

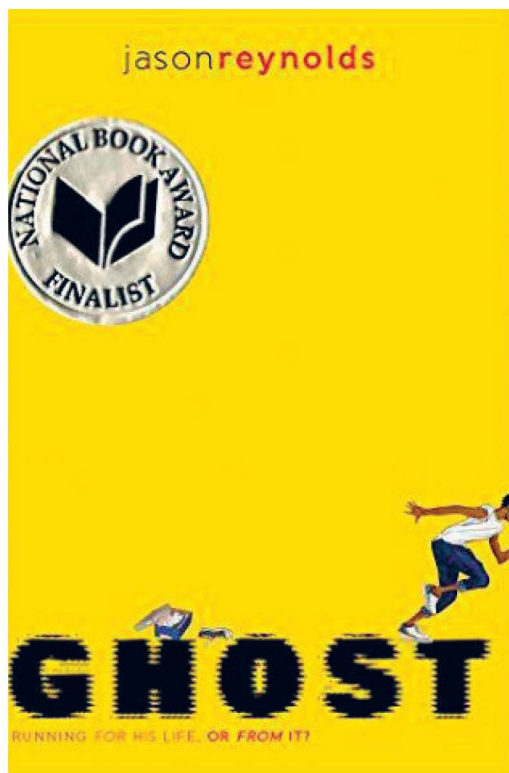
Reading ^{with} Relevance

Building Independent Readers and Thinkers

A Teacher's Guide for

Ghost

A novel by Jason Reynolds

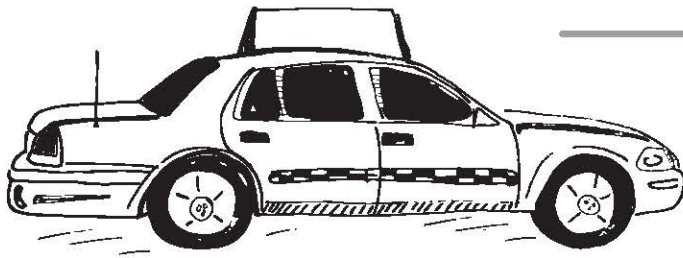


Recommended for:
Grade Levels
6th-8th

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 Ghost?

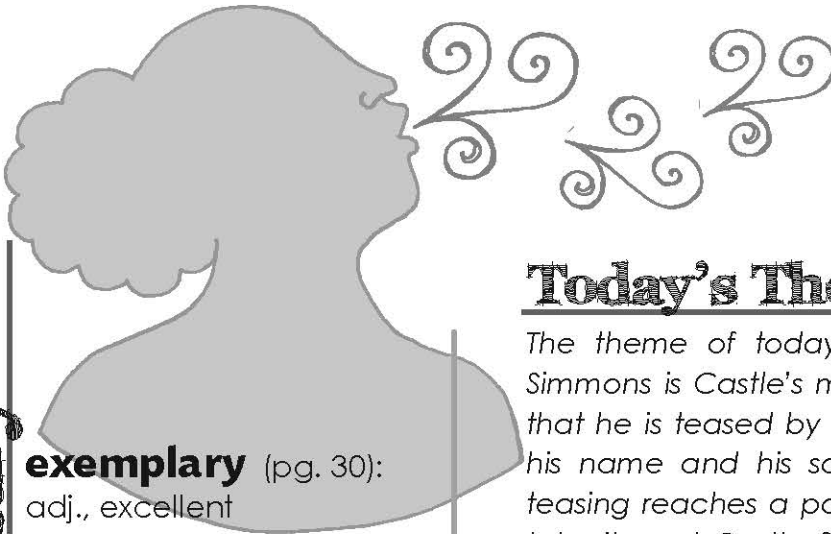
This novel tells the story of Castle, a seventh grade boy running from his problems, and his past. When a local track coach discovers Castle's natural talent for sprinting and takes him under his wing, Castle discovers both the challenges and the joys of joining an elite track team. We chose this book for its careful exploration of some powerful social and emotional themes: poverty, bullying, sports, friendship, and overcoming trauma. This curriculum will inspire students to build connections between Castle's redemptive 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.
- Ten 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 3

pages 29-51



Vocabulary

exemplary (pg. 30):
adj., excellent

disbelief (pg. 36): n.,
surprise, having a hard
time believing

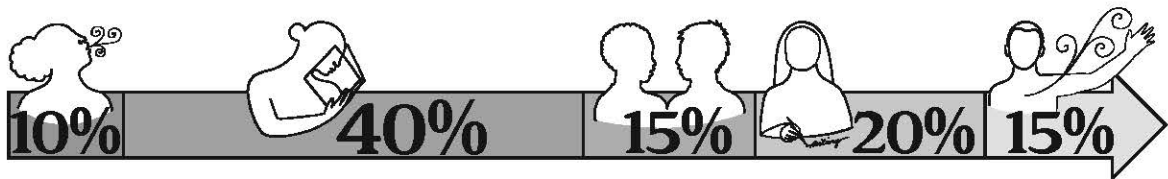
antsy (pg. 43): adj., full
of anxious energy

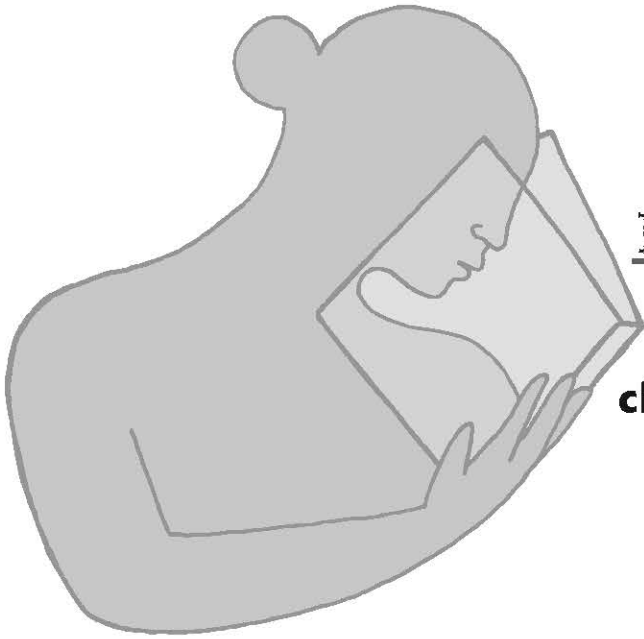
Today's Theme

The theme of today's session is **bullying**. Brandon Simmons is Castle's main bully, but Castle also notes that he is teased by a variety of people because of his name and his socioeconomic status. Brandon's teasing reaches a point where Castle can no longer take it, and Castle fights Brandon. You can use this scene as an opportunity to engage in a serious discussion with your students about bullying. What can we learn from this situation? How could it have been prevented? What could Brandon and Castle both have done differently? Students may feel that telling a teacher is not always the most effective way to deal with a bully. In response to that, work with students to brainstorm nonviolent ways to respond to bullying. You can especially encourage students to show up as each other's allies.

Session 2 Recap

In the previous session, Castle gets his sunflower seeds and goes to watch a track practice. He observes Lu, Sunny, and Patina run. Lu's arrogance presents like a challenge to Castle, and he decides to run against Lu. They tie. Coach Brody is astounded by how fast Castle runs and asks him, and later his mother, if he can join the track team. Castle's mother agrees as long as Castle behaves and keeps his grades up.





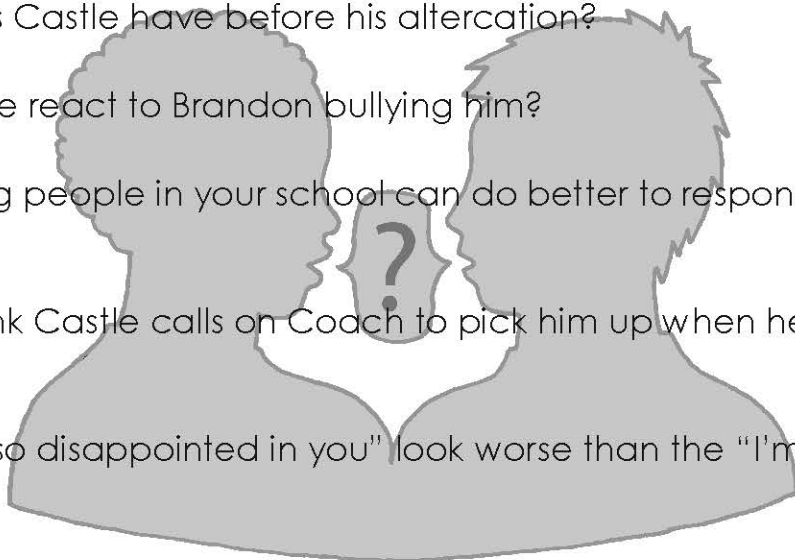
During Reading

rap sheet (pg. 29): slang for an official criminal record

chump (pg. 33): someone who is easily tricked

Discussion Questions

- Why does Castle refuse to sleep in his room? How does he feel about this space?
- What goal does Castle have before his altercation?
- How does Castle react to Brandon bullying him?
- Is there anything people in your school can do better to respond to bullying?
- Why do you think Castle calls on Coach to pick him up when he is suspended?
- Why is the “I’m so disappointed in you” look worse than the “I’m mad” look?
- What advice does Coach give Castle about life? What do you think this means?



Journal Prompt

BULLYING

- Brandon bullies Castle on a regular basis, but on this day, Castle decides to literally fight back.

Do you think Castle was right to fight Brandon? Why or why not?

- » Why do you think this was the moment when Castle had finally had enough of Brandon's bullying?
- » What are some other options Castle had for handling the situation?
- » What do you think is your responsibility in preventing or responding to bullying at your school?

SCARED

- When Castle says he is scared of himself, Coach responds, "Trouble is, you can't run away from yourself... ain't nobody that fast."

Why do you think Castle feels afraid of himself?

- » Where does his fear come from?
- » What parts of yourself scare you?
- » How can you use your fear to grow?

Checkpoint

- Students should start each journal entry by introducing the topic of their writing.
 - » Construct a clear topic sentence.
 - » For example, "Today, I am going to write about _____."

Extension Activity

Today, students read about a moment when Castle just snaps, and lashes out physically at Brandon in response to his bullying. This activity asks students to put themselves in the shoes of Castle's close friend. What advice would they have for Castle after this very bad day?

Materials:

- » Text Talk Handout

Name: _____

Castle snaps, and lashes out physically at Brandon in response to his bullying. Today, you'll put yourself in the shoes of Castle's close friend. What advice do you have for Castle after this very bad day? What would he say to you? How would you respond? How would your text conversation read?

Text Talk

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!

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If your students liked *Ghost*. . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *Holes*, *Hunger Games*, and *Crossover*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*