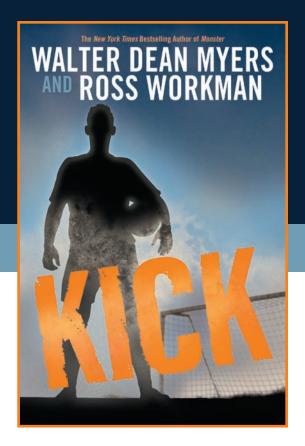
WALTER DEAN MYERS AND ROSS WORKMAN

DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the Book

The car Kevin is driving skids into a light pole. His friend Christy is in the passenger seat. He doesn't have a driver's license, and he is thirteen. Now he has a fast-approaching court date in addition to his fast-approaching soccer tournament. Kevin doesn't know what to do, what to say, or whom to trust . . . but if he wants to stay on the field and out of juvie, he has to figure it out, and fast.



Questions for Discussion

- 1. What are some possible meanings for the title of the novel? Think about literal and nonliteral interpretations for *Kick*.
- 2. While Walter Dean Myers and Ross Workman were working together, Ross wrote to Walter, "I feel that you can create the mind of a character so well and you can capture what kids say, how they feel." In the chapters written from Kevin's perspective, how does Ross capture the character of a teenager? Find specific examples from the novel to support your answer.
- 3. How do the authors begin Chapter 1? What information do you learn from the scene in the first chapter? Why might the authors have chosen to begin their novel that way? If you were telling the story, would you have chosen to begin it the same way or differently?
- 4. Kevin thinks, "I don't really get popularity, because most kids who are popular are mean, and the rest of the kids don't even like them" (p. 42). Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- 5. Why does Kevin resist telling Judge Kelly and Sergeant Brown why he was driving the car with Christy? Have you ever been in a similar situation? If so, what did you do? Do you think you made the right choice?
- 6. What is the moral of Sergeant Brown's story about the abandoned building (pp. 77–78)? Why does Sergeant Brown share the story with Kevin? How does this point apply to your own life?

- 7. In what ways does Sergeant Brown give Kevin a second chance?

 Do you think Kevin deserves a second chance? Does every person, no matter what he has done, deserve a second chance?
- 8. What is Kevin's reason for following Dolores? Does Kevin do the right thing in this case? In what other ways could he have handled the situation?
- 9. What event in Chapter 9 leads Kevin to finally open up to Sergeant Brown? Why do you think that event has this effect?
- 10. Why does Kevin get into the car with Christy and drive? What would you have done in the same situation?
- 11. Kevin thinks, "There's no glory for the team that comes in second" (p. 184). Do you agree? Why or why not? Can you think of a situation in which coming in second or losing a game might have a positive outcome?
- 12. The narrative about Kevin's legal trouble is intertwined with scenes from his soccer games. How do the events in Kevin's personal life influence how he plays and behaves on the field?
- 13. Describe the character of Mr. McNamara. How do you feel about him at the beginning of the story? How do you feel about him at the end? Do you believe he gets what he deserves?
- 14. Why do you think the authors chose to end the novel with Kevin missing the kick? If it were your story, how would you have ended it?



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Extension Activities

- 1. ROLE REVERSAL. The interactions between Kevin and Sergeant Brown are sometimes narrated by Kevin and sometimes narrated by Sergeant Brown. Pick a scene that takes place between the two characters and rewrite it from the perspective of the other character. Think about how the change in perspective affects the narration. What new thoughts are revealed by your new narrator? What details of the scene does your new narrator notice?
- 2. HEARING VOICES. Before he takes the penalty kick, Kevin hears his father's voice telling him where to shoot. Imagine that when Kevin started to drive Christy in Mr. McNamara's car, he similarly heard his father's voice. Compose a paragraph of advice that Kevin might have heard from his father.
- 3. WHAT'S THE REAL STORY? Sergeant Brown tells Kevin, "All the illegal immigrants were afraid of being deported" (p. 196). What does Sergeant Brown mean by this? Research illegal immigration. How do Americans feel about the issue, and what kinds of policies and laws do we have regarding illegal immigrants? What makes the issue of illegal immigration so controversial? What sorts of jobs do illegal immigrants often have? Under what kinds of conditions do they work? Present your findings to the class.
- 4. KICK IT BACK AND FORTH. Walter Dean Myers and Ross Workman wrote Kick by alternating chapters. Write a book with a friend using the same process. First meet with your friend to discuss the main characters; then each of you should compose a biography for the character from whose point of view you will be writing. Collaborate with your friend to make a general plan for each chapter, and write the chapters in alternating voices. Edit your composition until you are both satisfied with your work.
- 5. DEAR AUTHOR. Just like Ross Workman, write a letter to your favorite author. In addition to introducing yourself to the author, you might want to write about your favorite books by him or her and why you like them so much. Also in your mailing, include a piece of your own writing (e.g., a chapter from a story, a poem, a piece of nonfiction). Explain to the author why the writing that you are sharing is important to you.



About the Authors

Critically acclaimed author WALTER DEAN MYERS has garnered much respect and admiration for his fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for young people. Winner of the first Michael L. Printz Award, five Coretta Scott King Awards, two Newbery Honors, the first-ever Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the 2010 USBBY nomination for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, he is considered one of the preeminent writers for children. He lives in Jersey City, NJ, with his family. You can visit him online at www.walterdeanmyers.net.

When ROSS WORKMAN was thirteen, he wrote a fan email to his favorite author. When Walter Dean Myers wrote back and asked him whether he would be interested in writing a book, Ross was amazed—and incredibly excited. Four years later, Ross is seventeen and in eleventh grade at Westfield Senior High School. In addition to writing, Ross plays a sport every season: high school soccer in the fall, high school wrestling in the winter, and club travel soccer in the spring. He lives in Westfield, NJ.

