

A Standards-aligned Educator's Guide for Ages 12-18

JUMPED IN

About the book:

Sam has the rules of slackerhood down: Don't be late to class. Don't ever look the teacher in the eye. Develop your blank stare. Since his mom left, he has become an expert in the art of slacking, especially since no one at his new school gets his intense passion for the music of the Pacific Northwest—Nirvana, Hole, Sleater-Kinney. Then his English teacher begins a slam poetry unit and Sam gets paired up with the daunting, scarred, clearly-a-gang-member Luis, who happens to sit next to him in every one of his classes. Slacking is no longer an option—Luis will destroy him.

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 9

About the author:

*Patrick Flores-Scott was, until recently, a long-time public school teacher in Seattle, Washington. He's now a stay-at-home dad and early morning writer in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Patrick's first novel, *Jumped In*, has been named to the 2014 YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults list, a Walden Award finalist, a Washington Book Award winner, an NCSS/CBC Notable Book for the Social Studies, and a Bank Street College Best Books of 2014. He is currently working on his second book, *American Road Trip*. Learn more about Patrick by accessing his website at patrickflorescott.com.*



Discussion Questions:

That was then (pg. 3).

- Consider the depths of loss Sam experienced when leaving the friendships and lifestyle he once enjoyed in Aberdeen.
- Examine the unfairness of his being forced to move to the Seattle area.
- Explore how Sam's move affected his ability to trust others, and, even, to trust in himself.

He's got the gnarliest, sickest scar on his neck – the side of his neck facing me (pg. 9).

- Examine Sam's assumption that Luis became scarred as a result of a violent act. Are his thoughts justified? Explain your answer.
- Discuss Luis's personification poem. Do you think he feels that the scar is gnarly and sick, as well? How so?
- Determine how the scar personifies feelings of shame and misunderstanding for both Sam and Luis.

I can do this. Because I've got a plan. I've got strategies that I've worked on for two whole years. I've got . . . the Rules: (pg. 21).

- Examine the cause and effect consequences of practicing "the Rules" for two years.
- Discuss how "the Rules" serve as a form of self-preservation, yet deepening Sam's feeling of isolation.
- Sam notices that Luis is also practicing "the Rules". Predict reasons why Luis feels the need to close off from others in this way.

Cassidy's turned into a rabid pit bull, hell-bent on breaking us, turning us into students (pg. 81).

- The term 'student' is defined as person actively learning. Discuss how Cassidy's persistence is transformational.
- Determine why, instead of discounting or assuming Sam and Luis cannot contribute, Cassidy seems to believe in their abilities and intellect. Discuss the effect her tenacious care has on "Luisandsam".

NCSS-CBC: Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year, YALSA Best Book for Young Adults

Discussion questions continued:

Bouncing is one thing, but shining is something different altogether (pg. 134).

- Compare and contrast Sam's practicing reciting poetry with Luis and shouting Nirvana lyrics in Aberdeen. In both instances, Sam engages in poetics and, yet, the scenarios differ greatly. How so?
- To "bounce" requires a poet to intentionally relax and fall into the rhythm of poem, while "shining" is the result of being noticed and celebrated. Explain why, for Sam, bouncing is easier than shining. Tell why Sam is resistant to shine.

The front door slams. He starts up the car and drives away (pg. 150).

- Examine Sam's relationship with his grandparents. Tell why they care, so deeply, for Sam's welfare. Consider his response to their concerns.
- Discuss the connection between loving someone and assuming accountability for another's actions.
- Determine how the act of closing doors serves as a metaphor for giving up on others, or oneself.

It feels good to try (pg. 163).

- Predict why, in this instance, Luis seems unconcerned about Sam's "running-off thing".
- Describe the metaphor of Tex Johnson's knob as it relates to Sam's situation.
- Examine the parallel between Luis encouraging and "working" on Sam and Sam "working" on Gilbert.
- Explain how feeling good making an effort and "trying" connects with practicing "the Rules".

Extension Activities:

Examine Luis and Sam's relationship, the themes explored in the novel, or any topic examined in the discussion questions above by writing a poem following the instructions presented in the text.

- Personification (pg. 11)
- The Diamante (pg. 78)
- The Nonet (pg. 87)

Enhance your work through use of alliteration, assonance, consonance (pg. 37-8), and metaphor (pg. 48).

Share your work with the class. Add a little Slam poetry bounce when you do (pg. 126). Click [HERE](#) for inspiration.

Don't underestimate the power of the quiet ones (pg. 195).

- Analyze the poem Superhero Super Slam. Discuss stanzas that you find to be compelling or truthful.
- Is there a secret strength in being a "quiet one"? Explain your answer.
- Examine why "quiet ones" are often overlooked or seen as weaker than others.
- Discuss how reciting poetry empowered both Sam and Luis – The Quiet Ones.

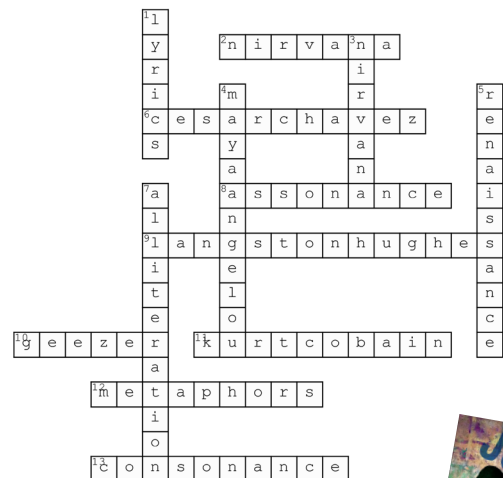
I'm so pissed at myself (pg. 252).

- Discuss how pre-judgement of Luis's situation plays a role in Sam's frustration with himself.
- Consider how, when a person is labeled in some way, their true nature is disregarded. Explain why this is so.
- Tell how each character's practice of "the Rules" created such a deep level of misunderstanding.
- In this scene, Sam wonders if he and Luis were friends. Were they? Explain your answer.

I unlatch the door to the cage and reach my hand out for Gilbert (pg. 264).

- Consider how Gilbert serves as constant reminder that Sam's mother has abandoned him. Explore the significance of Sam's desire to reach out and befriend Gilbert.
- Sam states that's he wants to hate Gilbert and to give up on everything, but he can't. Explain why this is so.
- Discuss how the act of unlatching the bird cage symbolizes Sam's willingness to open up to life once again.

Crossword Puzzle Answers:



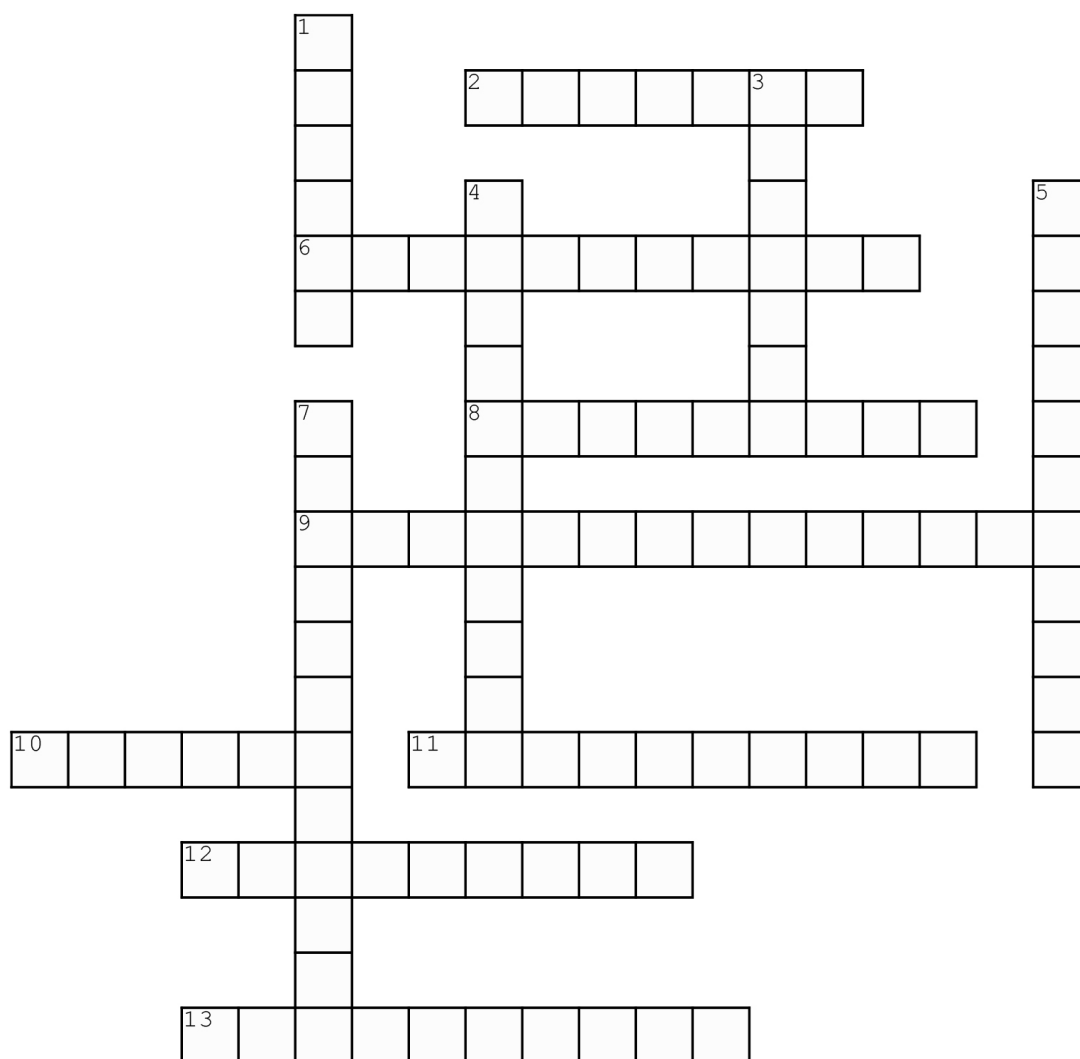
Common Core State Anchor Standards Alignment:

English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards for Reading: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.10
English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: SL.1, SL.2, SL.6
English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards for Writing: W.2, W.4, W.5, W.9

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JUMPED IN Crossword Puzzle



Across:

2. A legendary kick-ass rock-and-roll band (pg. 1)
6. Mexican-American labor leader and civil rights activist (pg. 278)
8. The repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words (pg. 38)
9. Important literary figure during the 'Harlem Renaissance' (pg. 11)
10. An old man or woman (pg. 207)
11. Singer, musician, and songwriter who formed the band Nirvana with Krist Novoselic (pg. 156)
12. A figure of speech making a comparison between two things that aren't alike but yet something in common (pg. 48)
13. Repetitive sounds produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase (pg. 38)

Down:

1. Words that make up a song usually consisting of verses and choruses (pg. 5)
3. An ultimate experience of some pleasurable emotion such as harmony or joy (pg. 1)
4. Poet, storyteller, and activist who wrote *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* (pg. 11)
5. The Harlem _____ (pg. 70)
7. The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of closely connected words (pg. 37)

