

Brian's Song by William Blinn ***(Published by Mass Market Paperback)***

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 8

Summary

Brian Piccolo and Gale Sayers are teammates and friends who play for the Chicago Bears. This nonfiction screenplay takes us through their lives together, their struggles with racial tensions, and a personal battle with cancer. This is the true story of two men who, through the trials of life, learn to be better people and break racial lines in the NFL.

Connection to the Curriculum

Brian's Song is a non-fiction story set in the 1960's. It addresses the segregation and civil rights issues from our 8th grade social studies curriculum. It meets the needs for 8th graders to read a variety of writing styles and understanding author's purpose. It teaches virtues and common universal themes that appear throughout the middle school curriculum.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.9- The student identifies characteristics expository text.

1.4.12- The student uses prior knowledge, content, text type, and text features to make, revise, and confirm predictions.

1.4.13- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after the reading of the text.

1.4.14- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.20- The student identifies and describes the author's purpose (e.g., to inform, to give directions, to entertain) and basic techniques the author uses to achieve that purpose.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g. their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor events related to the conflict in a story (e.g., crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution) and explains how one event gives rise to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit and/or explicit information from the text.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The book deals with controversial issues of segregation and prejudice. One conversation in the book uses a derogatory term directly at Gale Sayers.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities