



Blazer Drive

Sigmund Brouwer

Reading level: 3.8

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AR Quiz # 34969

Book Summary

When Josh Ellroy, left-winger for the Kamloops Blazers, and his dad find more than a dozen dead cattle on the family ranch, Josh has some serious decisions to make. On one hand, the Western Hockey League playoffs are ahead, plus a chance to play in the National Hockey League. On the other hand, there's a beautiful and interesting girl who believes more prize bulls will be killed. Josh is afraid of what will happen if he gets involved. As he learns more, he's afraid of what will happen if he doesn't.

Prereading Ideas

- Think about the expression "There's no I in TEAM." Then think about what Michael Jordan said: "There's no I in TEAM but there is in WIN." Is there any place on a team for players' egos? Some people say, "There's no I in TEAM, but there is an M and an E." What happens when teammates believe different things about teamwork? And how can coaches and leaders value individual strengths on a team?
- How many times should you turn the other cheek? Is it always the right thing to do?

Connecting to the Text

Foreshadowing

The first chapter of *Blazer Drive* begins and ends with foreshadowing. Have students find other examples from the book and write a paragraph discussing what it accomplishes and whether it works.

Character and Plot

- Josh is a very good person. He almost always responds well under pressure, does the right thing and doesn't allow himself to be provoked. Have students rewrite a scene from the book, changing Josh's behavior from good to bad. Then ask them to describe how the change in his behavior would affect the plot.
- After students have written about "bad" Josh, ask them to write the same scene with Josh being a combination of good and bad. Is he a stronger character or a weaker one? More realistic or less? How does this change affect the plot?
- Stephanie and Josh investigate a crime on their own. Ask students to consider the wisdom of their actions. Are they acting as vigilantes or as concerned citizens? How might the story have been different if they had called the police right away?

Connecting to the Curriculum

Social Studies

Cattle Ranching

- Josh's father is a rancher and Josh hopes to be a rancher after a career in the NHL. Losing a prize bull is an enormous blow to a rancher. Have students research what else threatens modern ranchers.
- Cattle ranching can be environmentally devastating. Divide students into small groups and have each group study the ranching practices of a particular country and then give a brief report to the class.
- Is there actually a black market for prize bulls?

Physics

How do hot-air balloons work? Explore the science of hot-air balloons and discuss whether they could actually be used the way they are in *Blazer Drive*.

Psychology

- Luke has an irrational fear of livestock. Is bovinophobia an actual phobia? Ask students to discuss when/how a fear becomes a phobia.
- People deal with conflict in different ways. Look for examples in *Blazer Drive* of how conflicts are resolved and ask students to pick a scene and write about a different way of resolving the conflict. For example, Josh's coach deals with the conflict between Josh and Luke by telling them to solve it themselves. What other approaches could he have used?

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. What takes more courage—hitting back or walking away?
2. How do practical jokes on other players on the team build up or tear down team spirit?
3. If someone you don't like apologized to you for something bad he or she did to you, how would that change the way you feel about that person?
4. Is there ever a time when violence is the right way of dealing with a situation?

Resources

Social Studies

- www.greenpeace.org/usa/news/cattle-ranching-biggest-driver
- www.fao.org/newsroom/EN/news/2005/102924/index.html

Physics

- www.physics.ubc.ca/outreach/phys420/p420_08/Karen%20Schmelcher/PowerK_files/v3_document.htm

Psychology

- <http://constantfear.blogspot.com/2008/01/bovinophobia-fear-of-cattle.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution

Author Biography

Sigmund Brouwer is the bestselling author of many books for children and teens. He has contributed numerous titles to the Orca Currents series, the Orca Echoes series and the Orca Sports series. He and his family live in Red Deer, Alberta, and Eagleville, Tennessee.

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