

The Crossover

Discussion Guide

GRADES 5 - 7

Before using this book with your class or recommending the book to students, we suggest reading the book closely to determine if it is a good fit. Consider saying to your students:

"This book contains topics that may be sensitive. Not all books fit all readers. If you are uncomfortable with this book, you have the right to stop reading it, but please pick another."

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Have students complete the [Anticipation Guide](#) to prepare for understanding and connecting with the deeper themes and messages of the story.
- Frontload vocabulary with the [Vocabulary Guide](#).

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

Warm-Up (Pages 1-29)

- What do you notice about how the words look and sound on the page? Why do you think the author chose to write the book this way?
- How does Josh feel about who he is (as a brother, son, and basketball player)? What details from the text help you understand his feelings?
- Why do you think this section ends with a basketball rule? How does the rule connect to what we are learning about Josh and his family?

First Quarter (Pages 30-55)

- What can we infer about what might be happening with Josh's father? What clues does the author give us?

Second Quarter (Pages 56-108)

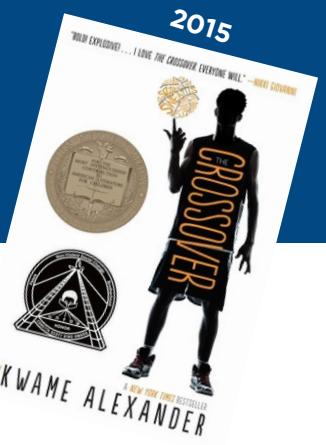
- How do the basketball rules connect to events in Josh's life so far? Give an example from the text.
- How is the relationship between Josh and JB beginning to change? How do the "life rules" help us understand this change?
- After basketball rule #5, how do you think Josh is feeling? What in the text supports your thinking?
- Why might Josh be lying to his father? What does this reveal about his emotions or fears?
- How do Josh and JB each feel about their conflicts with one another? How can you tell?

Third Quarter (Pages 109-152)

- What are Josh's "tipping points," and how are they adding to his challenges? Use examples from the story.
- How is the situation with Josh's family developing? What events show that things are changing?

Fourth Quarter (Pages 153-196)

- How is Josh's relationship with Vondie changing? What moments in the text show this growth?
- What do you think may be starting to happen with Dad? What clues does the author give the reader?
- Why does JB look at Josh like he "just saw a ghost"? What does this reaction tell us?
- Explain the meaning of the quote: "The word we never sounded sweeter." Why is this moment important?
- How does this experience with Dad bring Josh and JB closer together? What changes in their relationship?



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During Reading Cont: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

Overtime (Pages 197-237)

- Why do you think the author chose to include this chapter at this point in the story? How does it move the plot or theme forward?
- What do the final lines on pages 219 and 222 mean? How do they connect to Josh's growth?
- Discuss the meaning and impact of basketball rule #10. How does it relate to the overall message of the novel?
- How are Josh and JB able to move past their conflicts? What lesson can readers learn from their relationship?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- What are some lessons we can learn from The Crossover? (scaffolds/topics if needed: Family, Love, Sports, Growing Up, Identity)
- At times, Josh used basketball to persevere through challenges and make meaning of them within his life. What are some ways you allow yourself to persevere through and make meaning of challenges?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.