

BASKETBALL (OR SOMETHING LIKE IT)

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 6-8

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Basketball (or Something Like It) by Nora Raleigh Baskin. Harper Collins, 2005. 166 pages.

Summary

Basketball (or Something Like It) follows the experiences of four sixth-grade students who are involved with their school's basketball team, the North Bridge Panthers.

The story is in alternating chapters from the perspective of each person: Hank, Jeremy, Nathan and Anabel. Hank plays ball mostly to please his parents. Jeremy, the hot shot of the team, was abandoned by his dad and forced to live with his grandmother. He thinks that running away might solve his problems and ease his pain. Nathan, one of the worst players on the team, is also the only African American on the team. He is haunted by the knowledge that his uncle turned to drugs after playing professional basketball. Anabel plays basketball very well, but she is ignored and lives in the shadow of her brother.

The three boys feel inadequate, uncertain, and confused as they try out for the team. They struggle to seek their place and attempt to find relationships. Basketball gives them an outlet for their frustration and a chance to "sink or swim." As the story progresses, the three boys connect with Anabel when they are all in detention. They form a bond that gives them support in good times and bad. That bond helps them to learn about friendship, trust, and loyalty. It also leads to Nathan's chance to shine and the teams' victory in a very important game. The story offers insight into the pressures of being a part of a team, friendship, and family dynamics.

Read an excerpt (click on "Browse Inside"):

http://www.harpercollins.com/books/9780060596125/Basketball_or_Something_Like_It/index.aspx

Author's Biography

Nora Raleigh Baskin, who is the author of four children's books, grew up in Brooklyn and in New Paltz, New York. She graduated from the State University of New York at Purchase and taught preschool for several years. She now teaches writing and literature in Connecticut where she resides with her husband and two sons.

www.harpercollins.com/authors/27441/Nora_Raleigh_Baskin/index.aspx

www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=654.

<http://www.norabaskin.com>

Other Titles by Nora Raleigh Baskin

Almost Home

In the Company of Crazies

What Every Girl (Except Me Knows)

Related Titles

Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery by John Feinstein.

Slam! by Walter Dean Myers.

Hoops by Walter Dean Myers.

Taking Sides by Gary Soto.

Long Shot for Paul by Matt Christopher.

Classroom Connections

- Discuss friendship and brainstorm ways to be a good friend.
- Have a class discussion about the issues that the characters in the book struggle with. The following sites will be helpful in the discussion.
 - **Character.Com** <http://www.goodcharacter.com/Sports.html> This web site has a section on Character and Sports that includes discussions about trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and caring.
 - **Lesson Plan.com—Community Teamwork** <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSLAOMDCommunityUnit-TeamworkL36.htm> This lesson plan on community and teamwork includes activities for developing an understanding of teamwork and cooperation and building communities.
 - **Jefferson County School District, Colorado. Friendship Lesson Plan** <http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/passport/lessonplan/lessons/friends.html> This is a mini unit on friendship using multicultural literature.
- Use the activities given on the following web site to help students realize the importance of teamwork. <http://www.emporia.edu/athletics/saac/teamwork.htm>
- Have students research the history of basketball and create a PowerPoint presentation.
- Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a well-known basketball player to research.
- Divide the class into two teams. Create cue cards listing things about one of the characters in the story. The teams could take turns trying to identify the character described. Whoever identifies the character, they get to shoot a paper basket into the goal.
- Have the students look up magazine or newspaper articles about youth basketball games and compare them to one of the North Bridge team games.
- Have the students form a big circle outside. Give the students one event from the beginning of *Basketball (or Something Like It)*. Each student tells an event and bounces or rolls the ball to a classmate. That classmate must tell the next event and so on until the entire story is retold.
- Put questions from the story onto little paper basketballs. Give each question so many points based on its difficulty. When the student answers the question, he/she will get a chance to dribble and shoot a real basketball.
- Have the students do a report on how to play basketball or on the history of the sport.
- Have the students read other books related to basketball or other sports and make a Venn diagram comparing the two.
- Art: Have the students do a torn paper art basketball collage.
- Physical Education: Teach the students to play the game of basketball.

Web Sites

KidsRead.com Basketball (or Something Like It) by Nora Raleigh Baskin

<http://www.kidsreads.com/reviews/0060596104.asp>.

KidsRead.com has a detailed review of the book. This kid-friendly site is attractive and includes other interesting information and activities.

Nora Raleigh Baskin

www.norabaskin.com

<http://web.mac.com/norabaskin/iWeb/Site/words.html>

This site has basic information about the author and contact information. It also has a link to a sister site that contains an on-line journal, photos and a place for student work.

NCAA Basketball-The Chalkboard-Fastbreak Lesson Plans

http://www.ncaa.org/bbp/basketball_marketing/kids_club/htdocs/thechalkboard/fastbreak.html

This website showcases lesson plans and activities related to basketball in six different subject areas: art, language, physical education, social studies, math, and science. The plans are geared for kindergarten through 8th grade. The lesson plans meet national standards and emphasize good behavior in sports and in the classroom.