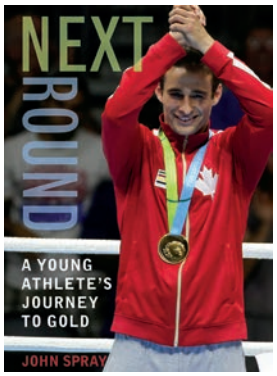
Next Round

READING GUIDE



Story Summary

Arthur Biyarslanov's journey to competitive boxing was not easy. As a small child he fled Chechnya with his family, dodging bullets and rocket fire and fording a freezing river. As a young Muslim refugee he faced hardships and hostility in his new homes in Azerbaijan and Toronto. Soccer became his refuge, and he learned two languages by playing the game with his new friends. In Toronto, he joined a league and quickly became their star player. A broken leg left him weakened and he turned to boxing to keep his strength up. Soon it became his new love. After many hours of hard work, he started to win his bouts. And by the age of twenty the "Chechen Wolf" was a champion amateur boxer, winning gold for Canada, his new homeland, at the 2015 Pan Am Games. That medal earned him a shot at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro—the next round for this talented boxer and determined survivor.

John Spray grew up in Indiana and spent years as a successful amateur gym rat and boxing fanatic. He has been a Private Investigator in Toronto for forty years and is the owner and founder of Mantis Investigation. John also sponsors the annual John Spray Mystery Award for excellence in mystery writing for children.

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BISAC Codes
JNF007100 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Biography & Autobiography / Sports & Recreation
JNF054110 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Sports & Recreation / Olympics
JNF053240 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Social Issues / Emigration & Immigration
JNF053070 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Social Issues / Homelessness & Poverty

Reading Level
Fountas & Pinnell : X | Lexile measure : 1020L

Book Clubs

This guide has been developed for use in classroom book clubs/literature circles. Book clubs support and develop the love of reading as well as help students build comprehension and support the development of collaborative learning and critical thinking.

In book clubs students:

- meet in small groups (4–8) to discuss a book they are reading
- take turns assuming a leadership role within the group
- meet regularly and set the pace for their reading
- take ownership for their learning by:
  - selecting the book they will read (usually from a predetermined list provided by the teacher)
  - determine the pace of the reading
  - prepare for and run their discussions.

Prior to beginning with book clubs, teachers:

- take time to develop and nurture whole class discussions about books while modeling the skills and behaviors needed to collaborate and work together as a book club
- provide guidance, modeling, and support
- become familiar with all texts prior to making them available to students

During book club discussions, teachers:

- develop a schedule for book clubs ensuring they provide time for reading and discussion
- provide mini-lessons for any needs that may arise
- monitor through observation and conferring as well as supporting student self-assessment

Key elements:

- Groups meet on a regular basis, with time provided in class to read and discuss their book
- Students use a "reader's notebook" to write notes, comments, insights, and questions while they read
- Students bring their reader's notebook to each meeting to support their discussion
- Discussion topics may emerge from the students as they read; however, the teacher provides discussion topics and provocations to help students engage in rich discussions (suggestions are provided in this guide)
- Group meetings are collaborative, with each group developing a set of norms for their group
- The teacher serves as facilitator
- Assessment is grounded in teacher observation, student conversations, and student self-assessment
- Book clubs promote a love of reading

Thinking about Assessment…

This Discussion Guide offers a range of prompts, tasks, and provocations to support Book Club discussions. While using this guide in the classroom, teachers have a number of opportunities to use observation, conversation, and product to assess student thinking and learning. The tasks and prompts offered in this guide are designed to support discussion, sharing, and student thinking while providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate comprehension, extension of thinking, and critical literacy. Assessment can include: self-assessment and peer assessment, conversations with students through teacher/student conferences; group discussions; and products created by the students.

For the teacher and student to have a clear, common understanding of the expectations and criteria to achieve success while reading the novels, educators develop learning goals based on curriculum expectations and share them with the students in language they can understand. Then together, the educator and students co-create criteria to make the path to success visible and clear.

These success criteria are posted in the classroom, are visible to all students, and may be revised and edited based on the learning and understanding of the students.

As the Book Club meetings are collaborative and begin with the groups developing a set of norms for their group, it is suggested that all groups open each meeting with a reflection of the previous discussion. These reflections can highlight what went well during the discussions; what needs to improve in these discussions; and considerations for the current discussion.

Discussion Guide:

This discussion guide will offer a variety of tasks, discussion prompts, and questions to provoke thinking and deepen comprehension before, during, and after reading of the novel. These are suggestions only and it is certainly not necessary to complete the entire list of suggested activities/questions. Educators are encouraged to make choices based on the strengths, needs, and interests of the students.

Highlighted Curriculum Expectations
Ontario Ministry of Education Language Arts Curriculum K–8

Oral Communication
1.2 Active listening strategies
1.3 Comprehension strategies
1.4 Demonstrating Understanding
1.5 Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts
1.6 Extending Understanding

Reading for Meaning
1.4 Demonstrating Understanding
1.5 Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts
1.8 Responding and Evaluating Texts

Reading: Understanding Form and Style
2.1 Text Forms
2.2 Text Patterns
2.3 Text Features

Reading: Reflecting on Reading Skills and Strategies
4.1 Metacognition

Writing: Using Knowledge of Form and Style of Writing
2.1 Form
2.3 Word Choice
2.5 Point of View

Media Literacy: Understanding Media Forms, Conventions, and Techniques
2.1 Form

Media Literacy: Creating Media Texts
3.4 Producing Media texts

During this book club study, students will use sticky notes and their Reader's Notebook to note their predictions, questions/new wonderings, new vocabulary, and their own metacognitive process.

For more information about Reader's Notebooks:
http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Guide_Lit_456_Vol_2_Assessement.pdf

Materials:
Reader's Notebook and/or sticky notes per student

Directions:
Give each student a pad of sticky notes. While they read, have them write down questions and reactions on the sticky note and adhere the note to the relevant pages. The notes could relate to:

- new vocabulary
- predictions about what will happen next
- identifying when their predictions were correct with a checkmark
- things they are surprised by
- questions they have while reading

If you have students who find it disruptive to stop in the middle of reading, suggest that they pause between each chapter instead and think back on what they have just read.

Students should use the notes during book club discussions to share their thinking.

Students will record the observations from their sticky notes into their Reader's Notebook.

Before Reading

The purpose of these tasks is to develop knowledge and understanding as well as to prompt conversation and discussion about the topics mentioned throughout this novel. In doing so, the hope is that readers will become engaged as they read, comprehend the issues presented, and develop a sense of empathy for the characters.

1. Use a Reader's Notebook to record strategies used before, during, and after reading that help you improve as a reader. For example, did preparing a list of questions to answer help you to find the information you needed from the biography? How did you know you were or were not understanding the story?

2. Quickly scan through the text and identify the non-fiction text features of the story. How will they help you as you read and understand the book?

3. Using Google Earth or a map of the world, locate Chechnya, Azerbaijan, and Toronto. Conduct some research to learn about the conflict between Chechnya and Russia. Why were the Chechen people in conflict with Russia during this time?

4. As a group, brainstorm some difficulties encountered by families living during a war. Use your background knowledge and the research conducted above to discuss displacement from homes, availability of food, personal safety, the necessity of gathering person power to fight as soldiers, etc.

5. Research immigration patterns in Toronto between 1990 and 2010. What is the difference between a refugee and a landed immigrant? Why would Toronto be attractive to both groups?

During Reading

Chapters 1–4:

1. While reading the first few chapters of the book, use a T-chart to record the perspective of the two groups:
   - the soldiers
   - the refugees

How do their perspectives differ? Cite evidence from the text to support your thinking.

2. Think about the research you conducted prior to reading. Did this help you understand the book? Does the author provide an accurate portrayal, or were there some differences?

3. We are hearing about the Chechen war from the perspective of a child. How does this build empathy for the families who were caught during the war? Would the text be different if it centered on an adult's story? If so, how?

4. Discuss any notes written in your Reader's Notebook or on your sticky notes with your group.

Chapters 5–8

1. The author inserted real photos throughout the book. How did this impact your reading and understanding of the text?

2. How did you feel about the journey Arthur and his family had to take in order to escape?

3. Word choice is an important writing tool to help present a person's mood or their perspective on an event in the text.
   - Identify the descriptive words used to describe life in: Chechnya, Azerbaijan, and Toronto
   - Identify and record the words used by the author to communicate the feelings of Arthur and his family during their struggle to leave Chechnya during the war; their passage to Azerbaijan; and their journey to Toronto.

4. How do the photos contribute to the telling of Arthur's life story? Was it important for the author to include the eight dedicated photo pages? Why? Why not?

5. Discuss any notes written in your Reader's Notebook or on your sticky notes with your group.

Chapters 9–12

1. On pages 64–65, we read about Arthur's injury during a very intense soccer game. Were you surprised to read that Arthur finished playing the game before letting anyone know he was injured? Why? Why not?

How would you describe Arthur after reading about this incident?

2. Using the stated and implied information we learn about Arthur, create a biosketch (biographical sketch) of Arthur. A biosketch is a short, one or two-paragraph summary of someone. A complete biography includes all aspects of a person's character, life, and achievements, while a biographical sketch is much shorter and more specific. Include words to describe Arthur's character.

3. Design a timeline highlighting the important events in Arthur's life during these chapters.

4. Discuss any notes written in your Reader's Notebook or on your sticky notes with your group.

After Reading

1. Refer back to your Reader's Notebook. As a group, discuss the strategies recorded that were helpful to you before, during, and after reading. Which strategies were the most effective in helping you improve as a reader?

2. A biography is an account of someone's life written by someone else. What are the characteristics of this text that identify it as a biography? Identify the language patterns and structures used to support this form of writing. Do you think writing the book as a biography was an effective way of sharing Arthur's story? Why? Why not?

   Extension: Write a biography of someone else's life. What text features will you include in this biography to make it interesting and effective in communicating the important events in his/her life?

3. Discuss how the themes of survival and courage are presented and developed in this book. Cite stated or implied evidence from the text to support your thinking. Are there other themes presented to the reader?

4. Extend the ideas of survival and courage as demonstrated by Arthur and his family as they made their journey to Canada to another group of refugees who have journeyed to your own area. Choose a group of your choice and research some information behind their stories:

   - How are their experiences similar/different?
   - What were the reasons these refugee groups left their home country? Do we know how this group has adjusted to their new life in your region? What were some of the difficulties in their adjustment?
   - What agencies/ support systems are available to newcomers after arriving in your area?

5. Creating your Photo Story:

   Gather a series of pictures to tell a story about you. Ensure the pictures are organized in chronological order. You may choose to describe an important event or time in your life to date.

   As a group, discuss the purpose and importance of captions.

   Include captions for each photo.

   Share your photo story with a partner.

This task can be modified for those who may not have photos to share. Using Google Images, gather photos of an interesting event/place. Organize the photos in order and provide a caption for each photo.

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