A Curriculum Guide to

Battle Bunny
By Jon Scieszka and Mac Barnett
Illustrated by Matthew Myers

Prereading Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below correlate to the following Common Core State Standards: (SL.2-3.1, 2, 3).

1. What books have you read that you disliked? What did you dislike about them? Does anybody respectfully disagree with what others liked/disliked? Why?

2. If you could write a book about anything, what would you write about?

3. What does the word "creative" mean? (Note to teachers: It may be helpful to discuss the "create" root.) What are some examples of creativity? Have you ever disagreed with someone (like your parents or a teacher) about whether something is creative? Has a teacher or other grown-up ever told you to stop doing something that you thought was creative?

4. How do you feel most comfortable expressing yourself? For example, do you like to write, draw, dance, cook, or design outfits? If appropriate, analyze and discuss what it means to express yourself. Use illustrative examples of art, music, etc., to show how others express themselves.

Prereading Activity

The activity below correlates to the following Common Core State Standards: (SL.3.1, 1b-d).

Note to teachers: After discussing No. 4 above, give students time to create something that expresses themselves, and then hold a session for sharing stories, drawings, dances, and more. Follow with a discussion about what they learned about one another. Ask for positive adjectives that describe them (funny, hardworking, committed, talented). Try to keep away from "good at . . ." and focus on students' efforts rather than abilities. Ask if anyone learned something that couldn't be learned through just a conversation?

During Reading

Note to teachers: Be prepared to answer questions about copyright or drawing on books that may arise during reading.

The discussion questions below correlate to the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.2.6, 7, 10) (RL.3.3, 7)

1. Read the text in two different voices at the same time; one reading the original text and one reading Alex's version. Think of it like a song duet.

2. Midway through, pause and ask kids what sound effects they think would be appropriate for each version (possibilities: birds chirping and a babbling brook for pre-Alex, evil laughter and sawing sounds for post-Alex.) Ask kids to provide these sound effects at appropriate times.

3. After reading, ask kids to perform in an Evil Bunny voice and a sappy narrator voice. Explain why you chose the voice you did.

Postreading Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below correlate to the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.2.1, 3, 5, 7) (RL.3.1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) (SL.2.2, 4) (SL.3.1a, 4)

1. Who is the main character of *Battle Bunny*—Bunny, or Alex? Use the story to support your answer.

2. Who is/are the real authors of *Battle Bunny*—Alex, or Jon Scieszka and Mac Barnett?

3. How was the story of *Birthday Bunny* structured before Alex made his changes (in particular, what was the climax)? What is the structure and climax after Alex makes changes? Did Alex change the structure, or did he just change the outcome?

4. What are some words that describe the story setting before and after Alex made his changes?

5. What are some words that describe the Bunny character in *Birthday Bunny*? What about in *Battle Bunny*?

6. What are some words that describe Alex? (Possibilities: smart, funny, creative, expressive, bored, entertaining . . .) How do you know? Answer using examples from the story. Do any of these words describe you?

7. Why do you think there are so many books for kids that are way too sappy? What are the grown-ups who create sappy books trying to do?

8. What are some other stories Alex could have transformed *Birthday Bunny* into, besides *Battle Bunny*?

9. What are some other books you wish you could transform the way Alex did? What would you turn them into?

10. Help students find other works by the authors and illustrator of *Battle Bunny*. What do you notice that's similar about their titles? What's different?

Beyond Reading Activities

1. Show the Duchamp, Dali, Warhol, and Basquiat versions of the Mona Lisa alongside the original. Is the new work art?

2. Show Shepard Fairey and Banksy graffiti works. Is this art?

3. Play music mash-ups of music that your grade level will know (play both original songs and mashed-up versions). Is this new work art?

4. Show music video mash-ups (both originals and mashed-ups). Is this new work art?

5. Check out Matt Myers "Collaborative Works" on his website: http://www.myerspaints.com/Site/Collaborative_1_myerspaints.html. These are part of the reason Jon and Mac thought Matt would be the perfect illustrator to paint both *Birthday Bunny…* and *Battle Bunny*.

Postreading Activities

The activities below correlate to the following Common Core State Standards: (W.2.1, 3, 5, 6) (W.3.1, 1a-d, 3, 4, 10) (SL.2.1, 3, 5) (Sl.3.1, 1b-d, 3, 5)

1. Let students, faculty, guest writers and artists choose a page, a spread, or whatever pages they want of the unaltered *Birthday Bunny*. Then give everyone regular time, over days or weeks, to create and draw their own stories.

Download *Birthday Bunny* at MyBirthdayBunny.com

2. Have students work in groups to create and record an audiobook version of *Battle Bunny*, a video, or a book of their own creation. Students can make their own mash-ups or remixes.

3. Ask interested students to write online letters or petitions to publishers, asking for fewer sappy books and more books that celebrate what kids consider to be creative. Explain why "sappy" doesn't work and "creative" can mean many things.

4. Hold a sharing time for kids to talk about their work. If feasible, invite parents and other teachers and students to an open house with student work on display.

Guide written in 2013 by Allie Jane Bruce, a children's librarian at Bank Street College Library.

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