



WHO CAN USE THIS BOOK AND GUIDE?

Crown is written at a level that will appeal to students in K-5 settings. Instructors may find the book and the resources below useful in the following ways:

- As an addition to the class library and/or a read aloud/whole class activity
- For use in guided reading
- For 1:1 or small group work in the classroom
- As an addition to the school library and/or a read aloud/whole class activity led by the librarian
- As a resource for social workers and counselors for 1:1 or small group work
- As an activity in an after school club or church youth group

SUGGESTED DURATION

One to two class periods (possibly 3 if the book is being used for guided reading)

THEMES

Representation and self-esteem

VOCABULARY

intellectual

(p.5) relating to serious study and thought

surgical

(p.7) careful and exact

CEO

(p.11) chief executive officer; the leader of a company

majestic

(p.12) showing great beauty

complexion

(p.15) the color of a person's skin

subtle

(p.15) hard to notice

tip

(p.26) extra money paid to someone for a service

flawless

(p.27) perfect

Classroom guide for



CROWN



AN ODE TO THE FRESH CUT

CORE LESSON PLAN

The book focuses on the following concepts: a person's sense of self, how that impacts how a person behaves and feels, and how others interact with that person.

Comprehension Questions:

- In writing or in discussion with a partner, summarize the story.
- What is the main idea of the story?
- Where does the story take place?
- Who is the main character?

Analysis Questions:

- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What is his message?
- What power does a haircut have for the main character? Find details in the text to support your answer.

Connecting to Text Questions:

- How do you feel when you get your hair cut?
- Is there anything in your life that makes you feel like the author does about getting a haircut?

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Talk about how the author's word choices affect the reader. For example, on page 4, how do the words "royalty" and "princely robes" help the reader understand the author's message?
- On page 19 the main character looks in the mirror and sees the "gold medal" version of himself. Who is the "gold medal you"? Who is the best version of yourself?



CONNECTIONS TO STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

WRITING TOPICS

- The book starts off saying that the main character comes into the barbershop as a “lump of clay, a blank canvas.” What does this mean? How does the main character change over the course of the book? Use this story as inspiration to write your own story of someone who changes because of an experience they have.
- On page 13 one of the customers in the barbershop is described as looking “like he owns a few acres of land on Saturn. Maybe there’s a river named after him on Mars.” The author isn’t actually claiming that this customer lives in outer space but is instead using these descriptions to show how important the man looks. Write a paragraph about real or fictional person focusing on using descriptive language to inform the reader about that person.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

- Talk about the illustrations in the book. What do you notice about them? Take any aspect of the illustrations as inspiration for an original painting.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- On page 5 the author says that a new haircut “hooks up your intellectual.” Do you think the way a person looks impacts how they feel or think? Why or why not?
- On page 22 the author says, “Being viewed in your mother’s eyes as someone that matters – now that’s beautiful.” How do people make each other feel that they matter? How do you make others feel that they matter? How do others make you feel that you matter?



CONNECTIONS TO STANDARDS (CONT.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

FURTHER READING

Also by Derrick Barnes

I Am Every Good Thing. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2020.

A picture book that celebrates the power and beauty of Black boys.

Other recent Newbery Honor Books

Alexander, Kwame. *The Undefeated. Versify*. 2019.

An illustrated poem that focuses on the history of Black people in the United States and celebrates the accomplishments of Black Americans. (Also a 2020 Caldecott Medal and 2020 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award winner.)

Other recent Caldecott Honor Books

Stephens, Javaka. *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. 2016.

A picture book biography of Haitian Puerto Rican artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. (Also a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award recipient.)

Other recent Coretta Scott King Author or Illustrator Honor Books

Cabrera, Cozbi. *Me & Mama*. Denene Millner Books/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2020.

A picture book about the bond between a mother and daughter. (Also a Caldecott Honoree)

Craft, Jerry. *New Kid*. Quill Tree Books. 2019.

A graphic novel about a boy who is one of only a small number of students of color in his grade at a new school. (Also a Newbery Award winner)

Slade, Suzanne. *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*. Harry N. Abrams, 2020.

A picture book that tells the life story of poet Gwendolyn Brooks.