 MINUTES)**

Ask, "What is your favorite game and why?"

Ask, "Could we play any of these games virtually while we're socially distancing?" "If your life right now had a soundtrack, what song would be playing today? Why?"

3

MAIN ACTIVITY SEE PAGE 2 **(30 MINUTES)**

4

REFLECTION **(5 MINUTES)**

What?- What did you find most challenging about creating a board game?

So What?- Some people design board games for a career. What's one skill you think a board game designer needs to have?

Now What?- Now what do you think about playing all these games? When we're back at the Club, which ones do you want to play first?

5

CLOSING & CHECK OUT **(5 MINUTES)**

Recognize youth for their hard work on their board game.

Encourage youth to keep reading *Front Desk*.

Provide members with clear instructions for the next time you will meet.



CREATE A BOARD GAME

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang, Art Supplies

3

MAIN ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

Introducing Youth to the Activity

- **Say**, “Who has played Monopoly before? Who can explain to the group how Monopoly works?”
- **Explain** that we are going to use simple craft supplies and our imaginations to create our own board games. They can be similar to Monopoly, Mia’s favorite game, or completely different. Some games might even incorporate aspects of *Front Desk*! Youth will have today to build their board games, and then they’ll get a chance to play one another’s games during the next session.

Step-by-step Directions

Step 1: Planning your Game

- **Ask**, “What are the important parts of a good game?” (For example: a board, pieces that move on the board, dice or cards that tell you how far to move, rules, a name for the game)
- **Say**, “In some board games, you roll a die and move forward that number of spaces. In other board games you draw a card and do whatever that card says. In some board games, the spaces themselves have instructions written on them, and when you land on that space you have to follow the instructions written on the space.”

Step 2: Making Your Game

- **Encourage** youth to gather a few supplies, including a sheet of paper and something to write with.
- **Support** youth as they create their board games, and encourage youth to share their ideas as they go.
- If youth finish quickly, encourage them to add decorations, find a container for their game, or write out the rules.

Step 3: Planning to Play

- **Ask**, “Is anyone planning to play their game with their family?”
- **Say**, “When we get to return to the Club, I hope you’ll bring your games and we can play together!”

GAME TIME

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

1

WARM WELCOME & GROUP AGREEMENTS **(5 MINUTES)**

Say, "Remember our group agreements: We are going to Check our Tech, Speak up, Listen to others, and Be kind when online."

Ask, "How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements in this virtual space?"

Ask, "Is there anything we should add to this list of commitments?"

2

COMMUNITY BUILDER: ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS **(15 MINUTES)**

Ask, "In the game Monopoly, players use paper money and may earn hundreds and thousands of dollars. What do you think Mia would buy if she had one thousand dollars?"

Ask, "What would you do if you suddenly had one thousand dollars?"

3

MAIN ACTIVITY SEE PAGE 2 **(30 MINUTES)**

4

REFLECTION **(5 MINUTES)**

What?- What did you enjoy about today?

So What?- How does playing games together help people become better friends?

Now What?- Now what other games could we play virtually?

5

CLOSING & CHECK OUT **(5 MINUTES)**

Recognize youth for their participation.

Encourage youth to finish reading *Front Desk*.

Provide members with clear instructions for the next time you will meet.

GAME TIME

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang

3

MAIN ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

Introducing Youth to the Activity.

Say, “Mia became closer with the weeklies by playing Monopoly with them. Playing the game helped them become better friends. Today, let’s play a game together even though we can’t be together in person”

Step-by-step Directions

Step 1: Setting Up the Game

- To play a drawing game, **create** a private room (so that this group will play together without any strangers) on Drawize.
- **Share** the unique link to the private room through the web conferencing platform you’re using to facilitate this virtual program
- To play charades, **explain** to youth that one person will act out a person, place, thing or idea, and the group will try to guess what that person is acting out.
- If youth suggested another game that can be played virtually, try that! The goal is to enjoy connecting and learn more about one another by playing.

Step 2: Play Together!

- **Remind** youth that, even while they’re staying home, it’s great to connect virtually, and virtual games are a fun way to stay connected to friends right now.
- **Enjoy** playing together!



WRITING LETTERS

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang, Pencil and Paper

1 WARM WELCOME & GROUP AGREEMENTS (5 MINUTES)

Say, "Remember our group agreements: We are going to Check our Tech, Speak up, Listen to others, and Be kind when online."

Ask, "How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements in this virtual space?"

Ask, "Is there anything we should add to this list of commitments?"

2 COMMUNITY BUILDER: STAND UP FOR ___ (15 MINUTES)

Say, "Today we're going to talk about how Mia was an advocate. An advocate is a person who recommends or supports a cause, policy, person, or community. You could be an advocate for yourself when you need help, you could be an advocate for a community, like a community of immigrants, or you could be an advocate for an idea, like the idea that children should be taken seriously and not looked down upon because of their age. Being an advocate means standing up for something."

Ask, "What is one thing you believe in standing up for?"

Share an example of something you believe in standing up for to get the conversation started.

3 MAIN ACTIVITY SEE PAGE 2 (30 MINUTES)

4 REFLECTION (5 MINUTES)

What?- What do you think about Mia's bold decision to send letters to adults about important topics like not discriminating against clients, not mistreating immigrants, or investing in a motel?

So What?- How does it feel to know that you could be an advocate for things that matter to you?

Now What?- What else do you think you could write a letter about?

5 CLOSING & CHECK OUT (5 MINUTES)

Recognize youth for writing letters to advocate and express themselves

Suggest that if youth loved reading *Front Desk*, they may also enjoy:

- *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga
- *Refugee* by Alan Gratz

Provide members with clear instructions for the next time you will meet.

WRITING LETTERS

Group Size: 10-15
Supplies Needed: *Front Desk*
by Kelly Yang, *Pencil and Paper*

3

MAIN ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES)

Introducing Youth to the Activity

Say, “Today we’re going to review the letters Mia wrote, and then we’re going to each write a letter communicating a message that matters to us. Even though Mia was only ten years old, she wrote letters to important people and wrote letters about important ideas. You can do that too! Writing letters is a great way to be an advocate for things that matter to you and to express yourself.”

Step-by-step Directions

Step 1: Mia's Letters

- **Ask** for six volunteers to read each of the letters Mia wrote on pages 127, 135, 181, 190, 204, and 213. **Encourage** other youth to follow along
- After each letter is read aloud, **ask**:
 - How was Mia feeling when she wrote this letter?
 - What was the purpose of this letter? Who or what was Mia advocating for?
 - Would you ever write a letter like this? Why or why not?

Step 2: Brainstorming

- **Say**, “Mia is not the only one who can write letters to be an advocate or to say thank you or to express her feelings. We can do that too! Before we get started, let’s brainstorm some ideas of people we could write letters to or topics we could write letters about. What ideas do you have?”
- **Write** ideas as they’re shared on a virtual whiteboard, shared document, or chat box so that everyone can see the list of ideas. Examples include:
 - I could write a letter to my school principal saying we need more art classes.
 - I could write a letter to someone who was kind to me saying thank you.
 - I could write a letter explaining why I feel frustrated, even if I never send it.
- Write an example letter together if you think your youth need some support with basic letter writing. In your example letter (on a virtual whiteboard or shared document on your screen) point out features of a letter like a greeting (Dear ____), the main body, a sign off, and a signature (first name only).

Step 3: Writing

- **Encourage** youth to think of a letter they’d like to write, and then give everyone time to write.
- **Invite** youth to read their letter aloud to the group.
- **Explain** that, for safety reasons, no one should send their letter without permission from their family.