Acknowledgements

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About The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc.

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc. is a year-long language arts program dedicated to strengthening the character development and literacy skills of students. Since the organization’s founding, the Courage Curriculum has positively impacted the academic performance of more than 150,000 students in the Boston Public Schools and surrounding communities. Our programs are taught locally in sixth and ninth grade classrooms, and our reach has expanded to include a national essay contest and an international program taught in Thailand, Cambodia, Mozambique, and beyond.

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum was founded in 1991 to honor the life of Max Warburg, a courageous young boy who maintained steadfast determination and heartfelt hope in the face of his battle with leukemia. After his death, Max’s parents, Stephanie and Jonathan Warburg, believed that Max’s story could be an example for other children. They worked with the Boston Public Schools and experienced educators to develop The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum.

The program’s sixth grade curriculum, *Courage in My Life*, features carefully selected novels whose main characters are courageous young people. As students become familiar with Max and the literary characters featured in each novel, they come to understand their own capacity for courage. Their personal stories are shared in the essays they write as the culmination of this year-long curriculum. Each spring, The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum honors students whose work, chosen from thousands of essays, is published in an anthology titled *The Courage of Boston’s Children*.

www.maxcourage.org
The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Teachers provide suggestions for teachers on how to help students understand and appreciate literature, while engaging in meaningful classroom discussions and activities. Immersion in literature becomes a bridge for the development of students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Using these guides, teachers can help students acquire and refine the skills they need to be effective communicators and excellent readers and writers.

The Boston Public Schools English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have also been integrated into these Guides for Educators by incorporating the ELA educational principles of the frameworks, by embedding student products from the Student Requirements, and by helping students to explore the key concepts and questions in the Content Objectives. In addition the Guides for Educators employ a variety of pedagogical approaches for developing literacy and social skills.

**ELA Educational Principles**

The following education principles from the ELA Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have guided the development of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators.

**Reading**

Reading is an active, constructive and creative process that involves distinctive cognitive strategies before, during and after reading. Good readers access prior knowledge, establish purpose, preview the text, generate questions, make predictions, confirm and revise predictions, locate and clarify concepts that cause confusion, take mental or written notes, organize information into categories, inference to form ideas and conclusions, use a variety of word study strategies to understand unknown words, and use text features such as illustrations and headings to acquire meaning from print.

**Writing**

Writing is a process involving planning (pre-writing), context (drafting), reading aloud and reflecting on the product, collaborating with others (peer editing), revising (rewriting) and sharing the final product with others (publishing). Good writing reflects and stimulates thinking and allows students to find their own voices and to express themselves in an articulate, coherent manner. While it’s valuable to have a writing process in place for students, it’s advisable to allow students to use the writing process fluidly and not necessarily linearly so it fits the individual learning styles of students.
Social skills and values
While students develop their reading and writing skills, they can simultaneously develop their social skills and values. One important way for students to express themselves and become aware of other people’s points of view is by developing strong perspective-taking skills. The development of students’ perspective-taking skills contributes to the development of their conflict resolution skills. These social skills—together with learning to value trust, respect, love, peace, self-esteem, courage, perseverance and freedom—help students to develop healthy relationships while, at the same time, support the development of students’ literacy skills.

ELA Student Requirements
Students are expected to complete specific products for each grade level by the end of the school year. The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators may include one or more of the following student products: reading review, autobiography, letter, essay, perspective-taking exercise, and conflict resolution exercise. The completions of these products may be used to satisfy the BPS ELA Student Writing Product Requirements.

ELA Content Objectives
Key questions are challenging, thought-provoking, age-appropriate, and generally open-ended. They are designed to engage students’ interest before, during, and after reading. Key questions direct students’ exploration of the most important topics, themes, characters, events, values, perspectives, and literary conventions. The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators explore key concepts and questions through whole class, small group, partner, and individual discussions and activities.
Dear Teachers,

In 2016, the *Taking Sides* (Lexile 750) curriculum guide was revised and updated with a variety of helpful and interactive instructional activities/strategies and organizers.

This edition includes additional vocabulary instruction and tools that allow you to choose direct vocabulary instruction or independent vocabulary work for students. A few highlights include: the use of word walls, semantic gradients, and the Frayer Model. In addition, the vocabulary definitions have been revised to reflect student-friendly definitions. We encourage you to continue to inspire students to be word hunters and gatherers, and to develop a love of words and word consciousness. This edition also includes more detail on using context clues when determining word meanings, especially for students who may struggle with language.

To extend student comprehension, you will find the addition of the technique, *tableau*, which offers students the opportunity to understand and explore particular scenes through active engagement. In the Author’s Craft section in chapter 1, see the addition of a mini-lesson on *idioms*, which is a wonderful way to discuss the differences (and similarities) between languages, like Spanish and English, which are both highlighted in *Taking Sides*.

While the guide offers excellent guiding questions for stimulating discussions and journal writing, we encourage you to allow for students to generate their own questions while reading the book. One option is to use The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) designed by Dan Rothman and Luz Santana. The QFT is a powerful and practical method that engages students in thinking critically to develop their own questions. For more information about QFT, please visit: [http://rightquestion.org/](http://rightquestion.org/) or check out their book, *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions* (2011), Harvard Education Press. Another option for student questioning is to provide students with the *Depth of Knowledge* question stems by Dr. Norman Webb to assist them with deeper level questioning. See the appendix for those question stems.

The standards have also been updated to reflect the Common Core State Standards that have been implemented across the United States.

Enjoy this revised edition and the wonderful story written by Gary Soto.

Best,
Beth Herman-Davis, EdD
Dear Teachers,

This guide has been written according to current research and best practices in literacy instruction. There are many ideas and activities that will help you to explore the themes of the novel, deepening students’ comprehension, motivation and enjoyment. There are also activities designed to deal with specific instructional goals, such as writing skills and vocabulary development.

As part of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, this guide focuses significantly with the theme of courage. Students are encouraged to think about examples of courage in their own lives, and make connections between Max’s story and Taking Sides. This guide has been written to reflect the Boston Public Schools’ English Language Arts Standards and Requirements for sixth graders. Many of the questions, activities and projects are designed to help you meet these requirements. Throughout the guide, you will find activities which relate to the standard requirements in one of four ways:

- Activities that fulfill the sixth grade Language Arts Student Requirements (these can be found in the post-reading section);

- Writing assignments throughout the book which can become part of students’ writing portfolios;

- Research activities that require students to read other text genres, such as newspapers, which help to satisfy the requirement to read ten other genre pieces; and

- Activities and questions throughout the guide that directly relate to the focus themes and questions. The goal is to help prepare students on an ongoing basis for their final key questions essay(s).

In addition, you will find in this guide important updates pertaining to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, reflecting current shifts in text complexity, evidence-based analysis, and more. This guide has been revised to align with these Common Core State Standards (CCSS) shifts. The mini-lessons, long-term projects and extension activity labels highlight the CCSS anchor standards.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Marcia Harris
Dear Teachers,

Adolescence is at once a time of great challenge and of great possibility. As the psychologist Erik Erikson wrote, it is a time “when each youth... must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be.”

Facing what Erikson called the identity crisis requires enormous courage—the courage to be oneself. As the story of an eighth-grade boy struggling to reconcile his Mexican-American identity with his middle class social status, and his loyalty to his friends with his loyalty to himself, Gary Soto’s Taking Sides illustrates in realistic and compelling detail the conflict of perspectives so pervasive in the teenage experience.

In writing this guide I myself have responded to two challenges. The first was to link literature to life—that is, to encourage students to use Lincoln’s story to help them better understand the problems and opportunities they themselves face every day, in real life. The second challenge was to design activities that would cultivate in students the skills that we, as teachers, know to be essential for a lifetime of successful reading, writing, and communicating with others. Included in these activities are those which meet specific BPS/ELA requirements.

All of the activities and strategies suggested in this guide are intended to address these concerns. Where I have recommended particular instruction techniques, I have included a summary of research on the technique. Along the same lines, I encourage you to convey a sense of purposefulness in your teaching by reminding your students of the reasons you have chosen each activity.

I encourage you to make whatever changes to the guide you deem appropriate for your students. This guide is just that—a guide, and not a strict itinerary. I hope that you will find ways to expand upon the ideas that I have suggested, in ways that will make the most of your students’ interests and your own experience.

As I put this guide together, I found that my appreciation of Soto’s novel deepened with each question and each activity I thought of. I wish you luck and success as you and your students begin the process of finding your own meanings in Taking Sides.

Sarah Beck

1Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: W.W. Norton, 1958), 14.
Dear Teachers,

In these mini lessons, I have attempted to pull out the teaching points in the many activities that have been so thoughtfully planned in the original curriculum. The mini lessons are based on author’s craft, story structure and good reading habits. It is my hope that by pulling out the teaching point for these mini-lessons, teachers will be better able to use the curriculum within a workshop model.

I based these mini-lessons on the idea that teachers may teach the books in any order. Occasionally some of the mini-lessons are repeated in multiple books. This repetition is deliberate in order to provide more practice with the skill. I envisioned the curriculum being used in a classroom which allows opportunities for students to do a majority of the thinking involved in reading a text. Many curriculums provide guiding or discussion questions for students. However, when students read for enjoyment they may not have a list of discussion questions to help them discuss the book with a friend or lead them to understand the bigger concepts.

Explicitly teaching students to create these questions on their own, to make connections, notice character traits, recognize authors craft, etc. will make reading a more enjoyable and efficient process for them. Allowing conversations within small groups around their own questions and ideas about the books will prove to be satisfying for all. As they share opinions, debate character motivations, discuss connections and ask questions of their peers they will become more and more authentically engaged with the text.

This type of independence and group work does not come naturally to all children. In order for this type of learning to work well there needs to be a lot of up front teaching around the expectations, routines and group dynamics before students are to be set free. I have found the Literature Circle model described by Harvey Daniels to be very helpful in establishing book clubs in the classroom.

As you already know, providing a variety of reading opportunities the classroom is essential to effective reading instruction. At times you may read these or other books aloud to the class, have students read in pairs, or independently if the book is on their reading level or you may also provide some students with a listening center, where they can listen to the book on tape. I found that many of the books in this curriculum are available on tape or CD at local libraries.

As you use these mini lessons and the initial curriculum to provide explicit reading instruction and establish a classroom of enthusiastic, critical, independent readers, I wish you many animated conversations focused around great literature and the compelling topic of courage.

Enjoy,

Kelly K. Smith
Author, Mini Lessons
Guide Preview

Chapter Summaries
These summaries are a brief synopsis of each chapter. In addition to the plot, each synopsis will also highlight concepts or key elements of the story introduced in the chapter that students will need to understand in order to comprehend the story.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
For each chapter, there will be a set of suggested questions designed to develop comprehension of the story and stimulate discussion of the themes and the way in which they story relates to your students’ lives, particularly with respect to courage.

In addition, some of the questions and activities will also provide ideas for linking Taking Sides to the Boston Public Schools’ Key Questions and Close Reads with corresponding concepts from the Boston Public Schools Standards and Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). There will also be Key Questions in the “Post-Reading” section. As with all activities and questions, it is not necessary to answer or complete all questions. When you preview the guide, it may be helpful to make a preliminary list of those questions, which you feel will most benefit your students. If you decide to use some of the Key Questions and Close Reads to stimulate group discussion, you may want to jot down some ideas or comments made by students on large chart paper. Students can refer to these at a later date if they are independently working on a Key Question, particularly one from the Post-Reading questions.

You may wish to vary the placement of questions using some before and others after reading. Although questions during a story can be an important means of assessing comprehension, you may find that you do not want to interrupt the flow of this dramatic book. Before reading you can ask the entire class to reflect upon what you read aloud or you may give different questions to pairs of students. After reading, give your students time to discuss the questions with their partners and then ask them to share their responses with the class. If two pairs of students reach dissimilar conclusions, elicit further information from on why they feel the way they do.

A Special Note about Journal Writing: Dialogue Journals
In addition to providing students with the opportunity to reflect and share their feelings with their classmates, you may also want to ask students to keep a daily journal of their reactions to the day’s reading. Allow students to choose between the optional writing prompts provided in this guide and writing their own unsolicited feelings or responses. In addition, encourage students to write about examples of courage found in the story and in their own lives. One means of focusing students on a particular chapter and assessing their comprehension of the plot is to ask them to create a title for each chapter as they begin their journal entry. Encourage students to reflect on their own comprehension. If they realize that they are unable to summarize the chapter or recognize its main points, they may wish to reread it on their own or ask you or a classmate for assistance.
Another option is to confer students and ask them to retell you the story and/or specific chapter so you can assess the students’ comprehension and understanding. Why confer? According to Patrick Allen (2009), “Conferring is a keystone of effective instruction… and allows you to provide authentic context for ongoing assessment and responsive teaching.” Conferring allows you to gain insights and understandings into student thinking, as well as explore a student’s reading process. In the appendix you will find prompts to assist you with conferring with students. For more on conferring with students, check out: *Conferring: The Keystone of Reader’s Workshop* by Patrick Allen (2009).

Before beginning journal writing, assure students that their entries will not be graded and that unless they choose to share what they have written, their writing is private. One effective technique in journal writing is a *dialogue journal* in which students write and their teacher responds in the journal to the content (not to grammar or spelling) of the entry. In this way, dialogue journals can foster conversations between student and teacher. One strategy for making this project more manageable for a large class is to ask three students a day who would like a written response to volunteer to share their writing with you. Questions which may be particularly appropriate for a dialogue journal will be marked with {Dialogue Journal}.

You may also wish to provide time for students to share their writing with another student or with a small group of students. If you choose to pair students as “journal partners,” have students write only on the right hand pages of their journal, reserving the left hand pages for their journal partner’s response.

Sharing your own writing about the story with your class could be a way of enabling students to become more comfortable with this activity. Before asking students to share with one another, you may wish to discuss appropriate ways of listening and responding to others’ work. Remind students to begin their response by first offering a positive comment such as: *I like the way you ___________.* The responder can then state how he or she feels about something specific in the reader’s entry. Allow the reader to respond to the comment if he or she chooses to do so. Other students may also want to join in the conversation or read aloud parts of their journal that relate to the discussion.

After several sessions of modeling appropriate, positive responses to students’ sharing and providing opportunities for students to practice as a whole group, students will be able to share with a partner or small group. Sharing written responses to literature will not only encourage your students to continue writing, it will also enrich and deepen their understanding of this moving story. In the appendix, see a list of *Sentence Starters* for students to use when discussing their journal entries.
Vocabulary Development and Learning:
Understanding the meaning of words in a text is critical to student comprehension and reading success. There are a variety of avenues for students to learn words, including independent learning, direct instruction, and engaging routines and activities. For new vocabulary words to stick, it is imperative for students to see have multiple exposures to new words over time (Overturf, Montgomery, & Smith, 2015). McKeown et al. (1985) determined that it takes twelve exposures for a new word to ‘truly stick’. One way to offer students multiple exposures to vocabulary is to construct a word wall in your classroom.

Word Walls
Use words that are harvested from meaningful contexts, and provide support, references, and visual cues for students. Word walls can be used for pre- and post-assessments and study guides, and can provide students with reading support before, during, and after reading. They’re interactive by nature and can be incorporated into classroom vocabulary routines. See the appendix for an example. For more information on word walls, see: http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/World_Walls_-_A_Support_for_Literacy_in_Secondary_School_Classrooms.pdf

Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using a Dictionary
Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words whose meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.

Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct.

*Note: Often times, dictionary definitions are in terms that students may not understand, and in turn may cause further confusion. It is critical to discuss definitions with students to ensure that students understand the meaning of the word. An option here is to work together with students and revise the definitions into student friendly definitions.

More About Context Clues:
Using context clues to figure out unknown word meanings may be helpful for some students and a struggle for others. Frey & Fisher (2011) suggest teaching students to “Look inside the word and outside the word to see what you know.” When used in tandem, use of word parts (inside the word) and use of context (outside the word) can be very helpful (Sedita, 2011).

For dictionary work with context clues, offer students the following strategy (adapted from Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006).
If you read an unfamiliar word that you do not understand while reading:

1. **Look for context clues.** Reread the sentence and the surrounding sentences.
2. Can you break the word down into parts? (If not go on to step 3).
   a. Is there a prefix? What does it mean?
   b. Is there a suffix? What does it mean?
   c. Is there a root word? What does it mean?
3. **Guess the word’s meaning.**
4. Insert your meaning into the original sentence to see if it makes sense.
5. If needed, use the **dictionary** to confirm your meaning.

### Vocabulary Notebook or “Personal Dictionary”

Have each student keep a “personal dictionary” of vocabulary words. This dictionary might include words that you will review in class, as a group, but you should also encourage students to keep track of unfamiliar words they encounter and learn as they read independently.

The specific format of the notebook is, of course, up to you, the teacher, but the following suggestions may be helpful.

- Encourage students to relate each word to their prior knowledge. For example, for a word such as *ransacked* (Chapter 1), students may be able to recall having seen an apartment that was *ransacked* on a television show or movie. Have students use the word to describe an experience or explain knowledge that is familiar to them.
- Encourage students to make “semantic mappings” among related words. This will be an especially useful activity toward the end of the book, when they should have a substantial collection of words among which to make connections. For example, students might make a map of all the words that could be used to describe a basketball game, or an exceptionally skilled basketball player in action.
- Students may benefit from attempting to guess the meanings of words using syntax and context clues, before looking them up to evaluate the accuracy of their guesses.
- The inclusion of Spanish words and idioms presents a unique opportunity to explore etymology and the common root of Spanish and English: Latin. You may help students to understand more about the origins of the English language by asking them to think of English words that are related etymologically to Spanish words.

At the beginning of each section, there will be a short list of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words that you may wish to review with your students before beginning to read. Suggested English vocabulary words are included in each chapter section, along with Spanish words for which definitions are provided in the glossary of *Taking Sides*.

The definitions have been modified into kid-friendly terms from *Merriam-Webster Online: Dictionary and Thesaurus* and *Merriam Webster Learner’s Dictionary Online*. 
Author’s Craft
Throughout this guide, suggestions are offered for how to draw students’ attention to Soto’s use of specific literary devices, such as the following.

- **Style**: Soto uses language in the service of other literary purposes, such as to convey what a character is thinking or feeling, or to establish setting. Sentence structure and length, as well as word choice, are important features of style. Most importantly, consider what the use of Spanish words and idioms contributes to the novel.

- **Characterization**: How does Soto portray his characters realistically? Ask your students to think about what aspects of Lincoln’s character allow them to identify with Lincoln, and to recognize familiar people in Mrs. Mendoza, Roy, and Coach Yesutis.

- **Dialogue**: Soto’s dialogue has often been praised for its authenticity and power. Ask students to consider why this is so. Reading aloud or staging specific scenes are especially effective ways to help students appreciate the effect of dialogue.

- **Setting**: Soto tends to draw on his own childhood neighborhood as inspiration for his writing. Ask students if Lincoln’s neighborhood(s) seem “real” to them, and if so, how they think Soto creates this realism. In addition, you may also want to ask students to compare and contrast the two neighborhoods and discuss the similarities and differences and how those influence the story.

- **Metaphor and Imagery**: Given that Soto was a poet before he became a fiction writer, it is especially illuminating to pay attention to how Soto uses these poetic devices to heighten the atmosphere in this novel, as well as to illustrate the characters’ feelings and thoughts.

Mini Lessons
This revised version includes mini lessons based on author’s craft, story structure and good reading habits, supporting teachers using the Courage Curriculum within a workshop model. These mini lessons are based on the assertion that teachers may teach the curriculum novels in any order. Occasionally some of the mini-lessons are repeated in multiple books. This repetition is deliberate in order to provide more practice with the skill. We envision the curriculum being used in a classroom which allows opportunities for students to do a majority of the thinking involved in reading a text. Many curriculums provide guiding or discussion questions for students. However, when students read for enjoyment they may not have a list of discussion questions to help them discuss the book with a friend or lead them to understand the bigger concepts.

Explicitly teaching students to create these questions on their own, to make connections, notice character traits, and recognize authors craft will make reading a more enjoyable and efficient process for them. Allowing conversations within small groups around their own questions and ideas about the books will prove to be satisfying for all. As they share opinions, debate character
motivations, discuss connections and ask questions of their peers they will become more and more authentically engaged with the text.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life
Each chapter section offers suggestions for reading activities, which include reading aloud to the class or with partners, staging important scenes from the novel (see tableau), journal writing, and class discussion of themes and key questions. Encourage students to connect these key questions to the Central Key Question whenever possible.

Tableau is a strategy to help students extend their comprehension and relate literature to their own lives. What is a tableau? Students make a series of frozen pictures to help break down a story, analyze the sequence of events, identify the important aspects of the story, and bring it to life. Their expressive faces, body poses, and how they pose in relationship to one another creates a living picture or sculpture. In its simplest form students simply freeze to capture a moment in time. Teachers can apply this strategy to history, literature, or visual art, and they can expand the strategy to include dialogue. Why use a tableau? Tableau an effective strategy to develop student comprehension, as students must envision the action and events they read about in the text. This strategy supports students’ understanding through developing their senses, building and activating background knowledge, asking questions, determining what is important, making inferences, and synthesizing the material they have read. Perhaps most importantly, a tableau is fun and interactive. Adapted from Minneapolis Public Schools: What is Tableau?

Post-Reading Activities
The purpose of post-reading activities, which are discussed at the end of this guide, is to help students articulate their understanding of the overarching themes in the book. They may express this understanding by making connections between the themes and the events that have occurred in their own lives, or by identifying and interpreting portions of the book that illustrate these themes particularly well.
**Special Long-term Projects**

**Special Project: Portraits of Courage**

This is designed to be a class activity in which each student either 1. Interviews a person her/she knows (for example, a family member or a close friend) who has done something courageous in his or her life or perhaps has consistently demonstrated courage throughout his or her life, or 2. Researches a historical figure who has demonstrated courage and writes up a profile of that figure. The portraits can then be compiled into a book with illustrations and/or photographs, so that every student can have a copy of the book.

**Suggestions for Interdisciplinary Activities**

- **Art:** Have students work individually or in pairs to create a two-sided poster illustrating Lincoln’s two neighborhoods—the old and the new. They may choose to do this in a map format, using some of their newly learned vocabulary words to label people and things.

- **Social Students/History: Life Histories Within History:** On a bulletin board or large sheet of chart paper, create a time line of Mexican-American/Chicano history. Have students place Lincoln, his mother and his father on this time line (they will have to guess at his parents’ ages). You might ask them to consider how Lincoln and/or his mother might feel about important events in contemporary Mexican/American history, including issues of immigration policy.

- **Music:** Because rap is one of Lincoln’s favorite types of music (see Chapter 8), have students create a rap from Lincoln’s point of view about one of the following topics: basketball, his old and new neighborhoods, or Monica.
Guide to Flagged Activities

**Key Questions**
Key Questions from the Boston Public Schools’ Curriculum Framework and Citywide Learning Standards

**Close Reading**
Build critical thinking via re-reading, and analysis of a passage. {Resource}

**Author's Craft**
Discussion of a literary technique used by the author

**Dialogue Journal**
Signals a question or activity that lends itself to the *dialogue journal* method described in the Guide Preview

**Resources**
Refers you to our website [www.maxcourage.org], where you will find a list of suggested resources, by topic. These resources may be helpful in completing questions or activities, or in connecting your students with this novel and its themes.

**Oral Reading, Silent Reading**
Identifies questions or activities, which ask students to read passages aloud our silently, either independently or with a partner
About the Author

Among the most prominent Chicano contributors to the current American literary scene, Gary Soto has been lauded as a writer of humorous and insightful books for young adults. In most of his writing, Soto draws on his experiences growing up in the Hispanic-American community in Fresno, California, where he lived from childhood to adolescence.

Along with his Mexican-American parents and the rest of his family, Soto worked as a migrant laborer in his early childhood. When he was five, his father was killed in an accident and his family moved to a Mexican-American barrio on the outskirts of Fresno, a neighborhood which subsequently became the model for the setting of many of his novels and stories.

Although his family owned no books and had not encouraged him to read, Soto eventually realized his love for language and literature. He enrolled in college and began to write poetry. After graduating from California State University at Fresno, Soto went on to pursue a graduate degree in writing at the University of California, Irvine. He began to publish his poetry while he was in graduate school, in such esteemed journals as The American Poetry Review, The Nation, and The New Yorker. After receiving his master’s degree, Soto held teaching positions as San Diego State and the University of California, Berkeley, where he was a senior lecturer until 1992.

As his literary influences, Soto names Theodore Roethke, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, E.L. Doctorow, Pablo Neruda and Nathaniel West. Images are an essential feature of Soto’s writing, both of the product and of the process. As Soto himself says,

“It is these first images—these first losses when our street was leveled to the height of yellow weeds—that perhaps made me a writer… as with other writers, I wish to restore these losses, first with private, closed-eye moments in which I see our lives as they were, simple and full, and later in the shape of poems and prose, which may or may not live on the page.”


For more on Gary Soto: http://www.garysoto.com/
Social, Cultural, and Historical Background of *Taking Sides*

The History of Mexican-Americans

The term “Mexican-American” officially came into existence in 1848, with the end of the Mexican-American war and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which established the boundary between Mexico and Texas. At that time, Mexicans who lived north of the border were given the opportunity to either return to Mexico or to stay in the United States, with the promise of full U.S. citizenship. Articles VIII and IX of the Treaty promised them full rights as U.S. citizens, including the right to liberty, the right to own property, and the right to practice their religion.

When the Gold Rush began in California in the late 1850’s, however, this promise was often broken. European-Americans showed little respect for the fact that California had once been a part of Mexico, and that therefore the *californios* (Mexican-Americans who lived in California) had legitimate legal claims on the land they occupied there. *Californios* were pushed aside by Yankees, and shut out of lucrative mining operations. By the 1880’s, *californios* held only one quarter of the land they had owned when the Treaty of Guadalupe was signed.

Economy

Throughout most of the 20th century, Mexican-Americans have found it difficult to move into the mainstream economy, even though they played an instrumental role in supporting it. In spite of the political boundary between the U.S. and Mexico, the two nations remained economically independent. The *bracero* program (*bracero* being a Spanish term for “one who works with his hands”) permitted California growers to rely on Mexico as a source of cheap, unskilled, or semi-skilled temporary labor. And during World War II, laws were enacted to permit corporations such as the Southern Pacific Rail Company to use Mexican-Americans to fill a shortage of domestic manpower.

Perhaps because of their historically marginal role in the U.S. economy, Mexican-Americans have been at the forefront of the labor movement. This movement began with the 1928 Cantaloupe Strike to improve the wages and working conditions of agricultural workers, which was organized by Mexican-American workers. Many of these workers were not permanently employed, but rather migrated according to the seasons for each crop. In spite of the difficulty inherent in organizing laborers who stayed only a few months in each place before moving on, the unions eventually won out. The most influential and famous of union leaders, César Chávez, organized the United Farm Workers of America and won the support of citizens all over the United States during the 1965 Grape Pickers’ Strike. Due to the persistent pressure of Chávez and the UFWA, many grape growers agreed to negotiate legal contracts with their workers, and growers of other crops soon followed.
**Immigration**

There has been a steady stream of immigration across the U.S.-Mexican border ever since the border was established. Although in the early years settlement was concentrated in California and the American Southwest, today Mexican-American families live throughout the United States. Laws and policies governing immigration from Mexico and Latin America continue to be at the forefront of American politics and discourse, and the issues bear important consequences for all involved. You may invite your students to share what they know about immigration, their own families’ roots, and what these issues mean to them.

Below are a few resources for discussing and exploring immigration further with your students:

*Ten Myths about Immigration*: [http://www.tolerance.org/immigration-myths](http://www.tolerance.org/immigration-myths)


**Mexican-Americans Today**

Today, some people of Mexican descent prefer “Chicano” as an alternative to “Mexican-American.” The term “Chicano” has its origins in the movement during the 1960s and 1970s to promote ethnic pride among Mexican-Americans. As social worker Lydia Aguierre eloquently explains,

> “Chicano power simply means that in the finding of identity—that is, a right to be *as he is*, not Mexican, not Spanish, not either speaking “pure” English or a “pure” Spanish, but *as he is*, a product of the Spanish-Mexican-Indian heritage and an Anglo-Saxon (American…) influence.”[^3]

Not all descendants of Mexican ancestors appreciated the term in this way. Some disapproved of the negative connotations of the word (the meaning of which has roughly equated with “thief,” among other pejorative terms). Currently, many people prefer the term *Latino*, although this term refers more broadly to people of Latin American descent.

Whatever the name by which they choose to identify themselves, people of Mexican ancestry have made their mark on all facets of American public life. You may encourage your students to research famous Mexican Americans, and share their findings with their classmates. (Examples: Henry Cisneros, Federico Peña, Richard Rodriguez, Lee Treviño).

[^3]: Quoted in *The Mexican-American Family Album*. Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler (eds.)
Taking Sides: Synopsis

When eighth grader Lincoln Mendoza moves with his mother from San Francisco’s Mission District barrio to a tree-lined street in the upper-middle-class suburb of Sycamore, he faces formidable challenges to his sense of self. He and his mother are the only Mexican-Americans in their new neighborhood, and he is the only dark-skinned player on the basketball team at his new school. As a minority student, he faces prejudice from the basketball coach, as well as a lack of understanding from even his most well-meaning classmates.

Unlike the conventional literary hero, Lincoln is not larger than life, nor does he possess a tragic flaw. However, his story may be read as a heroic inner journey. Throughout the book, he confronts situations that force him to reconcile his old self with his new self: Is he a Chicano from the barrio, or is he a privileged suburban kid? Who is his better friend: Tony, his carnal, or James, his new-found pal in Sycamore? And, most importantly, do his loyalties lie with his old school and basketball team, or his new one? Lincoln is forced to take a definitive stand on this last question at the novel’s climax, when his new school plays his old school in basketball.

Ultimate, and in the heroic tradition, Lincoln transcends the conflict by deciding that playing for himself is better than “taking sides.”

Before You Begin Reading

Option 1: Prepare students for the reading and discussion of this book by introducing the central theme (or overarching key question) of this book: How does it take courage to be yourself?

Record students’ thoughts on chart paper for later use in chapter-by-chapter discussions. As they progress through their reading of Taking Sides, ask them to think about whether their answers to this question have changed.

Option 2: Use an agree/disagree chart with the students before and after they read the book to see if their view has changed at all. The chart also offers you a springboard into discussions about courage before and after reading the book. See the appendix for the sheet.

Show the Take it to the Max video about Max Warburg’s life and his struggle with leukemia. Ask students to think about Max’s struggle in terms of the central theme: How does Max courageously demonstrate the ability to “be himself”?
Chapter 1

Summary
Pages 1-10*: Lincoln calls Tony, his best friend from the barrio and basketball teammate from Franklin, to talk over his concerns about the upcoming game between Franklin and Columbus. Lincoln reflects on the differences between his old and new neighborhoods, and how much he misses his old friends. His mother, preoccupied with her thriving graphic design business, seems to have no time for him, and Lincoln feels like no one in his new life understands him, not even his new-found friend, James.


Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing

- How is Lincoln’s new neighborhood (Sycamore) different from his old neighborhood (The Mission District)? {Key Question: Setting}
- What do we learn about the main character, Lincoln, in the first chapter? {Key Question: Characterization} {Close Read}
- What challenges does Lincoln face in this chapter? {Key Question: Conflict} {Close Read}
- What does Lincoln mean when he says, “This place is dead.”? (p. 3) How does Tony respond? Why do you think Tony responds the way he does?
- Compare the Columbus basketball team with the Franklin basketball team. What are Lincoln’s feelings about each? Why is Lincoln worried about the game between these two teams?
- What does Lincoln mean when he says to his mother, “Fun. That’s a new way of putting it.”? (p. 10)
- How does Lincoln feel about his ethnicity?
- What kind of relationship does Lincoln have with his mother? How do you think she contributes to his sense of self?
- What do you think will happen during the game against Franklin? How will Lincoln feel if Columbus wins? How will he feel if they lose? How do you think you would be feeling if you were in Lincoln’s shoes? {Dialogue Journal}
- Have you ever had to move to a new neighborhood or school? How did you adjust? If a student has not moved to a new neighborhood or school, offer the option to interview a student who has so they can understand what that experience is like. {Dialogue Journal}
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using a Dictionary

Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words whose meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.

Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct.

*Note: Often times, dictionary definitions are in terms that all students may not understand and in turn may cause further confusion. It is critical to discuss definitions with students to make sure that students understand the meaning of the word. An option here is to work together with students and revise the definitions into student friendly definitions.

Author’s Craft:

Allusion

An allusion is an implicit or explicit reference to a person, place, event or idea from literature or history. Explain this concept to students and ask them to think about why Soto chose the names “Columbus” and “Franklin” for the two schools, and why he chose the name “Lincoln” for his main character. You may need to supply some historical background.

Idioms

Gary Soto uses idioms in his writing and it may be beneficial to include a mini-lesson on idioms, especially for students whose primary language is not English. An idiom is a figure of speech that belongs exclusively to a particular language, people, or region and whose meaning cannot be understood, and might even appear bizarre, by simply joining the meanings of the words
composing it. For example, if you said you caught a cold. Other examples include: butterflies in my stomach, button your lip, and out on a limb. Ask students if they know of any idioms to share with the class. As students read the book, encourage them to be on the lookout for idioms and highlight them for the class. If you have room on your walls, develop an Idiom board for students to add on to throughout the school year.

**Words That Create Stunning Visuals for the Reader (CCSS: L.6.5, L.6.5.A)**

Soto uses powerful imagery so readers can visualize and comprehend the scenes more precisely. The following two examples can be highlighted and discussed with students and perhaps integrated into writer’s workshop at a later time. On page 1, Soto writes, “The sun hurled a spear of light through Lincoln’s window.” And, on page 10, “While Flaco lounged in the puddle of sunlight…” Ask students to be on the lookout for imagery throughout the book and add their finds to a journal.

**Mini Lesson: Setting**

**CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.5, W.6.1, SL.6.1.D**

**What you might say:** In some stories the setting is irrelevant and the events could happen anywhere at any time. In other stories this is absolutely not the case. For example, in *Taking Sides* it is very important to understand where Lincoln came from and where he is currently living in order to understand the conflicts that are occurring in his life. These are timeless, universal stories that usually focus around relationships and emotions.

These stories can take place anywhere in the world during any time period and we would learn the same lessons and understand the plot without knowing the setting too specifically. On the other hand there are stories where the setting is very important to the plot. This is one of those stories.

**Journal/Discussion:** Think of your own stories, are they timeless? Do they rely on the setting or the time period to make sense? How or why?

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**My neighborhood** Have students write descriptions of their neighborhoods, either current or past, using strong descriptive language. Students may wish to include illustrations. Ask students to share their descriptive writing (and drawings, if applicable) with a partner and respond to their partner with comments and/or questions. Remind students to reread the description of Lincoln’s neighborhood so they have a model to follow when writing about their own neighborhood. To extend this activity, check out the *Neighborhood Descriptive Essay* assignment in Robin Turner’s (2008) book, *Greater Expectations: Teaching Academic Literacy to Underrepresented Students.*
Where I'm From  This activity is based on a poem by George Ella Lyon and allows students (and teachers) to identify and share their cultural backgrounds and lives with each other. For a detailed lesson plan on this activity, check out the book: *Rhythm and Resistance: Teaching Poetry for Social Justice* (2015) by Linda Christensen and Dyan Watson or:  
http://www.rethinkingschools.org/static/publication/rhre/Where-I'm-From.pdf

Identity Web  Placing the word “identity” on a large piece of poster board or chart paper, make a web design of all the factors that influence or contribute to a person’s self-identity, asking students to brainstorm and volunteer their ideas. Some examples of possible factors are: friends, family, religion, ethnicity, neighborhood, appearance, talents or skills. Try to arrange the web so that factors that may be connected are placed close together so that you can draw a line between them. For example, *family* and *ethnicity* might be linked; so might *friends* and *neighborhood*.

This web should be kept for use in later discussions of characterization; also, you may want students to create identity webs for the important characters in the novel (e.g., Lincoln, Tony, Monica, James, Mrs. Mendoza).

Students may develop their own individual identity web (using the worksheet provided), with names of particular friends or family member, their particular neighborhood and important places there, and/or their particular talents and skills.  
*See Appendix: Chapter 1 Activities for this worksheet.*

Character Chart or Life Size Character Sketches  Chapter one offers the reader a glimpse into Lincoln’s persona, the main character in *Taking Sides*. This would be an opportune time to begin a character study of Lincoln using a character chart and/or create a life-size sketch of Lincoln. See the appendix for a character chart template to use with students. To make the character study more interactive, invite students to make life-size sketches of the characters. Materials needed: butcher paper and markers/crayons. Invite students to work in pairs or triads to make outlines of another student on the butcher paper. Then, ask students to draw the character’s physical characteristics, clothing, etc. As the book progresses, ask students to add additional characteristics to the sketches such as emotions, strengths, weaknesses, etc. to document the character’s growth. Feel free to have students develop additional character sketches for the supporting characters in the book. The sketches can be hung up around the room and serve as references for the students while reading the book. After the book has been completed, invite students to take a gallery walk of all the characters, comparing and contrasting the different characteristics that each group of students chose to represent their character.
Chapter 2

Summary
Pages 11-18: Lincoln arrives at school dreading the monotony of his classes and the feeling that he doesn’t belong at Columbus. But things pick up when his friend James introduces him to Monica Torres, a Mexican-American student who, like Lincoln, used to attend Franklin. James and Lincoln agree that she’s cute, but James annoys Lincoln by calling Monica “full Mexican.”

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Why does Lincoln feel like he doesn’t fit in at Columbus? How does he cope with this feeling? How would you feel if you had to go to a school where you felt that everyone was different from you? {Key Question: Connection} {Dialogue Journal}
• What do you learn about Lincoln’s character in this chapter? {Key Question: Characterization}
• How is Lincoln meeting Monica significant to the plot of the novel? {Key Question: Plot} {Close Read}
• There is more revealed about the differences between Columbus Junior High and Franklin Junior High. What are the differences between the two schools? What (if any) are the similarities? *You could have students use a Venn Diagram for this question.
• What is the symbolism of the statue of Christopher Columbus in front of the school? (See Author’s Craft) {Close Read}
• Discuss Monica’s character traits and list them on the character chart or life-size sketches. Why do you think Lincoln is attracted to her? What do you predict will happen between them?
• Why does Lincoln identify with the camel driver?
• How does Lincoln feel when James, describing Monica, says, “She must be full Mexican”? (p. 18) Why do you think Lincoln reacts the way he does? How does James’ comment make you feel? {Key Question: Connection} {Dialogue Journal}


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stucco</td>
<td>(p. 11) plaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pyracantha</td>
<td>(p. 11) shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scuttled</td>
<td>(p. 11) scurry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buckled</td>
<td>(p. 11) bend or collapse from pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harangued</td>
<td>(p. 12) addressed forcefully, lectured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frustration</td>
<td>(p. 12) unfulfilled needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smirk</td>
<td>(p. 13) smug smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>droned</td>
<td>(p. 13) speak for a long time in a dull voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jive</td>
<td>(p. 15) foolish talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uppercut</td>
<td>(p. 15) a swinging blow</td>
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Vocabulary Development: K-W-L (CCSS: L6.4.A, RL.6.4)

On a chart paper or on your classroom’s chalk/whiteboard, draw a three column K-W-L (Know, Want to know, Learn) chart for Spanish contributions to the English language. The format for a K-W-L activity is as follows:

• Ask students if they know of any words in English that come from Spanish, and record them on the chart. Students can follow along using the provided worksheet. See Appendix: Chapter 2 Vocabulary for this worksheet.
• Ask students what they want to know about Spanish words in the English language, and record their questions on the chart.
• Have students use the library, internet, dictionaries, or the expertise of native Spanish speakers (perhaps one of your students) to answer the questions in the “Want to know” section of the chart. Come together as a group and record the findings on the chart.

Here are some suggestions for words that students might investigate:

• gaucho
• chocolate
• burro
• chino
• mustang
• mesa
• chili
• sombrero
• chinchilla

In addition to finding definitions for these words, you might also want students to consider how these words came into the English language, as well as why we use words of Spanish origin to name these things. Students should include the results of this activity in their personal dictionaries. {Personal Dictionary}

Author’s Craft: Dialogue

Pay close attention in this chapter to how Soto uses dialogue to convey character. Read aloud the dialogue between Lincoln, James, and Monica (pp. 14-18). Ask students: Does this dialogue sound realistic to you, or similar to a conversation you might have with your friends? Why, or why not? Notice where Monica and Lincoln speak Spanish. Why do they switch into their common language at these points? To extend this discussion, ask students to discuss their experiences speaking multiple languages and how it affects their lives in- and out-of-school.
Mini Lesson: Characterization Through Dialogue

**CCSS: RL.6.4, RL.6.1**

**What you might say:** We know that dialogue is often used in stories to help us understand what has happened, what characters are feeling and to understand whom the characters are. Today I want to point out to you how authors can make dialogue authentic so you can feel like you are right there listening to the character. Authors do this by writing in the appropriate dialect and using natural flow (for example, allowing characters to cut each other off, mid-sentence).

Dialect is a variety of language that is characteristic of a particular group. In some areas this may mean that a specific dialect may use completely different words than the traditional form of a language. It may simply mean that a group of people use a more casual form of the language, shortening words or phrases for example. In this book you will also find that the characters switch back and forth between Spanish and English.

**Journal/Discussion:** Continue to fill out the character chart and/or character sketches. See *Appendix: Chapter 1* for this worksheet.

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**From Page to Stage** First, discuss how Soto uses dialogue in the service of characterization (see Author’s Craft). Then, divide students into groups of three, and have them prepare to act out the scene in which Lincoln meets Monica (starting on page 14) for the whole class. Finally, after each group has performed the scene, have the class share their reactions to the characters’ dialogue. Another option for this activity it so use tableau instead (for details on tableau, see the Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life section toward the beginning of the guide).
Chapter 3

Summary
Lincoln’s sense of alienation increases at basketball practice, when Coach Yesutis harasses him for favoring his injured toe. After practice, Lincoln finds some solace in talking to James about Monica. When he arrives home and greets his dog, Flaco, who was a gift from his father, Lincoln recalls negative memories of his parents’ divorce. His spirits pick up during dinner with his mother, but his mood is spoiled when his mother’s new boyfriend, Roy, calls to make a date with her for the upcoming weekend.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
- If you had coach or teacher who treated you the way Coach Yesutis treats Lincoln, how would you react? Have you ever experienced or witnessed similar treatment? If so, what did you do about it? {Key Question: Connection} {Dialogue Journal}
- Can you find evidence to support Lincoln’s feeling that Coach Yesutis is “on [his] back”? Compare how the coach treats Lincoln with how he treats the other players on the team.
- How might it be important that Mrs. Mendoza cannot remember, or does not know, the word for “dog food” in Spanish?
- How does Lincoln feel about his dad? Does he miss him? How can you tell?
- How does Lincoln feel about Roy? What makes you think this? {Close Read}

- **glared** (p. 19) stared angrily or fiercely
- **shafts** (p. 19) beams of light
- **fluorescent** (p. 20) glowing, shining
- **grimacing** (p. 20) facial expression of disgust or pain
- **hobbled** (p. 20) limped
- **oblivious** (p. 21) unaware, ignorant
- **smothered** (p. 21) to stop the activity of
- **gingerly** (p. 21) carefully, cautiously
- **clobbering** (p. 21) hitting with force
- **gavacho** (p. 25) white person
- **sentimental** (p. 28) resulting from feelings of sadness or tenderness
- **cansada** (p. 28) tired
- **llamaló** (p. 28) call him
- **mountainous** (p. 30) an area with many mountains
- **incense** (p. 30) produces an odor when burned
- **ándale** (p. 30) hurry
- **apúrate** (p. 30) hurry up
- **tortilla** (p. 31) thin round corn or flour bread
- **chamaco** (p. 31) kid
- **carne asada** (p. 31) grilled meat
- **frijoles** (p. 31) beans
- **gente** (p. 31) people
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Analyzing Word Structure

Remind students that prefixes are a type of affix, which is placed before the root of a word. Using the vocabulary word, *discourage*, and the word *encourage*, demonstrate that prefixes alter the meaning of the word to which it is affixed.

**Morphology:** At the middle school level, there is great value in the direct instruction (and practice) of morphology. There are commonly used prefixes, suffixes, and roots that are invaluable for students to learn in order to help them with deciphering unknown words. See the appendix for lists of common prefixes, suffixes, and Greek roots.

**Mini Lesson: Conflict**

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<th>CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.5, W.6.1, SL.6.1.D</th>
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**What you might say:** As you read today you may notice that there are some conflicts in this story. A conflict is a dramatic struggle between two forces in a story. This is more than simply a problem (ex: The boy could not get his backpack unstuck from the bus door.) Conflicts can occur between different elements of the story. What conflicts are arising in this book? As a class today we are going to focus on deciphering small problems from large thematic conflicts in the text. For example a conflict can be:

Character vs. Character: One character having a struggle with another character (human or not) in the book. (Ex. Two characters who really don’t like each other for moral reasons)

Character vs. Nature: In this the character seems to be struggling with the elements of nature. (Weather, trees/plants, mountains, etc.)

Character vs. Society: The main character is in conflict with a larger group, a culture, society, community. (The character could be fighting against war, stereotypes, prejudice, etc)

Character vs. Self: Character is having some kind of inner conflict. (They may be trying to change themselves; they may have new realizations as they grow up, etc)

**Journals/ Literature Circles:** What connections can you make to these conflicts? How do you think the conflicts will be resolved?

**Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**What is courage?** On the board or on chart paper, keep a running record of student responses to the question “What is courage?” Encourage students to look up the definition(s) of courage in one or more dictionaries and then come back together as a class to develop a student-friendly definition that is general enough to apply to many specific instances.

Refer back to Max’s story, and discuss similarities and differences students notice between Max and Lincoln.
**Conflict with the coach:** Ask students to write about a time when they experienced conflict with an authority figure, or someone like Coach Yesutis. How did they deal with this conflict? Students may wish to share this experience with their journal partners, who can then respond with questions or comments. {Dialogue Journal}

**Mexican American discussion:** On page 26, Soto writes about Lincoln’s love interests, Vicky and Monica. Lincoln reflects on that both girls are Mexican American. This would be a great opportunity to discuss the history, progress, and cultural perspectives of Mexican Americans with students. Refer to the Social, Cultural, and Historical Background section for additional assistance.
Chapter 4

Summary
Pages 33-42: Lincoln faces another tedious day at school, preoccupied with worry about his grades, about Roy, and about Monica. At lunch, he and Monica discover some common themes in their family backgrounds. Inspired by this moment of sharing, Lincoln asks her to “shoot some hoops” with him that weekend, and she agrees.

Building Background Necessary for Comprehension
To help students understand and appreciate the shared background that Monica’s and Lincoln’s parents share as agricultural laborers, read one or two narratives from Voices from the Field: Children of Migrant Farm workers Tell Their Stories, by Beth S. Atkin.

Discuss how hearing similar stories from their parents makes Monica and Lincoln different from their classmates at Columbus.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• How does Roy complicate the story and contribute to Lincoln’s difficulties? {Key Question: Conflict}
• How can friends help you to be yourself, or to know yourself better? Which friends help you to be “more yourself”? {Key Question: Theme} {Dialogue Journal}
• What helps Lincoln to find the courage to ask Monica out?
• How does discussing their parents’ backgrounds affect Monica and Lincoln’s relationship? How do they feel about the stories their parents tell?
• Do you think Monica speaks to her parents in Spanish or in English? Why do you think this?
• Why can’t Lincoln explain to Mr. Green why his grades are slipping? What does he mean when he says, “this school’s different”? (p. 39) {Close Read}

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)
tender (p. 33) sensitive to touch, sore
pudgy (p. 35) chubby
perrito (p. 35) little dog
tardy (p. 37) late
hordes (p. 39) group, multitude
din (p. 40) loud noise
aikido (p. 40) Japanese art of self-defense
rap (p. 41) situation
mi familia (p. 41) my family
pursed (p. 42) puckered
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using Context Clues:

Ask students to work in pairs to find the following words in the text:

\[ \text{tender (p. 33) } \quad \text{pudgy (p. 35) } \quad \text{din (p. 40) } \quad \text{rap (p. 41) } \quad \text{pursed (p. 42)} \]

Students can alternate reading aloud the paragraph in which the word is located. Using context clues, they can make an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask for volunteers to share their thought processes and definitions. Have students revise their own definitions to reflect what they have learned about the word meanings.

Mini Lesson: Figurative Language: Simile/Metaphor


What you might say: Today I want to teach you that authors use very specific language to help the reader visualize a situation. We have learned how an author may use a simile. Remember, a simile is a type of figurative language that uses like or as to compare two things. The author may want to compare one thing to something totally different or unrelated to give the reader a new image in their mind. (Ex: *He was like a bull running through the aisle towards the last game system available* or *He ran through the aisle as fast and strong as a bull.*)

Authors also use metaphors to help the reader visualize. A metaphor does not compare two objects it simply states that one object is the other. (Ex: *He was a bull running through the aisle towards the last game system available.*)

Journals/ Literature Circles: Have students have a section in their journal to list “Fantastic Figurative Language” This section should include a simile and metaphor page where students write down the examples they find truly powerful or descriptive as they read. They should record the book and page number where the simile was found.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Metaphors and similes This activity is a search for metaphors and similes in the first for chapters, and is meant to prepare students for the poetry writing activity that accompanies the next chapter.

Remind students of the definition of a metaphor and a simile. Divide students into pairs or groups and have them look for as many examples of each as they can find in Chapters 1-4. Then have each group select three metaphors or similes to present to the class and explain what each metaphor or simile conveys about the moment in which it appears (for example, a character’s thoughts or feelings).
**Conveying character through dialogue (CCSS: RL.6.5):** Ask students to write a dialogue between themselves and their parent(s), using dialogue to convey character, as Soto does in *Taking Sides*. If students speak a language other than English at home, encourage them to stay true to this when writing their dialogue. If students are comfortable, have them find a partner and act out these dialogues for the class.

**Identity and language** On page 34, Lincoln wonders if Monica speaks Spanish or English with her parents. He also reflects that he and his mother have been speaking more and more English at home and he worries that his Spanish is getting worse. Some times families who speak a language other than English come to rely more on English then their other language. Ask students if they have experienced that in their own lives and why they think English some times becomes the primary language in a home where several languages are spoken. Discuss the concept of identity and language, and how they are intertwined with each other.

To extend this activity, offer students time to reflect and write on the concepts of identity and language.
Chapter 5

Summary
Pages 43-51: Lincoln returns to his old neighborhood to visit his friend Tony. He feels more at home in this environment, but is troubled when Tony tells him that he found Lincoln’s stolen television in a local thrift shop. Apprehensive, Lincoln sets out with Tony to see if the television is in fact the one that was taken from his old house.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
(CCSS: RL.6.5)

• Why is Lincoln’s trip back to the barrio an important part of the story? {Key Question: Plot}
• What is so appealing to Lincoln about his old neighborhood? Explain with evidence from the book.
• What might the old television symbolize for Lincoln? What value does it hold for him? {Close Read}
• Compare the Contreras household to the Mendoza household: how are they similar how are they different? How do these differences affect Lincoln and Tony’s relationship?
• How does Lincoln’s friendship with Tony contribute to his sense of self?
• How does Lincoln feel when he is in Tony’s apartment?
• The word raza, which Lincoln uses to identify the “brown-faced people on the bus,” is defined as “Latino people” in the glossary, but in conventional Spanish it means “race.” Why do you think Lincoln uses this word to describe the people on the bus?

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)

slick (p. 43) having a smooth surface  
gleaming (p. 44) to shine  
urgent (p. 44) very important and needing immediate attention  
diablito (p. 44) little devil  
vato loco (p. 45) crazy dude  
chomping (p. 47) chewing, munching  
hombrecito (p. 48) little man  
incredulous (p. 50) doubtful, lack of belief  
raza (p. 50) Latino people

swivel (p. 50) rotate, spin  
jivin’ (p. 50) lying  
chale (p. 50) no way, I don’t want to  
viejo (p. 50) old man  
bifocals (p. 51) lenses divided into two parts to help a person to see things that are nearby and far away  
dimpled (p. 51) indented surface  
bueno (p. 51) good
The activity below allows for students to think critically about words, as well as use their prior knowledge. In each set of words below, circle the one that does not belong. Then write a sentence explaining why that word does not fit in with the others.

1. gloomy coarse (gleaming) dull

2. certain definite unquestionable (incredulous)

3. (slick) unpolished simple inferior

4. minor inessential (urgent) unnecessary

Write a complete sentence for each of the following words (for a challenge, combine the words into one sentence).

1. chomping

2. dimpled

3. swivel

Author's Craft: Setting (CCSS: RL.6.5)
Soto, like many skilled writers, makes extensive use of detail and imagery to convey a sense of place and to make a setting seem real to the reader. To help your students appreciate this, separate them into pairs and have them read aloud the description of Lincoln’s old neighborhood (pp. 43-46). They can divide the reading and switch halfway through. Ask them to try and visualize the neighborhood as they listen. Are they able to do so? Why, or why not? How does Soto use language to appeal to the senses?
Mini Lesson: Prediction


**What you might say:** Good readers actively think while they are reading. They may be noticing figurative language, making connections or focusing on the plot or structure of a story as they read. We have practiced all of these and are starting to do them naturally as we read. Other things good readers do as they read is predict, or guess what is going to happen next. Readers really act as detectives as they do this. They use their own experiences to help them predict. They may also use knowledge they have learned from books, T.V., peers, school, as well as clues from the author to help them predict.

**Journal/Literature Circles:** What experiences have you had, read about in books or seen on T.V. that are helping you to predict what Lincoln will do about his stolen T.V. in the pawn shop?

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**Odes** Give the class the definition of an *ode*: a lyric poem in which the poet expresses a happy and positive feeling. Read aloud selections from Gary Soto’s *Neighborhood Odes* (“Ode to the Sprinkler,” “Ode to Mi Perrito,” and “Ode to Pablo’s Tennis Shoes” relate particularly well to Lincoln’s situation) and show students the accompanying illustrations.

Ask each student to write an ode to his or her neighborhood. To prepare them, remind them of the previous discussion of metaphor and simile (Chapter 4) and your class discussion of imagery (see Author’s Craft). Students may wish to create a drawing or illustration to accompany their poem. Arrange the odes on a bulletin board, along with your students’ artwork.

**An old familiar place:** Ask students to describe, in writing, a time when they visited an old familiar place after being away for a while. Try to use imagery and other details to help your partner/reader appreciate the experience. Focus on appealing to the five senses.
Chapter 6

Summary
Pages 62-72: On the way to the thrift shop, Lincoln expresses his doubts about accusing the thrift shop owner of being a thief, and Tony accuses him of having lost his street smarts since moving away from the neighborhood. Lincoln resents this comment, but even after he recognizes the TV in the shop, her remains reluctant to confront the shop’s owner, whom he sees as a helpless old man. Tony accuses Lincoln of weakness a second time, and Lincoln storms off in a rage, but not without wondering if Tony is right.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing

• Why does it sometimes take courage to argue with a friend? Does Lincoln show courage in rejecting Tony’s plan to accuse the old man of stealing the TV?
• What do Lincoln and Tony reveal about themselves by the way they treat the thrift shop owner? {Key Question: Characterization}
• Why do you think Lincoln refuses to believe that the old man could have been involved the theft of his TV?
• Why does Lincoln want to punch Tony when Tony says, “You’re getting soft, Linc. Just ‘cause you live with white people.”? (p. 60). How would you react to this comment if you were Lincoln? {Key Question: Connection} {Dialogue Journal}

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4, L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)

- queso (p. 54) type of white cheese
- gleamed (p. 55) shined
- espérate (p. 55) wait
- recliner (p. 56) adjustable chair that can lean back
- paring (p. 56) a piece of
- anticipation (p. 56) feeling of excitement about something that is going to happen
- turpentine (p. 57) type of (smelly) oil to make paint thinner and clean paint brushes
- derby (p. 58) hat
- un gordo (p. 58) fat guy
- alviánate (p. 58) lighten up
- clot (p. 59) a portion of a substance sticking together
- carnal (p. 60) brother
- saunter (p. 61) walk, stroll
- tonto (p. 61) stupid, fool
- detention (p. 61) a punishment where a student stays after school when other students have gone home
- lint (p. 61) tiny piece of cloth or material
- flecked (p. 61) marked, dotted
- lopsided (p. 62) unequal, unbalanced

Direct Instruction of Vocabulary Words: Knowledge Rating Scale
It is likely that several of the vocabulary words in this chapter will be new to students. In the appendix is a knowledge rating scale that can also be used as a pre- and post-assessment in order to get a sense of students’ prior knowledge regarding this chapter’s vocabulary words.
Mini Lesson: Conflict

**CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.5, W.6.4**

**What you might say:** We have talked about how authors include conflict(s) within their story. Within the conflict authors typically have a protagonist and an antagonist or a “good guy” and a “bad guy.” As the literature you read becomes more sophisticated so does this concept. You may find some authors have the protagonists and antagonists change throughout the story, you may also find that one of the characters is not actually a person, but a force or idea, which we looked at when talking about conflict. Authors do this to engage the reader, to make the story interesting and often times to help them make a statement or teach a lesson.

**Journals/ Literature Circles:** Is there anyone in this book that you would say is truly a “bad guy” or an antagonist? Do you dislike everything about this character? Do you think the antagonist in this book is a person or an idea? Explain.

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**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**Exploring the word, stereotype** In the appendix you will find a tool called the Frayer Model, which will allow you to elicit students’ prior knowledge about the word, stereotype. Using the Frayer Model, students can work in pairs or small groups and explore their understanding of the word. Then, have the students come back together as a class and discuss their definitions and examples of the word stereotype and what the word means to them. It may be beneficial to develop a class definition of the word, stereotype based on the results of the Frayer Models and class discussion.

**Stereotypes in the media:** As an in-class or homework assignment, have each student find an example of a stereotype from the newspaper, magazines, the internet, or other media. These may include photographs, print advertising, news articles about a particular ethnic group or gender, or representation of specific groups of people on a television show.

In class, ask each student to explain how his or her example illustrates a stereotype and discuss the possible negative effects of this stereotype on the people who read or view it, and on society as a whole.

Finally, discuss Lincoln’s impressions of the students at Columbus and the people in Sycamore, and his description of the students at this old school and in his old neighborhood. Could any of these impressions be considered stereotypes? Why or why not?  

**Reacting to stereotyping** Ask students to write about a time when they were stereotyped on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, gender, physical appearance or some other characteristic. Ask them to consider the following questions:

- How were they treated?
- How did they react?
- Did they have an opportunity to confront the person who stereotyped them? If they did, what happened? If they didn’t, what might they have said or done if they had the opportunity?
Do people stay the same? On page 54, Lincoln tells Tony that, “Things change, but people stay the same.” Ask students to explore that statement through writing and then discuss in small groups or pairs. In their experience, is the statement true? What evidence do they have to support their opinion?
Chapter 7

Summary
Pages 63-73: Lincoln’s doubts about his identity are heightened during an argument with his mother, in which she accuses him of being lazy and disrespectful towards her. His friend James offers him a refuge by inviting him over for Sunday dinner. Although James’ parents are kind and generous, and the food delicious, Lincoln doesn’t feel at home at James’ house. The anticipation of his afternoon date with Monica is his only source of consolation.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• What is the catalyst for the argument between Lincoln and his mother? {Close Read}
  Why is Lincoln’s mother angry with him? Do you think her anger is justified? Why or why not? {Key Question: Conflict}
• What is the symbolic meaning of food in this chapter, and throughout the book? {Key Question: Language}
• What do you think is the meaning behind Lincoln’s dream? What might the black bear symbolize? {Close Read}
• What song is playing at James’ house, and how might this detail be significant? Compare its significance to the background music playing at Lincoln’s house. (p. 28)
• Compare and contrast Lincoln’s relationship with his mother to James’ relationship with his parents. How are they similar? How are they different?
• Compare Lincoln’s friendship with Tony to his friendship with James. Could you say Lincoln is closer to Tony than James, or vice versa? Why or why not?
• Describe a time when you felt that you didn’t belong in your own home. How did you handle this situation? Were you able to find a sense of belonging somewhere else? {Dialogue Journal}
• On page 67, James invites Lincoln over for dinner, “They’re cutting me some chow—honest-to-goodness venison.” He then goes on to say on page 68, “We like to grub on Sundays.” Ask students to reflect on Soto’s particular style of writing on the sentences above, and why he chose to write in this style for James’ character?

Vocabulary (CCSS: L6.4.A, RL.6.4)

winced (p. 63) flinched, shrink back involuntarily
viciously (p. 63) marked by violence, dangerously aggressive
bulky (p. 66) massive
primarily (p. 69) for the most part, in the first place
snickered (p. 71) laughed in a covert manner
boomerang (p. 72) throwing club designed to return near the thrower
trophy (p. 72) award
lacquered (p. 72) a liquid that is spread on wood or metal and dries to form a hard and shiny surface
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using Context Clues:
Ask students to follow the same procedure in which they worked with a partner to read aloud the paragraphs or pages on which the vocabulary words can be found. Using context clues, they can make an educated guess about each word’s meaning. After all students have written down their definitions, ask for volunteers to share their thought processes and definitions. Students can then revise their own definitions.

Offering Students Multiple Exposures to the Vocabulary Words:
Cloze Sentence Activity
The cloze sentence activity offers students the opportunity to see and use the vocabulary words again in conjunction with context clues work. In the appendix find a cloze sentence activity to implement with students using the words from this chapter. Another option is to have the students write their own cloze sentences to share with their classmates.

Mini Lesson: Symbolism

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<th>CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.4, W.6.4</th>
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<td><strong>What you might say:</strong> Authors use symbols (one thing that represents another) throughout their story to provide meaning to the reader. Sometimes symbols in stories can be quite explicit or obvious. Other times you have to be a little creative to understand some of the symbolic connections. There are many references to food in this chapter which we can find a deeper meaning in.</td>
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| Journals/ Literature Circles: | What is the food symbolizing? What do you think the black bear in Lincoln’s dream is symbolizing? Why would the author use symbols to portray their message? |

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life
You’re the author now... Ask someone in the class to read aloud the scene on pp. 64-65 where Lincoln argues with his mother, and she asks, “Who do you think you are?”

Break the class into small groups (3-4 students in each) and ask them to come up with an explanation for why Mrs. Mendoza treats Lincoln this way. Then, have them work in their groups to create a scene in which they illustrate the explanation (e.g., a fight with Ray, a phone conversation with Lincoln’s father in Los Angeles). After they’ve written their scenes, have each group read or perform it for the class. You can also use tableau for this activity as well. See the Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life section toward the beginning of the guide.

Family menu: This activity can be completed at home and then presented in class. Have students interview parents or other family members about a typical family meal, which may reflect the family’s heritage or ethnicity. In class, have each student describe his or her meal for their classmates. Discuss the symbolism of the food, both in the students’ homes and in Taking Sides, and its role in cultural and ethnic identity.
**Cultural Traditions**  *Taking Sides* offers readers a glimpse into familial and cultural traditions. To connect readers further to the cultural traditions of the Mexican American culture, read and explore the picture book, *Family Pictures / Cuadros de Familia*, by Carmen Lomas Garza (2005). She explores her childhood and cultural traditions through vignettes of art and a descriptive narrative that allows readers to see the different aspects of a traditional Mexican American life. After reading and discussing the book with students, ask students to reflect and write about the cultural and family traditions that shape their own lives. Then, allow students to share their writing with a peer and compare and contrast their cultural and family experiences and how they have influenced their own lives. Finally, as a class, discuss how their cultural and familial experiences are similar and different from the character’s experiences in *Taking Sides*. 
Chapter 8

Summary
Pages 74-86: When Lincoln meets Monica at the basketball court, he is anxious and eager to impress her. He lies about going to church, and when she expresses shock at the fact that he ate deer meat at James’ house, he refrains from telling her how much he enjoyed it. During the game, she bumps into him and sends him tumbling to the ground with a badly sprained knee. He puts on a brave face, and tries to tell her how much he likes her, but she won’t hear it.

At home, Roy and Mrs. Mendoza attend to his injury, and Roy shares a story about how he was injured playing basketball for Franklin in his youth. He also reveals that he played against Coach Yesutis then, and tells a story which proves Yesutis’ bigotry. Lincoln is surprised at this information about Roy, and begins to wonder if maybe he has been wrong about his mother’s boyfriend.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing

• What do we learn about Lincoln’s character during his game with Monica? {Key Question: Characterization} {Close Read}
• Were you surprised by Roy’s story about playing for Franklin?
• How does Lincoln’s behavior change when he is with Monica? Is he still “being himself”? Why do you think he lies to her? {Close Read}
• After hearing Roy’s story about Coach Yesutis, does Lincoln’s opinion of the coach change? Does his opinion of Roy change? If so, how?
• On page 84, Roy describes an incident where Coach Yesutis, as a young basketball player, yelled the word, ‘spic’ at the players on the opposing basketball team. The term ‘spic’ is a derogatory term regarding Spanish-speaking people. If the coach felt biased towards Latinos when he was a young man, would this mean he is still potentially biased? How might this affect his relationship with Lincoln? {Dialogue Journal}


sagging (p. 75) a drop or hanging down
mussed (p. 76) untidy, messy
startled (p. 77) surprised or suddenly frightened
ni modo (p. 78) no way
hovered (p. 81) suspended over a place or object
hobbled (p. 82) limped
unison (p. 83) harmony, at the same time
chummily (p. 83) friendly
bulging (p. 84) filled
Semantic Gradients Activity Using Vocabulary Words:
After going over the words with students or having the students figure out the word meanings through context clues or using a dictionary, have students complete the semantic gradients sheet (see appendix). The semantic gradient activity complements context clues work and can lead to engaging discussions and critical thinking. For complete directions on how to implement semantic gradients, refer to:
http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/semantic_gradients
http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/solving-word-meanings-engaging-1089.html?tab=4#tabs

Mini Lesson: Characterization through actions

CCSS: RL.6.1, SL.6.1.C, W.6.4

What you might say: Earlier we discussed how we could learn a great deal about someone through their dialogue, what they were saying. Today I want to point out to you how an author will divulge information about a character later in the book. This provides a little twist to help you understand why the character acts the way they do. Often times this new information leads the reader to change their opinion about a character or a situation. In this chapter this is done by telling us of specific actions involving both Coach Yesutis and Roy.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Continue filling out the chapter 1 character chart. See Appendix: Chapter 1 Character Chart. If you are using the life-size character sketches, make sure to add character changes to the sketches.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Basketball poetry With the class, read aloud one or more of the following poems from Slam Dunk: Basketball Poems, ed. by Lillian Harrison (feel free to choose your own poems, as well):

• Patrick Ewing Takes a Jump Shot, Diane Ackerman
• Shooting, B.H. Fairchild
• A Poem for Magic, Quincy Troupe

Compare how these poets and Soto use metaphor, imagery and language to convey the atmosphere and excitement of the game. Then ask each student to write their own poem, conveying the excitement of an athletic event or another activity which they enjoy and have participated. Other possible topics may include playing video games or board games, riding a bicycle or even baking a cake.

Have students share these poems with the class. [Resources]

Making an impression: Invite students to write in the journals about a time they lied or exaggerated in order to impress someone. Did the person find out they were lying? If they didn’t, do you wish they had? Why or why not? Do you think there are ever times when it is okay to lie or exaggerate?
Chapter 9

Summary
Pages 87-95: Lincoln wakes up with a swollen and throbbing knee and gets permission from his mother to stay home for the morning. When he wakes up from a mid-morning nap, he is surprised to find an intruder in the house. Lincoln manages to chase away the would-be thief, but the irony of the break-in doesn’t escape him: “What had sent them away from the Mission District had caught up with them in Sycamore,” he muses. (p. 95)

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• What do we learn about Lincoln’s character from the fact that he doesn’t want to go to the doctor? {Key Question: Characterization}
• How does Lincoln show courage in his reaction to the intruder?
• Why does he think of James’ boomerang during the break-in?
• Why is the break-in a significant event? {Key Questions: Plot, Significance}
• Why does Lincoln lie to his mother by promising not to play at practice? Can you understand why he did this? What would you have done?
• This is the second lie we see Lincoln make (the first being to Monica during their date)—does this affect your opinion of Lincoln? Why or why not? {Dialogue Journal}
• Why does Lincoln imagine Tony “kicking off to school, not carrying any books…sidestepping drunks and homeless people”? (p. 93). What does this image suggest about Lincoln’s feelings towards Tony and/or his old neighborhood?
• Do you think the break-in changes how Lincoln feels about Sycamore? (Remember that their home in the barrio was also broken into). {Close Read}
• Predict whether or not Coach Yesutis will ask Lincoln to play. Explain your prediction. {Dialogue Journal}
• After Lincoln moved to Sycamore, he complained that it was often quiet and perhaps even boring compared to his old neighborhood. Ask students to discuss and/or write about the irony of his home in Sycamore being the potential target of a robbery and how that might affect his (and his mom’s) future.

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4, L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)

throbbing (p. 87) pounding, pulsating
maneuvered (p. 88) to make changes in direction or position
cochino (p. 88) pig
laced (p. 89) to add something to
glistening (p. 89) sparkling, shiny
aura (p. 92) a special quality or feeling that seems to come from a person, place, or thing
portfolio (p. 92) case for carrying papers
unraveled (p. 93) to cause the separate threads of something to come apart
groggily (p. 94) weak, tired, unsteady
intruder (p. 94) a person who enters a building or grounds without permission
unscathed (p. 95) unharmed, uninjured
heaving (p. 95) to cause to swell or rise
Developing Vocabulary Knowledge:  

Word Sort:  
A word sort is a vocabulary and comprehension strategy used to familiarize students with words found in a reading and is primarily used prior to reading. Students place words into different categories based on each word’s meaning and then after completing the categories make predictions about the reading. Categories can be defined by the teacher or by the students (http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept_sort). Students can also share the categories they developed with their peers for further discussion about the words. See the appendix for word sort cards, which can be photocopied and cut out for the word sort activity. Generally, word sort cards don’t include the definition, but for this activity the definitions are included as several of the word meanings may be unknown to students.

Mini Lesson: Plot and Significance (for use with Chapters 9 and 10)  

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<th>CCSS: RL.6.1, RL.6.5, W.6.4</th>
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<td><strong>What you might say:</strong> Within novels you will find events that are humorous, events that are included to give you insight into characters and events that help you understand the big picture or the author’s purpose/lesson. Today we are encountering one of the events that help us to understand the big picture, the theme of the story. Lincoln’s home being broken into is a very significant event in the story because it helps us to understand the central theme in the story.</td>
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**Journals/ Literature Circles:** What do you think is so important about this event? How does it relate to the big idea of the book?

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life  

**Portraits of Courage (long-term project)** Students should choose the person they wish to profile for their “Portrait of Courage.” Once they have chosen that person, use some class time to do research (online or in the library) on the person’s life. Students whom have chosen to interview someone they know can use this time to search for background information that will help them ask strong questions during the interview. Before sending them off to research or interview, work with them to generate a set of questions to guide their research or interviews. Remind them to use Lincoln’s story and Max’s story to get ideas for questions. Possible questions may include:

- What is the biggest obstacle the person faced in his or her life?
- How did he or she overcome that obstacle?
- Would he or she make different decisions if given the chance to go back and relive that part of his or her life?

For students who are interviewing real people, have them ask permission to take a photograph (or make a drawing or illustration) of that person for inclusion in your class’ “Portraits of Courage” anthology.

Students whom are researching a historical figure may photocopy photos or illustrations from a magazine or book. Make sure students credit their sources appropriately.
Facing an intruder: Ask students to imagine that, like Lincoln, they found an intruder in their home. Would they have handled the situation differently? If so, in what way? Note that students may have experienced a similar situation in their own lives.

Metaphorical iceberg organizer This organizer, found in the book, *Deeper Readings: Comprehending Challenging Texts, K-12*, by Kelly Gallagher (2004), allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of a particular character. Like an iceberg, there are certain character traits that are easily visible; but at the same time there may be parts of the iceberg or a character that remain unseen. For example, Lincoln portrays himself as a pretty tough and resilient young man, but by the end of chapter 9, the reader should come to realize that he still wants to be looked after by his mother and craves her attention and approval. Draw an iceberg on the board or use a document camera to begin the discussion about the unseen character traits of Lincoln. As students offer you Lincoln’s character traits, write them down on the iceberg. The iceberg can be referred to later on post-assessments and further analysis of the book. Another option is to ask students to draw their own icebergs and work in pairs to uncover Lincoln’s unseen character traits and then share with the class.
Chapter 10

Summary
Pages 96-106: Lincoln goes to school still shaken up by the break-in. Feeling miserable, he is abrupt with Monica and then ignores her. At basketball practice, Coach Yesutis teases Lincoln for favoring his swollen and purple knee. Lincoln plays hard in spite of the pain, and manages to get some revenge on his team by reminding him of the incident that Roy told him about the day before.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing

- How does Lincoln show courage in the way he responds to Coach Yesutis pulling him from the game? (p. 105) {Key Question: Theme}
- How does the break-in affect Lincoln? {Key Question: Conflict} {Close Read}
- Why is Coach Yesutis not more concerned about Lincoln’s injury? Why is he so unsympathetic?
- Explain Lincoln’s behavior towards Monica. Why, in your opinion, can’t he tell her about the break-in? Why does he leave her abruptly and then ignore her when she tries to talk to him? If you could write the scene to play out differently, what would happen? Would you change Lincoln’s behavior at all? {Dialogue Journal}
- How does Lincoln react when Coach Yesutis tells him he won’t play in the game against Franklin? What does he reveal about himself through this reaction? Do you think he shows courage by reacting this way? Why or why not? {Dialogue Journal}
- Ask students to reflect on the image of Lincoln nailing the damaged door shut and the irony surrounding that image. Lincoln and his mother moved to Sycamore because she believed it was safer then the barrio Lincoln grew up in. What does the nailed door symbolize for Lincoln and potentially his mother? Ask students to make a prediction about what this potential robbery may mean for their future?

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4, L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)

- *pried* (p. 96) to pull apart
- *electrodes* (p. 97) a conductor used to establish electrical contact
- *awkwardly* (p. 97) lacking ease or grace
- *remainder* (p. 98) part or trace
- *furtively* (p. 98) slyly

- *cinch* (p. 101) easy
- *heaved* (p. 101) lifted, raised, threw
- *muttering* (p. 105) uttering sounds or words with a low voice
- *slouched* (p. 106) droop, move or go slowly or reluctantly

Direct Instruction of Vocabulary Words: For direct instruction using the words from chapter 10, refer to the vocabulary organizer in the appendix. The organizer will allow you to go more in-depth with these words then simply having students working with the words independently.
Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

The Innocent Bystander Read aloud—or ask a student to read aloud—the scene between Coach Yesutis on pp. 105-106. Ask each student to say what he or she would do if they were a member of the team witnessing their coach’s unfair treatment of Lincoln.

Discuss or debate what might be the most effective way for other students to take action against the coach. You may also want to discuss why some students might not want to challenge him, or get involved. Finally, discuss how it takes courage to avoid being just an “innocent bystander” in the face of injustice.

A professional opinion Invite a basketball coach or player from your school (or nearby community or university) to discuss Coach Yesutis’ treatment of his team in general, and of Lincoln in particular. Prepare the guest speaker(s) by giving them copies of the book and marking specific passages, which illustrate the conflict between Lincoln and his coach. You may also want to ask them to read some of these scenes aloud to the class.

Prepare the class by asking each student to write down a question for the coach or player about basketball, about coaching, or about prejudice in sports. Then have the students pose their questions when the “experts” visit the class.

Overcoming injury: Ask students to write in their journals about a time when they, or someone they know, overcame physical pain and/or injury to accomplish something important.
Chapter 11

Summary
Pages 107-117: At home after practice, Lincoln is cheered by Roy’s promise to defend him if Coach Yesutis gives him any more trouble. In the mail, Lincoln receives the $4.00 that Tony owed him from a past bet. He is reminded of the unresolved conflict with his friend. He tries to talk to Monica and apologize for his rude behavior, but she turns away and accuses him of being selfish.

At basketball practice, Lincoln is hurt when Coach Yesutis pulls him from the starting line up for the game against Franklin, but once again, he suppresses his feelings.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
- What is the significance of Tony’s sending $4.00 to Lincoln? {Key Question: Plot}
- How does Lincoln try to resolve his conflict with Monica? Is he successful? Why or why not? {Key Question: Conflict}
- Why does Lincoln say to Durkins, his teammate, “I hate to say it, but I think you’re going to lose”?  
- How do you think Lincoln feels about James starting? How would you feel?
- Why is it now easier for Lincoln to tell Monica about the break-in? (p. 114)
- Do you agree with Monica’s characterization that Lincoln is “selfish”? (p. 114) Why or why not?
- Predict the outcome of the game. Explore, in writing, the consequences of each possible outcome. {Dialogue Journal}

Vocabulary (CCSS: L.6.4, L.6.4.A, RL.6.4)

- hinges (p. 107) a piece that attaches a door, gate, and allows it to open and close
- mingling (p. 108) mixing together
- enchiladas (p. 108) a flat piece of bread (tortilla) that is rolled around a filling and covered with a sauce
- sopa (p. 108) a rice dish
- mantel (p. 110) a shelf above a fireplace
- overcast (p. 111) a covering of gray clouds
- en serio (p. 111) seriously
- temptation (p. 115) a strong urge or desire to have or do something
- shouldering (p. 115) to place or carry something on the shoulder
- loco (p. 116) crazy
- manhood (p. 117) qualities associated with men

Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words whose meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they
derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.

Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct.

**Mini Lesson: Plot and Climax**


**What you might say:** We have discussed the structure of a story plot. Today I want you to determine the climax of this book. Remember the climax is the turning point of the story, usually the most exciting, dramatic part of the story.

Remind students of the following key components of a story:

- **Exposition:** The start of the story, the setting, before the action starts
- **Rising Action:** Series of events and conflicts that set the stage for the climax
- **Climax:** The turning point, the most intense moment
- **Falling Action:** All of the events that follow the climax
- **Resolution:** Conclusion, ending, tying together all of the pieces

**Journals/ Literature Circles:** Share the related worksheet with your students (See Appendix: Chapter 11 Mini Lesson for this worksheet). Have students complete each section with the events that match them. Allow students to discuss what they think is the climax of the story. Encourage them to think about the benefits and negatives of putting the climax in the middle of the story, closer to the end, etc. Can a story have more than one climax?

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**Portraits of Courage** (long-term project) Use class time to allow students to continue their research on historical figures, or to begin putting together their interview notes and forming coherent paragraphs.

Consider assigning students to research “teams,” placing at least one student who is a strong reader and writer in each group, so that they can help one another in the research process.

**Resolving conflict:** Have students write about a time when they had a falling out with a friend and then tried to resolve that conflict. How did they achieve a resolution? Would they do anything differently if they had a chance to do it again? **Dialogue Journals**
Chapters 12 and 13

Summary
Pages 118-135: On the day of the big game, Lincoln is so anxious that he reacts with hostility when his teammate Bukowski antagonizes him, and almost gets into a fight. When the game begins, Lincoln is still disappointed about not starting, and his feeling of not belonging to either side overwhelms him.

However, during the game Lincoln comes to terms with both sides of his identity and finally realizes “who he is.” When Coach Yesutis finally brings him into the game, he acts on his realization by deciding to “play for himself” and not for either side. Although Franklin ultimately wins, Lincoln plays well and scores enough points to make the victory less embarrassing for Columbus. He makes peace with both Monica and Tony, and Roy makes good on his promise to straighten out Yesutis.

In the final chapter, we see Lincoln at peace with himself. He has realized that his true identity lies within him, and not on one side or the other. In fact, he finds that he can take both sides simultaneously. The end of the novel suggests a bright future for Lincoln as he looks forward to a conversation with Monica.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• How does the final game illustrate the central theme of the book? What understanding does Lincoln come to? {Key Question: Theme} {Close Read}
• How does Lincoln finally resolve the two “sides” of his identity? {Key Question: Conflict}
• How does Lincoln’s mother respond to his complaints about Coach Yesutis? Why do you think she responds the way she does?
• Why doesn’t the confrontation between Lincoln and Bukowski end up in a fight?
• How does Lincoln feel during the first half of the game? Why does Lincoln feel “glad” after halftime? (p. 127) What brings about this change in his mood?
• What does Lincoln mean when he says, “he was a Franklin boy beneath a Columbus uniform?” (p. 127) {Close Read}
• What does Roy say when he confronts Coach Yesutis? Why do you think he does this? What effect does this have on Lincoln?
• What is the significance of the Warriors beating the Kings? Why is this an important detail?
• What prompts Tony to come to Sycamore to play basketball with Lincoln, rather than asking Lincoln to go to the city? How is Tony’s plan significant in terms of the issue of “taking sides”?
• Discuss the ways in which Taking Sides is an appropriate title for this book. How many situations are there in the book in which someone is pressured to “take sides”?
• Does Lincoln ultimately take a side? Can a person take both sides at once? {Dialogue Journal}

- **excursion** (p. 119) a trip
- **countered** (p. 120) oppose
- **clenched** (p. 122) held tightly
- **ligaments** (p. 124) a piece of tissue in your body that holds bones together or keeps an organ in place
- **huddled** (p. 124) to crowd together
- **spectator** (p. 125) one who looks on or watches
- **toothy** (p. 126) having or showing prominent teeth
- **clobbered** (p. 126) to defeat someone easily
- **logic** (p. 126) mode of reasoning
- **scanned** (p. 126) to examine
- **giddy** (p. 127) playful and silly
- **feigned** (p. 128) to pretend to feel or be affected by something
- **ranting** (p. 129) to talk in a noisy, excited manner
- **pampered** (p. 131) to treat with extreme or excessive care and attention
- **lathering** (p. 131) to cover
- **órale** (p. 131) come on!

Direct Instruction of Vocabulary Words: Vocabulary Organizer
In the appendix is a vocabulary organizer for chapters 12 & 13, which is modified from the vocabulary organizer for chapter 10. The organizer for this chapter allows students to include a student-friendly definition, a sentence using the word, synonyms & antonyms, and a picture. The organizer could be completed individually or in pairs. This organizer would complement a word wall well.

Mini Lesson: Resolution

|-------------------------------------|

**What you might say:** The resolution tells us how the conflict is resolved. It is the ending. Some authors like to give you all the information and neatly wrap up the end of the story. In *Taking Sides*, Soto does this and gives a pretty clear picture of how the major conflict is resolved. Soto also leaves us with a new understanding or a lesson learned as he resolves the conflict in the book.

**Journals/ Literature Circles:** What events helped the reader to understand how the conflict was resolved?

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

**Dealing with negative emotions:** Encourage students to address the following questions and prompts in their journals.

- How does Lincoln deal with negative feelings (e.g., frustration, anger, disappointment)?
- Does he deal with them in a courageous way?
- Compare how you and Lincoln deal with similar negative emotions.
- Have you learned anything from Lincoln in this respect?
- What advice would you offer Lincoln?
Post-Reading

Portraits of Courage (long-term project)
When everyone has finished writing a draft of their research articles or writing up their interviews, have students follow these steps for putting the book together.

1. Share rough drafts in small group “workshops” of four students, keeping journal partners together. A workshop is a format for discussing student writing, in which students critique one another’s work. All students in each group read the work of all of the other students in the group, and then discuss each student’s work, one by one. Before beginning this activity, review with the students what it means to critique: all criticism should be constructive, and students should always try to find at least one positive thing to say about each piece of writing.

2. Ask workshop group members for ideas about illustrating their portraits. If possible, students should try to obtain photographs or drawings of the individuals that they interview or research.

3. Divide class into groups with different responsibilities: a. typing up the portraits on the computer, b. layout, c. illustrations/photographs, and d. “marketing” the book (i.e., to whom should they distribute it, and how?)

Note: You may wish to invite a publishing professional from the community (such as a layout person from a local newspaper, or a graphic designer) into the classroom to give students advice about how to design and market their anthology of courage portraits.

Letter to the Author
Have students write individual letters to Gary Soto in which they share:
- What they liked best about the book
- What they didn’t like as well
- How they related to the book in a personal way

Letters can be mailed to Mr. Soto via his publisher.
Themes and Key Questions

**Theme: Courage**

*Topics:*
- Courage to stand up for your beliefs;
- Courage to face prejudice or stereotyping;
- Courage to go against popular opinion;
- Courage to be different;
- Courage to stand your own ground;
- Courage to follow your beliefs.

*Key Questions*
- What is courage?
- How does Lincoln show courage?
- How do the other main characters show courage?
- What do you think is the most courageous act of the book? Why do you think so?
- What is the most courageous thing you have ever done?

**Theme: Being True to Yourself and Identity**

*Key Questions*
- What do you think it means to be true to yourself? Is it important to be true to yourself? Why or why not?
- To be true to your self, does one have to make sacrifices? Explain.
- How were characters in the book true to themselves or not? How was Max Warburg true to himself or not?
- Based on what you know from Lincoln’s experiences, what can you do when being true to yourself means being excluded from your friends and family?
- How does Lincoln grapple with his (racial) identity when he moves to Sycamore? How do you know?
- Does Lincoln have a difficult time negotiating his identity when he returns to the Mission District? Explain with evidence from the book.
- Is language a way that Lincoln identifies himself and who he is? Explain with evidence from the book.

**Theme: Friendship & Loyalty**

*Key Questions*
- What do you think characterizes a true friend?
- How has Lincoln’s life been affected by his friendships with Tony, James, Monica, and Roy?
- How has Max Warburg been a friend to the thousands of people whom he has never met or known?
- What is the meaning of friendship? Use characters in Taking Sides, your own experiences and Max Warburg as examples to support your ideas.
• Is Lincoln loyal to his friends and teammates in Sycamore and the Mission District? Explain.
• Are Lincoln’s friends loyal to him? How do you know?

**Theme: Family**

*Topics*
There are many possible forms a family can take;
Your family is not necessarily related by blood to you.

*Key Questions*
• Are there people in Lincoln’s life who are a part of his family, even though they’re technically not his family? What role do they play?
• What are the differences and similarities between the various families in *Taking Sides*? Lincoln’s family, Monica’s family, James’ family, and Tony’s family.
• What do you think makes a strong family unit?
### Depth of Knowledge Questions Stems

#### DOK Question Stems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOK 1</th>
<th>DOK 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you recall</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>Can you explain how</strong> ____ affected ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When did</strong> ____ happen?</td>
<td><strong>How would you apply what you learned</strong> to develop ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who was</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you compare</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can you recognize</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>Contrast</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you classify</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can you find the meaning of</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How are</strong> ____ alike? <strong>Different</strong>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you recall</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you classify the type of</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you select</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>What can you say about</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would you write</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you summarize</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What might you include on a list about</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you summarize</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who discovered</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>What steps are needed to edit</strong> ____?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What is the formula for</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>When would you use an outline to</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you identify</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How would you estimate</strong> ____?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How would you describe</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>How could you organize</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you notice about</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>What would you use to classify</strong> ____?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOK 3</th>
<th>DOK 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is</strong> ____ related to ____?</td>
<td><strong>Write a thesis, drawing conclusions from multiple sources.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What conclusions can you draw</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>Design and conduct an experiment. Gather information to develop alternative explanations for the results of an experiment.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would you adapt</strong> ____ to create a different ____?</td>
<td><strong>Write a research paper on a topic.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would you test</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>Apply information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you predict the outcome if</strong> ____?</td>
<td><strong>What information can you gather to support your idea about</strong> ____?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the best answer? Why?</strong></td>
<td><strong>DOK 4 would most likely be the writing of a research paper or applying information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What conclusion can be drawn from these three texts?</strong></td>
<td><strong>DOK 4 requires time for extended thinking.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is your interpretation of this text? Support your rationale.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would you describe the sequence of ____?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What facts would you select to support ____?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Can you elaborate on the reason ____?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What would happen if ____?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Can you formulate a theory for ____?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How would you test ____?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Can you elaborate on the reason ____?</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*From Depth of Knowledge – Descriptors, Examples and Question Stems for Increasing Depth of Knowledge in the Classroom Developed by Dr. Norman Webb and Flip Chart developed by Myra Collins*
Sentence Starters for Responding to Journal Entries, Peer-to-Peer

I liked..... about this piece.

I was really interested in what you were saying when...

My favorite part of your journal entry was...

I could really see/hear/feel what you were describing when...

I could relate to what you said when...

My favorite word/phrase you used was...

This entry made me feel...

Your entry reminded me of...

I really enjoyed reading your journal entry. One thing that I was wondering about was...

adapted from:
Prompts for Conferring with Students

What kinds of things are you noticing/realizing about Lincoln? What evidence from the book has helped you know/realize that?

What has Lincoln (or other characters) learned or realized (about self, others, life, etc.) at this point in the book? What evidence from the book helped you know/realize that?

Share a part where you could infer an emotion a character was feeling.

How does the setting affect the story?

What has been the most exciting part of the story so far? Explain.

Read me a part that stood out to you/that you liked.

How would the story change if it were written from a perspective other than Lincoln?

What new ideas or connections is Taking Sides inspiring you to think about?

What do you like about Gary Soto's writing?

Tell me about some confusing parts of the story.

What are some questions you had while reading?

What is the main problem(s) in the book?
Before You Begin Reading: Agree/Disagree Chart

Name:

**Statement:** It takes courage to be your self.

*(Put a ✓ mark under the choice that represents your position and then explain why you chose your position in the middle box).*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before reading</th>
<th>After reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Before reading:**

**After reading:**

**After reading:**
Word Wall Example

In the example below, the part of speech has been included so that students can be reminded that words may have multiple meanings and thus the meaning can change depending on the part of speech. The definition is in kid-friendly terms, and the students should generate the sentence. Including a picture or illustration is advantageous for those learners whom remember things visually.

traitor (n)

*a spy; someone who is disloyal*

The traitor was caught with the top secret documents.
# Chapter 1: Character Chart

Name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Beatrice (mom)</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Tony</th>
<th>Roy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to the character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strength(s) of the character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weaknesses of the character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defining moment(s) for the character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential question for the character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why was the relationship important?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Identity Web

Name ________________________________
# Chapter 2 Vocabulary: K-W-L

Name __________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we <strong>KNOW</strong> about Spanish contributions to the English language</th>
<th>What we <strong>WANT</strong> to know about Spanish contributions to the English language</th>
<th>What we’ve <strong>LEARNED</strong> about Spanish contributions to the English language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

### Chapter 3: Most Common Prefixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anti-</td>
<td>against</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de-</td>
<td>opposite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dis-</td>
<td>not, opposite of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>en-, em-</td>
<td>cause to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fore-</td>
<td>before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in-, im-</td>
<td>in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in-,im-, il-, ir-</td>
<td>not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inter-</td>
<td>between</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mis-</td>
<td>wrongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-</td>
<td>not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over-</td>
<td>over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-</td>
<td>before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-</td>
<td>again</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi-</td>
<td>half</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub-</td>
<td>under</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>super-</td>
<td>above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans-</td>
<td>across</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un-</td>
<td>not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under-</td>
<td>under</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The example column is left open for you to complete with students.*

Adapted from:
# Chapter 3: Most Common Suffixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-able, -ible</td>
<td>can be done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-al, -ial</td>
<td>having characteristics of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ed</td>
<td>past-tense verbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-en</td>
<td>made of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-er</td>
<td>comparative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-er</td>
<td>one who</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-est</td>
<td>comparative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ful</td>
<td>full of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ic</td>
<td>having characteristics of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ing</td>
<td>verb form/present participle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition</td>
<td>act, process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ity, -ty</td>
<td>state of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ive, -ative, -itive</td>
<td>adjective form of a noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-less</td>
<td>without</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ly</td>
<td>characteristic of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ment</td>
<td>action or process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ness</td>
<td>state of, condition of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ous, -eous, -ious</td>
<td>possessing the qualities of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-s, -es</td>
<td>more than one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-y</td>
<td>characterized by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The example column is left open for you to complete with students.

Chapter 3: Common Greek Roots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aero</td>
<td>air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anthropo</td>
<td>human being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>astro</td>
<td>star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auto</td>
<td>self</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>biblio</td>
<td>book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bio</td>
<td>life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chron</td>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crat</td>
<td>rule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem</td>
<td>people</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>earth</td>
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<tr>
<td>graph</td>
<td>write</td>
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<td>homo</td>
<td>similar</td>
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<tr>
<td>meter</td>
<td>measure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>micro</td>
<td>small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pathos</td>
<td>feelings of pity or sorrow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phone</td>
<td>sound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photo</td>
<td>light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psych</td>
<td>mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scope</td>
<td>distance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theo</td>
<td>god</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>therm</td>
<td>heat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zoo</td>
<td>animal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The example column is left open for you to complete with students.*

Adapted from: https://keystoliteracy.com/wp-content/pdfs/5b-wkshp-templates/commongreekRoots.pdf
Chapter 6: Knowledge Rating Scale

Name:
Check box 1: Know it well
Check box 2: Have seen or heard it
Check box 3: Have no idea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Predicted meaning</th>
<th>Actual meaning &amp; sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gleamed (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recliner (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paring (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anticipation (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turpentine (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derby (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clot (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Word</td>
<td>Part of Speech</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saunter (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detention (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lint (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flecked (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lopsided (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6: Frayer Model Activity (Example: *stereotype*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Definition</th>
<th>Characteristics/Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- People making assumptions about others based on their physical characteristics</td>
<td>- Stereotyping can often cause bitterness and hatred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People judging others based on pre-conceived notions</td>
<td>- talking negatively about others behind their back about their differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- can cause violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**stereotype (n)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples (may also be drawn)</th>
<th>Non-Examples (may also be drawn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- girls can't play sports as good as boys</td>
<td>- everyone accepting each other no matter what their differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- all blondes are ditzy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- girls aren't good at math and science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentence (using word):

Some times boys stereotype girls by saying that they’re not good athletes.
Frayer Model Activity (Blank template)

Name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Definition</th>
<th>Characteristics/Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples (may also be drawn)</th>
<th>Non-Examples (may also be drawn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentence (using word):
Chapter 7: Cloze Sentences Vocabulary Activity

Name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viciously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bulky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snickered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boomerang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lacquered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ________________ tree branch came screaming down on top of the car, causing Allison to ________________ and drop her drink. The tree shook ________________ after the branch fell and caused loud sounds to ________________ across the grove of trees. After she realized that she and the car were ________________ in one piece, Allison ________________ with relief. She thought she deserved a ________________ or some type of ________________ award for surviving this drama.
Chapter 8: Semantic Gradients

Name:

Place the words from the word bank in the appropriate place on the gradient.

mussed ------------------ organized
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

Word Bank: untidy, orderly, messy, harmony

unison ------------------ disagreement
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

Word Bank: division, alliance, separation, agreement

hobbled ------------------ run
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

Word Bank: continue, falter, continue, stagger

startled ------------------ expect
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|

Word Bank: terrified, calm, composed, agitated
### Chapter 9: Word Sort Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>throb</strong>ing (adj)</th>
<th><strong>maneuvered</strong> (v)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pounding, pulsating</td>
<td>to make changes in direction or position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>lace</strong>d (v)</th>
<th><strong>glisten</strong>ing (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to add something to</td>
<td>sparkling, shiny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>aura</strong> (n)</th>
<th><strong>portfolio</strong> (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a special quality or feeling that seems to come from a person, place, or thing</td>
<td>case for carrying papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>unravel</strong>ed (v)</th>
<th><strong>groggily</strong> (adv)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to cause the separate threads of something to come apart</td>
<td>weak, tired, unsteady</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>intruder</strong> (n)</th>
<th><strong>unscathed</strong> (adj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a person who enters a building or grounds without permission</td>
<td>unharmed, uninjured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>heav</strong>ing (adj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to cause to swell or rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pried (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electrodes (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awkwardly (adv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remainder (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furtively (adv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cinch (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heaved (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muttering (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slouched (v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Chapter 11 Mini Lesson: Plot and Climax

Name __________________________________________

Directions: In the space provided, note the events and conflicts that make up each part of the story plot of *Taking Sides*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Definition</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>Antonyms</th>
<th>Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>excursion (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>countered (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>clenched (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ligaments (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huddled (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>spectator (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toothy (adj)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>clobbered (v)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logic (n)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>scanned (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giddy (adj)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>feigned (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ranting (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pampered (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lathering (v)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Boston Public Schools ELA Key Questions

Topic
- What is this book or chapter about?

Theme
- What lessons is the author trying to teach?
- Do you agree or disagree with the author’s point of view?

Plot
- What are the most memorable or significant events? Why these?
- What role did they play in developing the theme?
- What’s going to happen next? Did it?

Characterization
- Who are the most important characters? What makes them so important?
- How do they help develop the theme?
- What are their key characteristics?

Conflict
- What challenges are the key characters wrestling with?
- How are they responding to them?
- How should they respond? How would you respond?

Setting
- How do location, time, and culture affect the characters and plot?
- What role do they play in developing the theme?
- Would the story be different in another location, time, or culture?

Language
- How does the author’s use of language enhance the story?

Connections
- What comparisons can you make between the characters and events in the book/chapter, yourself, and contemporary characters/events you’re familiar with?

Significance
- Why is this book important?
- Is there anything unique about this book? Is there anything difficult or challenging?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

General
- What are the most interesting things you learned?
- What surprised or amazed you?
- How would you change any part of this book/chapter? How would this affect the story?