

Educator Information and Directions

This PDF provides the materials that accompany the lesson “*The Crossover*.” This PDF contains activities for students to complete before, during, and after they read the poem. Highlighted words within the poem indicate vocabulary words that will be referred to in assessment questions.

Student Reading Guide

Before Reading

- Read some information about today’s poem.
- Start thinking about the topics in the poem by answering the questions.

During Reading

- Read the **Purpose for Reading**.
- Read the poem.
- Take notes and annotate what you are reading.

After Reading

- Reflect on what you have read by answering the questions.
- Complete the **Online Assessment** questions.

Taking Notes and Annotating

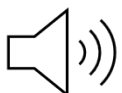
Here are some strategies for annotating and taking notes **in the text itself**:

- **Highlight** or underline important words or words you don’t know.
- **Circle** key concepts and ideas.
- Use abbreviations or symbols. For example:

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| ? | To show confusion or questions |
| FL | To identify figurative language |
| ★ | To identify imagery |
| SD | To identify sound devices |

Here are some strategies for annotating and taking notes **in the notes section** under the text:

- Summarize key points in your own words.
- Write brief comments and questions.

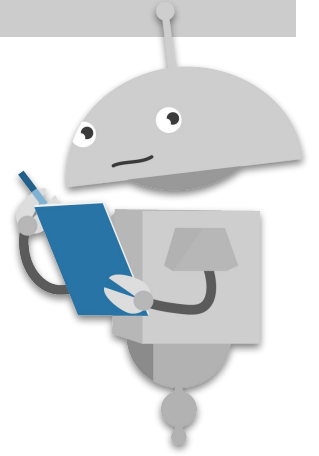


If you would prefer to listen to the poem, click the link to access an audio recording: [Link to Audio Recording of Poem](#)

Before Reading

Today's poem is an excerpt from the verse novel *The Crossover* that takes place during an action-packed basketball game. The main character is playing without his "lucky charm" for the first time.

Before you read today's poem, think about what makes you feel confident.



What items, people, or inner thoughts help you to feel confident? Do you have a "lucky charm," like a favorite hat, that you feel brings you good luck? Write or draw to share your thoughts below.



If you could only watch or play one sport, which would it be and why? Write or draw to share your thoughts below.

During Reading



Purpose for Reading: Today’s excerpt is from *The Crossover*, a verse novel about a boy who follows in his dad’s footsteps to become a school basketball legend. Josh has always seen his hair, or “wings,” as a good-luck charm and a connection to his dad. In the chapter, titled “Josh’s Play-by-Play,” you will see Josh fly on the basketball court without his “wings” for the first time after his hair is cut. As you read, think about how elements of poetry help to develop the mood.

While you read, remember to annotate and take notes! You can review strategies for annotation on p. 1 of this PDF.

Excerpt from *The Crossover*, by Kwame Alexander

Josh’s Play-by-Play

(1) At the beginning
of the second half
we’re up twenty-three to twelve.
I enter the game
(5) for the first time.
I’m just happy
to be back on the floor.
When my brother and I
are on the court together
(10) this team is
unstoppable,
unfadeable.
And, yes,
undefeated.

(continued)

Notes

During Reading (continued)



Excerpt from *The Crossover*, by Kwame Alexander
(continued)

(15) JB brings the ball up the court.

Passes the ball to Vondie.

He shoots it back to JB.

I call for the ball.

JB finds me in the corner.

(20) I know y'all think

it's time for the pick-and-roll,

but I got something else in mind.

I get the ball on the left side.

JB is setting the pick.

(25) Here it comes-

I roll to his right.

The **double-team** is on me,

leaving JB free.

He's got his hands in the air,

(30) looking for the dish

from me.

(continued)

Notes

During Reading (continued)



Excerpt from *The Crossover*, by Kwame Alexander
(continued)

Notes

Dad likes to say,

When Jordan Bell is open

you can take his three to the bank,

(35) cash it in, 'cause it's all money.

Tonight, I'm going for broke.

I see JB's still wide open.

McDonald's drive-thru open.

But I got my own plans.

(40) The double-team is still on me

like feathers on a bird.

Ever seen an eagle soar?

So high, so fly.

Me and my wings are—

(45) and that's when I remember:

MY. WINGS. ARE. GONE.

Coach Hawkins is out of his seat.

Dad is on his feet, screaming.

JB's screaming.

(continued)

During Reading (continued)



Excerpt from *The Crossover*, by Kwame Alexander (continued)

(50) The crowd's screaming.

FILTHY, PASS THE BALL!

The shot clock is at 5.

I dribble out of the double-team.

4

(55) Everything comes to a head.

3

I see Jordan.

2

You want it that bad? HERE YA GO!

(60) 1 . . .

Notes

Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. HarperCollins

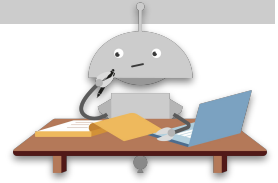
Children's Books, 2014.



After Reading



If you were going to film this poem as a scene for a movie, who would you cast to play Josh, the speaker of the poem? What characteristics does your selected actor share with Josh?



What words or phrases from the poem best capture its mood? Find 2-3 quotes from the poem and explain how they help to develop the mood.

After you are done reading and answering these questions, you may want to ask yourself some more questions, like...

- What figurative language is used in this poem?
- What is the setting of this poem?

You may even want to read the poem a second or third time! When you feel ready, go ahead and take your assessment!