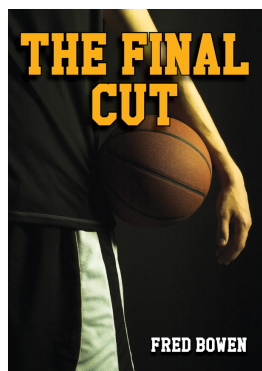


DISCUSSION GUIDE



The Final Cut

Written by Fred Bowen

PB: 978-1-56145-510-2 | Also available in e-book

Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction | Series: Fred Bowen Sports Story
AR • RC • Lexile • F&P • GRL Q: Gr 4

ALIGNED with
COMMON CORE
STANDARDS

ABOUT THE SERIES

Fred Bowen's fast-paced middle-grade stories offer readers themes of competition, cooperation, facing change, gender roles, overcoming challenges, and new experiences. In addition, they feature play-by-play action, snappy dialogue, and engaging plots. Bowen's books are not the usual sports-fiction fare; each book loops in a little sports history and includes back matter with fascinating glimpses into that history and the heroes who made it happen.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Ryan, Zeke, Eli, and Miles want to make their eighth grade basketball team. They're not great, but they're not slouches either. Basketball is their life. They spend hours playing hoop together and hold their own against good teams in a 3-on-3 street tournament in the city. When they are not playing basketball, they are hanging out in Ryan's basement trying to figure out their chances of making the school team. The tryouts become not only a test of their athletic ability but also of their friendship too.

THEMES

Friendship | competition
dealing with disappointment | effort | practice
personal development | ambition resilience

WRITING PROMPTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

aligned with Common Core Reading Standards

DIRECTIONS

Use details from the text to support ALL of your responses.

CHAPTERS 1–3

Describe in a few words the different personalities of Ryan, Zeke, Eli, and Miles. Who cares the most about basketball? Who is the least enthusiastic? Do you think all four boys will make the team? Why or why not?

CHAPTERS 4–6

How does the author remind the reader that Ryan is always thinking about whether he will make the team? Why are Eddie Wilson's problems with his math class so important to the four friends? How does Ryan react to the news about Eddie Wilson? Compare his reaction to Zeke's reaction.

CHAPTERS 7–9

Describe the four Cellar Dwellers as basketball players. Study the statistics in chapter 9. What do the statistics tell the reader about the four friends' chances of making the Sligo team? If you had to rank them as players—best to worst—how would you rank the four boys and why?

CHAPTERS 10–12:

Study the chart and the team that Zeke picks in chapter 11. Do you agree with his choices? Why or why not? The

four friends play Ping-Pong throughout the book. What do the games tell you about each of their personalities?

CHAPTERS 13–15

How does Ryan’s stepfather’s story about being cut from his high school basketball and baseball teams fit into the story about Ryan and his friends? How do the stories about Michael Jordan and Bill Russell fit into the story? Describe Ryan’s feelings about not making the team. Do you think Ryan will keep playing basketball? Why or why not?

OVERALL QUESTION

In just a few words, write down what this whole story is about (the overall theme or big idea). Explain your response.

“THE REAL STORY” FOLLOW-UP QUESTION

How does the information in “The Real Story” relate to the theme or the plot of the book?

REVIEWS

“Bowen is quickly joining the ranks of today’s most popular sports-fiction authors...he skillfully interweaves fact and fiction and uses historical sports plays and concepts as a backdrop for the story.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Bowen is a natural when it comes to writing sports stories and informing his readers about the past. These books are perfect for kids ages 8 to 12.”

—*Newsday*

“[Bowen’s] pace is excellent and he has a knack for efficient evocation...” —*Washington Post*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fred Bowen is the author of Peachtree’s popular Fred Bowen Sports Story series. A lifelong sports fanatic, he has coached youth league baseball, softball, soccer, and basketball. His kids’ sports column “The Score” appears each week in the KidsPost section of the *Washington Post*. Bowen lives in Maryland.

www.fredbowen.com

Peachtree Teacher’s Guide for
THE FINAL CUT
prepared by Peggy Jackson

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