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# INTRODUCTION

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Read through today's common curricular goals for "reading literature" and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support* and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigour and synthesis were asked of students – and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher's standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic. From a student's standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis – questions such as, "Why did the author choose to include this information?" and "How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?" And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel *as they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.



## A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximise the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *The Crossover*, utilise the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with activities designed to acclimate students to the themes and concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read the novel. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel individually, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesise their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** (pages 54–73). This section of the resource includes such larger assignments as group projects and essay prompts.

On pages 74–75, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers.

**Note:** Page references to the original novel in this resource may vary depending on the edition you are using, and are provided here as a guide only.

### Teacher Tips

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using this novel as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterisation. Examine the craft, structure and purpose of select passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in years 5–8. This levelling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher year levels, as well.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

# KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multi-layered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give students a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterisation, craft and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

### Materials needed for each student:

- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a sheet of plain paper for the title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of lined paper for a Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts at the end of each section

### Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design and decorate their own title pages. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*The Crossover*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and year level at the bottom.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.
3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 11–18). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” on page 10.
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students begin by completing a copy of the “Examining Endings” worksheet (page 18), which asks them to predict what will happen next in the novel. Students then select one or more of the four prompts in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” section, and they create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.
5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “Rating the Novel” worksheet (page 71) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

### Teacher Tip

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *The Crossover*, a smaller binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

### Teacher Tip

Consider allowing your students to preview the “Ideas for Your Interactive Novel Log” prompts a day or two before they are asked to respond to them. When asking students to reflect on past experiences and articulate their personal connections to a work of art, give them the time and space they need to collect their thoughts. By allowing your students to sit with the ideas presented in these prompts, you will relieve the pressure that an immediate response can cause.

## COMPLETE LESSON PLAN

The following lesson plan presents a systematic way to use this entire guide in your classroom study of *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander.

**Note:** All page numbers listed in parentheses refer to this teacher guide.

### Before Reading the Novel

- ✦ Before students have begun reading the novel, have them complete "And the Winner Was ..." (page 8). For this activity, students will need access to the Internet or other sources. Monitor students' Internet usage.
- ✦ Read "About the Author" (page 7) to the students. Then, have a discussion with students about their expectations for the novel based on the awards the book has earned, as well as what they have learned about its author.
- ✦ Complete "Poetry and Motion?" (page 9). Have students examine their own feelings about the strengths and limitations of poetry. Then challenge them to think critically about not only the pluses but also the pitfalls of athletic achievement.
- ✦ Introduce the concept of Interactive Novel Logs (see page 5). Prepare a blank notebook for each student or allow students to prepare their own.

### Section I of the Novel

- ✦ Read the section titled "Warm-Up" in *The Crossover*.
- ✦ See "Section I Teacher Instructions" (page 19). Have students add to their Novel Logs before completing the other Section I activities.

### Section II of the Novel

- ✦ Read the section titled "First Quarter" in *The Crossover*.
- ✦ See "Section II Teacher Instructions" (page 25). Have students add to their Novel Logs before completing the other Section II activities.

### Section III of the Novel

- ✦ Read the section titled "Second Quarter" in *The Crossover*.
- ✦ See "Section III Teacher Instructions" (page 33). Have students add to their Novel Logs before completing the other Section III activities.

### Section IV of the Novel

- ✦ Read the section titled "Third Quarter" in *The Crossover*.
- ✦ See "Section IV Teacher Instructions" (page 40). Have students add to their Novel Logs before completing the other Section IV activities.

### Section V of the Novel

- ✦ Read the section titled "Fourth Quarter" in *The Crossover*.
- ✦ See "Section V Teacher Instructions" (page 47). Have students add to their Novel Logs before completing the other Section V activities. Then have students read the section titled "Overtime" in *The Crossover* and complete related activities.

### After Reading the Novel

- ✦ Consult "Teacher Instructions" (page 54) for descriptions of Post-Reading Activities. Synthesise understanding with the "Add It Up" worksheets (pages 55–57).
- ✦ Complete additional individual (pages 58–64, 70) and collaborative (65–69) projects.
- ✦ Have students share final thoughts and opinions on the novel with the last two Post-Reading Activities (pages 71–73).

# NOVEL INFORMATION

## Book Summary

Josh Bell is a basketball *phenom*. On the court, it's always the same: his game is tops, he can't be stopped, his confidence is supreme. Off the court? That's where the game is subject to change. The voice inside his head is quieter, much less sure. Instead of driving the lane and taking all the shots, he sits on the bench, observing, trying to make sense of the rules. And those rules aren't always clear. Sometimes the ball is taken right out of his hands. Sometimes it seems as if people switch teams right in front of his eyes.

With great rhythm and energy, *The Crossover* tells the story of a young man and a family who have been successful in the past, continue to shine in the present, and yet still face an uncertain, and at times frightening, future. By mixing and matching poetic forms and styles, Kwame Alexander creates multiple angles from which young readers can view a character who is a little bit like their heroes but a lot more like themselves.

## About the Author

Kwame Alexander is a poet, educator and public speaker who has authored over 20 books. His 2015 novel *The Crossover* earned him such honours as the Coretta Scott King Book Award and the John Newbery Medal, which is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

Alexander writes books for children of all ages. He believes that all children can be reached through literature, and one way to do this is through more diversity in the types of characters, cultures and stories students read about at school. To promote reading, Alexander has founded such programs as Book-in-a-Day (a student-run publishing program) and LEAP for Ghana (an international project that focuses on building libraries and training teachers in other parts of the world).

## Make It a Text Set!

The following novels can form ideal text sets with *The Crossover*. (**Note:** Check books in advance to ensure they are appropriate for your students.)

Other books by Kwame Alexander	Recent Newbery Medal Winners
<i>Booked</i> (2016) <i>Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band</i> (2011)	<b>2017</b> - <i>The Girl Who Drank the Moon</i> by Kelly Barnhill
Books by Other Authors	<b>2016</b> - <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i> by Matt de la Peña
<i>Ghost</i> by Jason Reynolds (2016) <i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i> by Jacqueline Woodson (2014) <i>All the Broken Pieces</i> by Ann E. Burg (2012) <i>Love That Dog</i> by Sharon Creech (2001)	<b>2014</b> - <i>Flora &amp; Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures</i> by Kate DiCamillo <b>2013</b> - <i>The One and Only Ivan</i> by Katherine Applegate

## INTERACTIVE NOVEL LOGS

# TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

As students read through *The Crossover*, have them use the following activities to track the growth and development of certain literary elements. For each activity:

- ✦ Distribute a fresh copy to students after each section is read.
- ✦ Have students include these completed worksheets in their Interactive Novel Logs. See page 5 for more information.




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**Activity:** "The Summaries of Its Parts" **Page #:** 11  
**Focus:** Plot **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Practise summarisation skills by listing the major plot points of the section just read. Further condense the information by naming the one main idea of the section.

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**Activity:** "The Boys and Da Man" **Page #:** 12  
**Focus:** Characterisation, Plot **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Describe each of the three main characters in the novel. Show what each character does, says and/or thinks in each section of the novel.

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**Activity:** "Rules of the Game" **Page #:** 13  
**Focus:** Plot, Theme, Characterisation **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Highlight one of the Basketball Rules found in each section. Paraphrase the rule and determine how it applies to the sport, the characters and to life in general.

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**Activity:** "Checking In on Theme" **Page #:** 14  
**Focus:** Theme **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Use evidence to support a claim about the importance of a particular theme. (**TIP:** Starting with Section II, ask students to highlight a theme that they have not yet written about.)

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**Activity:** "Choice Words" **Page #:** 15  
**Focus:** Vocabulary **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Locate a quotation in which a vocabulary word appears. Use context to determine meaning. Then look up the word, write its definition and part of speech, and use it in a new sentence. Illustrate the word's meaning. (**TIP:** Select vocabulary words from the "Novel Vocabulary" lists on page 75.)

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**Activity:** "Versatile Verse" **Page #:** 16  
**Focus:** Craft and Structure, Plot **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Analyse the different ways the author uses poetry in this section of the novel. Describe how form and content inform one another.

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**Activity:** "Flipping the Form" **Page #:** 17  
**Focus:** Craft and Structure **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Rewrite a scene from the section twice, once in prose and once in graphic form. Determine what the author might have gained or lost by using a different writing form.

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**Activity:** "Examining Endings" **Page #:** 18  
**Focus:** Plot, Mood, Characterisation **Learning Type:** Individual  
**Description:** Summarise the section's final poem. Determine its mood and decide if it ends with a cliffhanger. Make a prediction about where the novel's plot will go next. (**TIP:** This page should be completed as a part of the "Log-In" activity that concludes each section. Prior to this activity, introduce the concepts of mood and cliffhangers.)

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