

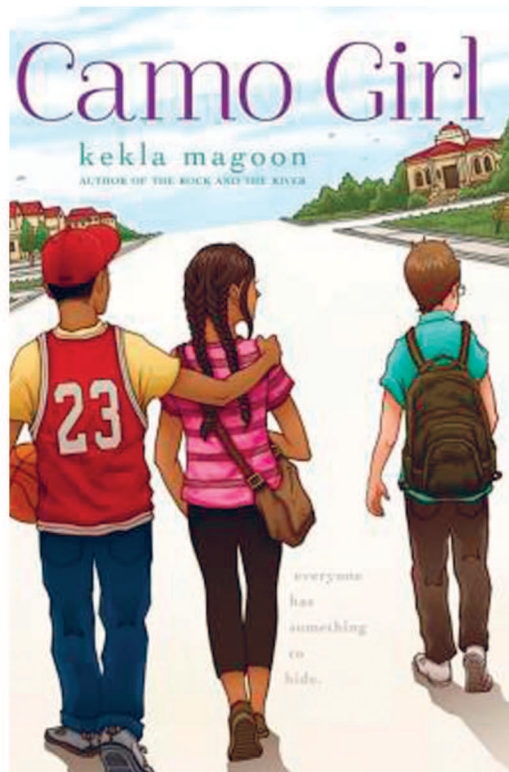
# Reading <sup>with</sup> Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

*Camo Girl*

A novel by Kekla Magoon



Recommended for:  
Grade Levels  
4th-6th

# A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this Common Core Standards curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!



## Why *Camo Girl?*

This novel tells the story of Ella and her best friend Z, two social outcasts whose lives are changed when a new kid joins their class, altering the ways they see themselves and each other. We chose this book for its thoughtful exploration of important social and emotional themes: race, physical appearance, mental health, social cliques, poverty, and friendship. This curriculum will inspire students to build connections between Ella's unfolding life story and their own

### This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program.
- Twelve individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel.

# Session 8

pages 143-158

## Vocabulary

**stony** (p. 147): adj., rigid or unfeeling

**slinks** (p. 151): v., moves slowly, as if with shame

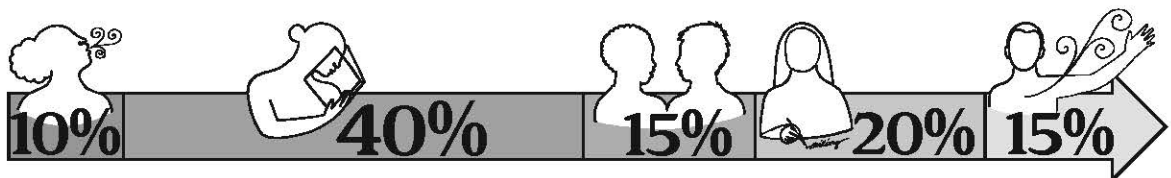
**pew** (p. 152): n., a long backed bench, usually appears in churches

## Today's Theme

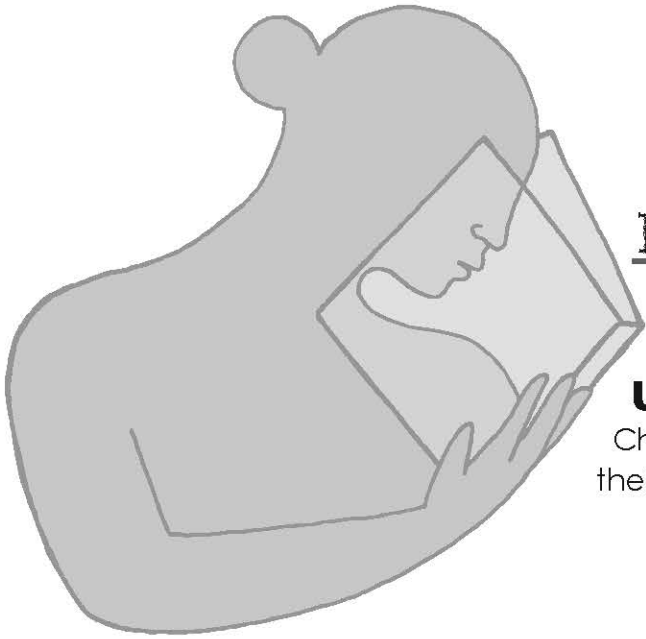
The theme of today's session is **loss of a loved one**. All the characters in this session are grieving a loss of someone they loved, and they all cope in different ways. Ella and her mother go to a Unitarian church to commemorate the third anniversary of Ella's father's death. Her mother cries to clear out her emotions, while Ella chooses not to cry. Talk with your students about the different ways that the characters handle loss. Remind students that it is not their place to judge someone else's response to loss, but we can learn from the different kinds of reactions that we see in *Camo Girl*. What might we learn from Ella, Z, and Bailey about coping with loss? How can this help us with the losses we have faced in our own lives?

## Session 7 Recap

In the previous session, Z tries to fight Bailey, who refuses to fight back, because Bailey has his "treasure:" a few Mirage casino chips. Later, Bailey punches Jonathan after he calls Ella "Camo Face" and hits her in the face with his backpack. Bailey is grounded, and Ella comes to the conclusion that she and Bailey cannot be friends.







### During Reading

**“in rare form”** (p. 150): an expression that means at one's best

**Unitarian church** (p. 152): a kind of Christian church with a liberal approach to their teachings

A stylized, grey-toned illustration of two people from the chest up, facing each other in conversation. The person on the left has curly hair, and the person on the right has short, spiky hair. A large question mark is superimposed over the space between them.

## Discussion Questions

- What important anniversary occurs in this session?
- What does Z do to commemorate the anniversary? What do you think about this?
- How does Ella remember her dad?
- How do you or your family remember the people you've lost?
- How does Ella feel about the consequences that Bailey experiences over the fight?
- What does Bailey do to cope with his dad's absence?
- Make a prediction. What do you think Z's quest is?

# Journal Prompt

## KINDNESS

- Even though Z and Ella's friendship has been tense, Z remembers the anniversary of Ella's father's passing. He gives her a little heart with a three painted on it to show that he cares.

**Write about a time when you were kind to someone.**

- » What happened? How did you show kindness?
- » How did it feel to offer this person comfort and compassion?
- » Who in your life shows you kindness?

## CRYING

- Ella watches as the anniversary of her father's death takes a toll on her mother, who cries in the church and at home.

**Write about a time when you cried or felt like crying.**

- » What was happening that made you feel so sad?
- » How did it feel to let out your emotions?
- » Some people believe crying is a sign of weakness. What do you think about this?

*writing*

## Checkpoint

- **Student writing should include details that describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.**
  - » Students should convey a clear understanding of the character, both through describing the character's actions and her or his internal state.
  - » For example, "When the character said \_\_\_\_\_ she seemed to be feeling \_\_\_\_\_."

## Extension Activity

Z, Ella, and Bailey are all coping with losing their fathers. Each of them shows their feelings in different ways. In this activity, students will use the "Coping with Loss" worksheet to compare each character's reaction to the losses they've faced.

### Materials:

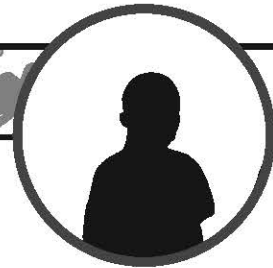
- » Coping with Loss Handout

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Ella copes with grief by...

My advice to this character is...



Z copes with grief by...

My advice to this character is...



Bailey copes with grief by...

My advice to this character is...

Z, Ella, and Bailey are all coping with losing their fathers. Each of them shows their feelings in different ways. In this activity, you will use the "Coping with Grief" worksheet to compare each character's reaction to the losses they've faced.

## Coping with Loss

# Appendix

## Additional Activities

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### Get to Know MFI

**Moving Forward Institute** is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

### Our Purpose

*At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.*

*We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.*

### Training and Professional Development Services

*While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.*

*Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!*

### Contact Us

*Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!*

**Online:** [www.movingforwardinstitute.org](http://www.movingforwardinstitute.org)  
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**By Mail:** 1425 Park Ave  
Emeryville, CA 94608

### If your students liked *Camo Girl* . . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out Walk Two Moons, Mighty Miss Malone, or Number the Stars. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*