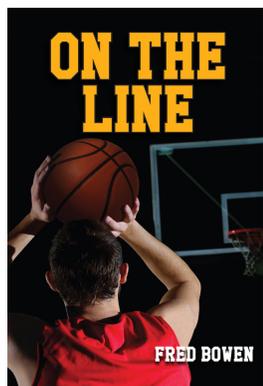


DISCUSSION GUIDE

ALIGNED with
COMMON CORE
STANDARDS



On the Line

Written by Fred Bowen

PB: 978-1-56145-511-9 | Also available in e-book

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

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

Marcus is a turbo-charged, high-scoring forward. He lights up the court with his star power—except when he has to make a free throw. His foul shots are embarrassing air balls or off-the-rim disasters. He's got to get better at the foul line—his team needs those extra points in close games. The custodian at his school shows him how to shoot underhand. Marcus doesn't want to try it. What if everybody laughs at him?

THEMES

Overcoming adversity | fear of failure | practice hard work | teammates | family | friendships
looking at accomplishments as opposed to appearances

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

Marcus is an awesome basketball player, but he is terrible at free throws from the foul line. Why are free throws important to Marcus? How does the author show that Marcus is really upset that he is so bad at them?

CHAPTERS 4–6

Describe how Marcus feels about playing the basketball game “21.” Why does he feel that way?

CHAPTERS 7–9

What is Marcus's first impression of Mr. Dunn? What are some indications in chapter 7 that Mr. Dunn may know a lot about basketball? How is the way Mr. Dunn shoots free throws different from the regular way? Why is Marcus reluctant to try Mr. Dunn's way?

CHAPTERS 10–12

What does Marcus discover during his research for his history project? How does this discovery change the way Marcus thinks about Mr. Dunn? How does Marcus's discovery change the way he feels about trying underhand free throws? What are the reactions of Marcus's teammates to Marcus taking underhand free throws?

CHAPTERS 13–15

How does Marcus’s new way of shooting free throws also change the way he plays during the game in chapters 13 and 14? Compare and contrast the way Marcus feels about Mr. Dunn in chapter 15 to the way Marcus felt about Mr. Dunn in chapter 7.

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

“Basketball fans will empathize with an eighth-grade star center’s struggle... Marcus learns a valuable lesson about self-image and open-mindedness. Fast-paced court action, vivid game descriptions, and an upbeat ending will lure middle-school and reluctant readers... Bowen scores again with a satisfying blend of historical sports commentary and fiction.”

—*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

Available in the Fred Bowen Sports Story series

BASEBALL:

- Dugout Rivals*
- The Golden Glove*
- The Kid Coach*
- Perfect Game*
- Playoff Dreams*
- Throwing Heat*
- T.J.’s Secret Pitch*
- Winners Take All*

BASKETBALL:

- The Final Cut*
- Full Court Fever*
- Hardcourt Comeback*
- Off the Rim*
- On the Line*
- Outside Shot*
- Real Hoops*

FOOTBALL:

- Double Reverse*
- Quarterback Season*
- Touchdown Trouble*

SOCCER:

- Go for the Goal!*
- Out of Bounds*
- Soccer Team Upset*

Peachtree Teacher’s Guide for **ON THE LINE**

prepared by Peggy Jackson

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