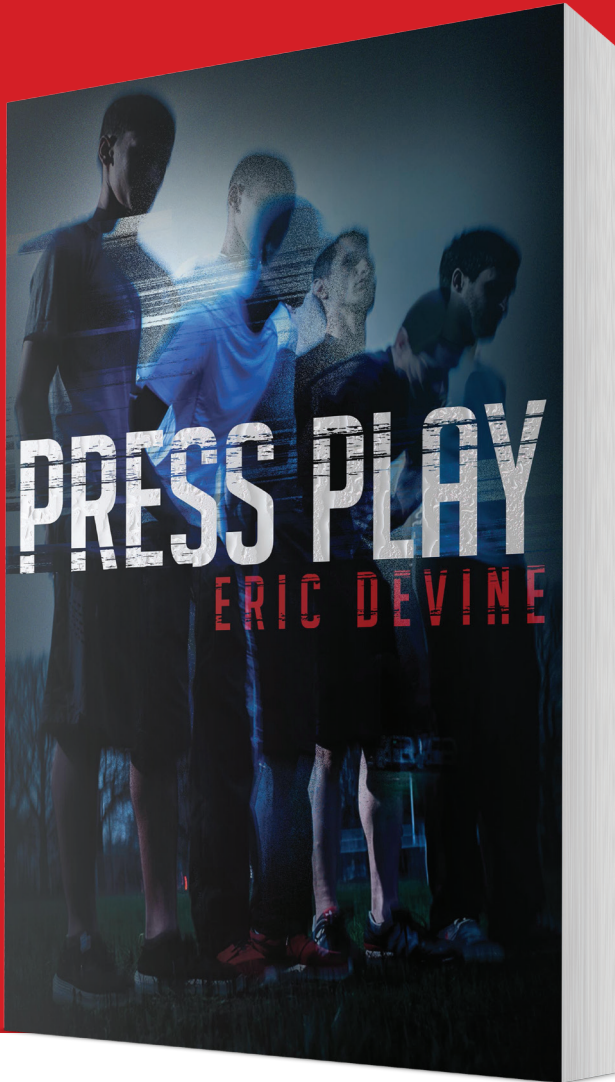


DISCUSSION & PROJECT GUIDE

Presented by RUNNING PRESS KIDS



PRESS PLAY

by Eric Devine

LEXILE INFO:

Lexile level: 570L | Lexile code: HL (high-low)

ABOUT THE BOOK

Greg, a wannabe filmmaker, captures footage of violent, extreme hazing by his high school's lacrosse team. Will his exposé be his ticket out of town or a death sentence? With unflinching honesty, *Press Play* explores the realities of sports culture and the choices we make to get through each day intact.

“There’s so much sweat, blood, and adrenaline that you almost need to wring out the pages.” –BOOKLIST

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ERIC DEVINE is a writer, high-school English teacher, and educational consultant. He is the author of *Tap Out* (a YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Readers), *Dare Me*, and *This Side of Normal*, and lives and lives in Waterford, NY, with his family. He can be found online at ericdevine.org and via Twitter [@eric_devine](https://twitter.com/eric_devine).

ISBN 9780762455126 | Paperback | Price: \$9.95 | 12.00 CAN | 5 3/8 x 8 1/4 | 368 Pages | eBook ISBN 9780762455539 | Subject categories: Juvenile Fiction / Social Issues / Bullying / Peer Pressure

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Greg states that the bros' taunting about his weight is "...fuel for my workout, for my motivation to get out, no problem" (23). Explore Greg's motivation for change. What does he want? What obstacles stand in his way of achieving his desires? Define which obstacles are within his control and which are not.
2. Alva says that there is a difference between being hurt and injured (54). Justify this statement, from his point of view. Explain how he would know the difference between the two. On what experiences might he base this assumption?
3. While secretly filming the Warriors' lacrosse practice, Greg resists the "overwhelming urge" to save Kyle from a vicious act of hazing. Greg struggles with the need to record more violent evidence and the desire to capture the grueling action on film (55-7). Identify with his inner conflict, of watching instead of helping. Consider how this moment in the story serves as Greg's 'point of no return.'
4. In a straight-forward manner, Ella asks Greg if he is a liar (75). Consider how Ella challenges Greg's integrity in this scene and in others. On a larger scale, analyze how the themes of truth and lies are explored throughout the story.
5. In Chapter 10, Greg refuses to surrender his phone to Alva by hiding it deep in his flesh. Explain how, in this scene, Greg's weakness became his strength, not only on a physical level, but a personal one, as well. Discuss how this act became a defining moment for him. Consider how this act affected Quinn, Ella, and, eventually, Ollie.
6. Explain why Ella chose to tell Greg about her attempted suicide (146). Explain what her willingness to share her pain with Greg reveals about their relationship. Tell how surviving that experience empowers her.
7. During lacrosse practice, Principal Callaghan states "Put away your fear of being hurt and replace it with your desire to inflict pain. Then, and only then, will you ever succeed" (163). Analyze this statement. Is it true that, to succeed, one must put away fear? Is it true that one must inflict pain on order to achieve success? How so?
8. Consider the notion of 'pain' as a plot thread as it is woven throughout the novel. Name instances when pain – emotional or physical – serves as motivation, empowerment, and triumph. Note instances when pain is the catalyst for expressions of compassion, forgiveness, and the reflection of truth. Reveal how the transformational experience of being in and enduring pain affected Quinn, Ollie, Ella, Kyle, and Greg.
9. Explain why, on page 167, Ella feels that the Greg's final version of the video lacks the depth required to make a real difference. Discuss why violent drills such as 'bull in the ring', 'knucklehead', and 'face slam' lack the visual impact to create outrage among the study body and school administration. If her assumption is true, what does this say about society, as a whole?
10. Interpret Greg's intent in the statement, "This truth stuff has so many consequences" (268). Define the term 'truth stuff.' List the causes and effects of the situations, or 'stuff', he is referring to.
11. Greg challenges Ella's desire to present the final video project as her own by saying, "Haven't you been a victim enough" (291)? Discuss his intention in doing so. Justify his statement from his point of view.
12. Greg and Ella's final film project, 'Film This', is comprised of brief, subliminal clips documenting hazing embedded in a video celebrating the Warrior's winning tradition (346-8). Explain how the structure of the film serves as a metaphor for the perception of the Warrior tradition and the secrets that lie within.
13. Examine how Greg, Ella, Ollie, and Quinn transform by the end of the story. Tell how their issues were resolved, and if or how their desires were met. And, in the end, Greg comments that "Alva's eyes glisten, and it must be from anger, from the restraint it's taking him to listen to me. But something tells me it's not" (351). Could it be that Alva's character transformed in some way, as well? Explain your answer.

CCSS Alignment: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.10, RL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1

PROJECT:

Create a Book Trailer for PRESS PLAY

This weight loss transformation video was supposed to be the crowning jewel for Blint's class, my middle finger to the school. But it has morphed into something much greater (358).

INTRODUCTION

Note: Book trailers are short and interesting because they focus on the highlights of a book without giving the entire story away. To make a book trailer, its creator must have a solid understanding of the story's beginning, middle, and end, as well as four basic elements that make the project great. Analyze the four basic elements below as they pertain to Press Play.

CHARACTER

- What are the characters' fears, strengths, weaknesses, and innermost desires?
- How do characters relate to one another in the story setting?

SETTING

- Where does the story take place?
- How does the setting relate to the characters' interactions or experience?

CONFLICT

- What is the problem or situation presented in the story?
- How can this conflict be revealed without giving the whole story away?

A HOOK

- The element of suspense intended to convince the viewer to read the book.
- A cliffhanger that causes the viewer to feel compelled to find out what happens in the story's end.

Note: Creating book trailers requires the use of certain skills and creative techniques. In well-crafted book trailers, the implementation of these skills and techniques seems almost invisible to the viewer. Analyze the creative techniques below as they pertain to making a book trailer for Press Play.

WORDS

- How are words used?
- Were quotations from the text used?
- What purpose do they serve in the trailer?

SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC

- What kind of sound effects or music appeal to you?
- How do sound effects reflect various aspects of the story's plot, characterization, theme, or setting?

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- How does the use of particular highlights depict the message of the story?
- What aspects of the story have been revealed in the trailers?

SETTING

- Where does the story take place?
- Why is this setting important to the story?

NARRATION

- Who is speaking?
- How did the narration reflect the tone and emotion of the story?

VISUALS

- Are you using video clips, still images, or a combination of both?
- Are the visuals successful in setting up a compelling hook?

For practice, access www.booktrailersforreaders.com watch book trailers closely. Evaluate the effectiveness of the book trailers you observe using the points listed above.

PART ONE: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Note: Effective book trailers concentrate on only a few main characters and leave the minor characters out. This technique enables the book trailer creator to focus on the most important aspects of the story. And, it is not necessary to present characters as they physically appear in the story. Symbols for their characterization can be useful in revealing the individual's innate nature. Consider the effect of color, or a symbol, or even an animal to represent that character in the book trailer.

Decide upon the characters you desire to depict in the book trailer. It is suggested to keep the number limited to five.

Consider and the describe the following aspects of their character:

- Physical features
- Fears
- Strength
- Weakness
- Nemesis
- Innermost desire

Consider characterization in a symbolic sense by:

- Choosing a color to represent each character.
- Choose an animal to represent each character.
- Choose a sound to represent each character.
- Choose a tone to represent each character.

PART TWO: PINPOINT PLOT POINTS

Note: *Overloading the book trailer with too many details causes it to be slow and uninteresting. It is best to choose a few plot points and then develop those through revealing specific detail. Pick a few key moments in the story and elaborate upon them. Highlight what makes a particular key moment memorable or interesting. Perhaps, state how it creates a plot twist, or how it sets up a conflict between characters. Maybe tell what is at stake if something horrific takes place or ask a compelling question of some sort.*

Craft your script by considering three major plot points – beginning, middle, and end. Decide upon those that are full of tension and drama.

Each plot point should build upon the other. For example:

- Beginning – Greg Dunsmore is... (describe his character and predicament)
- Middle – If Alva and the bros ... (describe their motivation for evil)
- End – Then ... (consider the consequences for Greg and/or the Warriors)

Think of specific details that occurred in the story that support the major plot points.

- Tell what happened in the plot point.
- Tell who was involved in the plot point.
- Tell the consequences of the plot point.

PART THREE: IMAGES, TEXT, AND SOUND

Note: *Visualize images, use of text, and sounds that depict the details stated in the prior exercise. Remember that the images do not necessarily need to reflect the physical features of the characters. For example, if a character is angry then a picture of a raging fire might best express the emotion. Or, if a character is kind and gentle, perhaps a photo of a rainbow or a daisy might suit the situation. Consider both the setting and mood, as well. Let your imagination run wild in this lesson. Your good work here will pay off later.*

List and discover options for visual images that reflect the intended message of the specific details listed in Part Two.

Make certain that the selected images show the intended mood, theme, emotion, or action depicted in each detail.

Create a storyboard for your book trailer. Match script to images. Organize images, text, and sounds in your intended sequence using a storyboard template or on individual file cards.

Transfer your images, text, and sounds into a digital format and...it's show time!

CCSS Alignment: *W.9-10.3, W.9-10.3.a, W.9-10.3.c, W.9-10.3.d, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.6, W.11-12.3, W.11-12.3.a, W.11-12.3.c, W.11-12.3.d, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.6, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3*

REFERENCE:

Book Trailers for Readers. Web. 9 Sept. 2014. <http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/>

Guide written by author DEB GONZALES, a former classroom teacher, school administrator, and educational consultant. She earned her MFA in writing for children and young adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and has published several early-readers. To review the wide variety of guides she's created, access her website at www.debbiegonzales.com.



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