

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 connection of deeper themes and messages of the story.
- Frontload vocabulary: Pages 3-20 (see *vocabulary list*)

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

- What do you notice about the words on the page? Why do you think the author chose to write the words this way? (p. 3)
- How does Josh feel about different aspects of his identity? How do you know? (p. 15)
- Why do you think the author chose to end this section of the book with a basketball rule? How does it connect to what we have learned about Josh and his family? (p. 20)
- What can we infer/predict is happening with Josh’s father? How do we know? (p. 42)
- How do the basketball rules connect to what we have learned about Josh’s life at this point? (p. 66)
- How is Josh and JB’s relationship changing? How do the life rules help us understand this? (p. 85)
- What can we infer/predict about how Josh is feeling after basketball rule #5? (p. 93)
- Why might Josh be lying to his father? (p. 99)
- How might Josh’s tipping points be adding to his life challenges? (p. 122)
- How is the situation with Josh and his family developing? How do we know? (p. 134)
- How are Josh and JB feeling towards the conflicts with one another? (p. 159)
- How is Josh’s relationship with Vondie changing? (p. 163)
- What might be beginning to occur with Dad? (p. 169)
- Why is JB looking at Josh like he “just saw a ghost”? (p. 176)
- Analyze the impact of the following quote: “The word we never sounded sweeter.” (p. 189)
- How is this experience with Dad bringing JB and Josh closer together? (p. 196)
- Why do you think the author chose to include this chapter? (p. 204)
- Analyze the meaning of the last line on pages 219 and 222.
- Have a discussion around the meaning/impact of basketball rule #10 (p. 230)
- How were Josh and JB able to see past their conflicts with one another? What lesson can be learned between the connection between JB and Josh? (p. 237)

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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.