

(Ch.3-5) Let's Hear It for the First Grade! - Bad Boy

1. Why doesn't Walter's first-grade teacher think he should be promoted early to the second grade?
2. Why does Walter hit Manuel? Discuss Walter's punishment and whether you think it is fair.
3. What does Mrs. Bower read to her class when she gets upset?
4. Picture Walter's new neighborhood. Discuss and list some of the author's descriptive phrases and whether or not you think he was successful in painting a mental picture of his childhood home. Use specific details from the novel.
5. What is Walter's nickname for Mrs. Dodson?
6. Of which interests of Walter's did Mrs. Dodson not approve?
7. Although Walter is excellent at reading and spelling, far more attention is paid to his speech problems. Explain how you think this makes him feel and why.
8. Who helps Walter with arithmetic during the summer?
9. Whom does Mrs. Parker choose to be cookie monitors?
10. What happens in Walter's fight with Bunny? Explain why you think Walter behaves as he does in this situation.
11. What surgical procedure must Walter have after Bunny beat him up?
12. On page 35, the author takes a step back from his own life to give a description of the broader political and cultural climate of 1947. Is this good for someone to do when writing an autobiographical work? Why or why not?
13. Why does Walter prefer his name to Walter Myers?
14. Walter states that "beatings came easily in our neighborhood". Explain whether you think that beatings, as Walter describes them, constitute child abuse.
15. Walter recalls attempting to lynch another boy in the neighborhood. Discuss the

tone Walter uses when recalling the situation. Do you think he understood the seriousness of his actions? Do you think he should have been more severely punished for his behavior?

16. In what ways is Walter's community sensitive to racial differences? In what ways

is it insensitive to these differences?

17. In Mrs. Conway's class, whom does Walter hit for laughing at his speech problem?

18. What do you think of Mrs. Conway?

19. What is the name of the first book Mrs. Conway gives Walter to read during class?

20. Explain what you think Walter means when he comments that "the 'me' who read

the books....seemed more the real me than the 'me' who played ball in the streets."

21. What is the subject matter of Walter's first published poem?

Exit: Describe how bullying can negatively impact the person who is being bullied.

Chapter's 3-5 Vocabulary

Mimicking drafted serials rote integrate proceedings provoked
recuperating transit scenarios

(Ch. 6 & 7) Mr. Irwin Lasher - I Am Not the Center of the Universe

1. Recalling summer in Harlem, Walter comments that black people seemed to fit into three categories- churchgoer, entertainer or athlete. How does Walter come up with his three categories? What is necessary for people to think freely and creatively about their dreams, desires and identity?
2. What does Walter say is the main source of entertainment for young people in Harlem?
3. Where does learn what it means to be a boy?
4. Why does he hide his love for books? Do you think Walter is the only boy hiding something like this?
5. In the summer between fifth and sixth grade, who is Walter's best friend?
6. In Mr. Lasher's sixth-grade class, Walter's grades and behavior improve. Why do you think Walter does better in this class than in previous classes?
7. Why do you think Walter tells his father that his mother beat him rather than admitting the truth-that he was injured trying to hitch a ride o a taxi? Do you think Walter's lie is justifiable and why.
8. Why do you think Walter's mother responds as she does to his lie?
9. When Walter jumps from the church roof, from whom is he escaping?
10. Explain what events served to remind Walter that he was "not the center of the universe". How is the timing of these events ironic?
11. What does Walter's father do at home to pass the time as he mourns Lee's death?
12. In what sort of class is Walter enrolled in the seventh grade?
13. On occasion, where does Walter's father take the family as he tries to overcome his depression?

Exit: How do books and reading have both a positive and a negative effect on Walter?

Chapter's 6-7 Vocabulary

precise lilting charismatic leaflets bevy anatomy
transgressions excruciating inquiry resolute berated
vestibule
permeated incoherent distorted adversary derision
deflection alluded jetty

(Ch. 8 & 9) A Writer Observes-Sonnets from the Portuguese

1. Why do you think Walter finds it difficult to write about his own community and Harlem? What is ironic about his dilemma and the way he communicates it to readers?

2. Why do you think the author mentions the pages about slavery in his seventh-grade

American history book? Why does Walter, find it difficult to learn about the the basic unfairness of slavery in American history? (page 74)

3. How are Mickey and Walter different?

4. What is the purpose of the club the boys in Walter's class start?

5. What do the boys in the club get in trouble for doing?

6. Who scares the boys in class by pretending to talk to an officer in the hall?

7. On pages 85 & 86, Walter says, "What I was doing, without knowing it, was accepting the idea that whites were more valuable than blacks. I knew I would never be white, and therefore I wanted to be without a race". What did these realizations mean to Walter?

8. Why isn't Walter allowed to attend Eddie's party?

9. What sport does Walter enjoy playing regularly?

10. What interest does Walter hide from his teammates and friends?

11. What is the name of Walter's ninth grade teacher?

12. Walter becomes fascinated with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems as he learns

more about her life. Do you think a writer's work is more or less appealing when the reader knows something about the author's real life?

13. What is the name of the Japanese play that the ninth-grade class performs?

14. What special notion does Walter believe all of the SP kids take with them at the end of the school year?

15. Explain how you think Walter's father feels about his son's greatest achievements

being in reading and writing while he himself cannot read.

Exit: Predict-Will Walter begin to take his educational opportunities more seriously?

****There are no vocabulary words for chapters 7-8***