



Fernanda Frick H.

Raise the Bar: A Graphic Novel

Why read this book?

Sam Sanchez dreams of becoming Chile's first weightlifting gold medalist, even though she lacks a coach and proper equipment. When she earns the chance to train with her Olympic hero, Eva Dos Santos, Sam takes a risk to pursue her goal. As she faces intense training, new friendships, and tough competition, Sam learns that reaching a dream takes perseverance, responsibility, and confidence in herself.

Great for readers who...

- Enjoy graphic novels about sports, competition, and ambitious goals
- Like stories about perseverance, hard work, and overcoming obstacles
- Are interested in weightlifting, athletics, or the Olympic Games
- Enjoy characters who learn from their mistakes and take responsibility
- Like realistic stories featuring friendship, family, and personal growth



Looking for your next great read?

Check out all of the Read with RIF book club picks at rif.org/literacy-central.

Raise the Bar: A Graphic Novel

Author: Fernanda Frick H.

Illustrator: Jenny Alvarado

Themes: Perseverance, Responsibility, Friendship, Competition, Confidence, Goal-Setting

Book Brief: Sam dreams of becoming a champion weightlifter, but pursuing her goal challenges her to make difficult choices, accept responsibility, and discover how much she can truly carry.



BEFORE READING

To activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Ask, “Have you ever worked toward a goal that required a lot of practice or sacrifice? What helped you keep going?”
- Use RIF’s [KWL Chart](#) to activate background knowledge and spark curiosity.
- Purpose for Reading: “As we read, think about the choices Sam makes while pursuing her dream and what she learns about strength, responsibility, and perseverance.”

DURING READING

To engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- What motivates Sam to become a competitive weightlifter?
- What challenges does Sam face because she does not have a coach or proper equipment?
- Why does Sam decide to pursue the opportunity to train at the high-performance center?
- How do Sam’s friendships and rivalries affect her training and confidence?
- What consequences does Sam face because of the choices she makes?
- How does Sam’s understanding of strength change throughout the story?

AFTER READING

To summarize, question, and reflect.

- Ask, “How does Sam grow as both an athlete and a person? What does she learn about perseverance, responsibility, and believing in herself?”
- Have students create a training plan for a goal they would like to achieve. They can identify the goal, list several steps, anticipate possible challenges, and name people who could support them.
- Use the questions on the next page to continue the conversation after reading. Talk together, share personal connections, and explore how the themes in the story connect to real life. There are no right or wrong answers, just thoughtful discussion and listening.

Beyond the Book: Conversation Starters



For the classroom

1. What is the difference between taking a positive risk and making a decision without considering the consequences?
2. How do Sam's relationships with her friends, family, teammates, and competitors influence her journey?
3. What does Sam's experience teach us about perseverance, responsibility, and the different kinds of strength a person can have?

For at home

1. Talk about a goal you or someone in your family worked hard to achieve. What challenges came up along the way?
2. Discuss why it can be difficult to ask for help or admit when we have made a mistake. Why are these actions important?
3. Share ways your family can support one another's goals while also encouraging honesty, balance, and responsible choices.

Write Like a Champion!

Sam works hard to achieve her dream, even when things get difficult. Write about a goal you have for yourself. It could be learning a new skill, improving at a sport, getting better at reading, making a new friend, or anything else that's important to you.



My Weekly Training Plan

Every champion has a plan!

Sam trains every day to become a stronger athlete. Think about a goal you want to achieve. Complete your own weekly training plan by writing one action you can take each day to move closer to your goal.

My Goal: _____

This week, I will practice by...

Day	My Training Plan
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	