

A Common Core Curriculum Guide for Derek Jeter's *The Contract*

About the Book

The debut book in the Jeter Publishing imprint, *The Contract* is a middle-grade baseball novel inspired by the youth of legendary sports icon and role model Derek Jeter.

Derek Jeter is a legend in professional sports and a role model for many youth around the country. While leading the New York Yankees to five World Series Championships and achieving a myriad of milestones and accomplishments on and off the field, including thirteen All-Star selections and membership in baseball's exclusive 3,000-hit club, Jeter has established a reputation of unparalleled character, credibility, dedication, and excellence. When Jeter was a boy, he had the dream of becoming the shortstop for the New York Yankees. Inspired by his childhood, the first book in this middle-grade series is about a boy who sets high goals for himself and makes his dreams come true through hard work, teamwork, and determination.

Prereading Activity

The following activities contained in this section address the following Common Core State Standards: (SL.3.1)

Introduce readers to Derek Jeter's 10 Life Lessons. You can find them listed on his website, here: http://mlb.mlb.com/players/jeter_derek/kids/handbook.jsp. Ask your students to share one goal they have and explain what they are doing to achieve it.

Discussion Questions

The following questions contained in this section address the following Common Core State Standards: (RL.K–12.1, 2)

- 1) What is Derek doing when his teacher calls on him?
- 2) What does Derek write about for his homework assignment, "My Dreams for the Future"?
- 3) What does Jeff say that makes Derek feel like he's been "punched in the stomach"?
- 4) What is it that Derek's parents do for him when they see he's troubled?
- 5) Why does Derek consider rewriting his essay? What advice do his parents give him?
- 6) Where did Derek's father play baseball?
- 7) Why do Derek's parents give him a contract to follow? What are the rules of Derek's contract?

- 8) Why did Derek's family move from New Jersey to Kalamazoo, Michigan?
- 9) Why is Derek disappointed in his team assignment?
- 10) How has Derek's father inspired his love of baseball?
- 11) What advice does Derek's father give him about his rivalry with Coach Kozlowski?
- 12) In what ways does Derek's love of competition extend beyond the baseball field?
- 13) How would you describe Derek's relationship with his parents?
- 14) What is the class's reaction when Ms. Wagner shares Derek's dream? How does he feel about the grade he receives for his essay?
- 15) How would you describe the way Pete treats his teammates?
- 16) Do you think Coach Kozlowski is playing favorites with his son on the team? If you were Derek, how would you feel about the situation?
- 17) What do Derek's parents explain to Ms. Wagner about his dream of playing professional baseball?
- 18) What does Derek notice about Ms. Wagner following the parent-teacher conference?
- 19) What does Derek not share with Vijay about his experiences being picked on?
- 20) What does Derek's mom explain to him about losing?
- 21) What does Derek make an effort to say to the umpires at every game?
- 22) What does Derek conclude about Pete Kozlowski when he's named MVP?
- 23) How would you describe the friendship between Derek and Vijay?
- 24) The first of Derek Jeter's 10 Life Lessons is "Set Your Goals High." What are some examples of how Derek learns to set his goals high in this story?

Postreading Activities

The following activities contained in this section address the following Common Core State Standards: (W.3–5.2) (W.3.4, 5) (W.4.9)

My Dreams for the Future Essay

Write a two-page essay on the topic of "My Dreams for the Future."

Create a Body Biography

Break into groups of three or four and trace one person's outline on butcher paper. Identify characteristics of multiple characters and label the characteristics on parts of the body. For example, if a character is intelligent, write the quote in the brain area. If a character is a good listener, write the quote on the ear. Cite textual evidence from the story to support the characteristics. Display the biographies. Students can illustrate and decorate as they like.

Create Your Own Contract

Create a contract like Derek's that can be shared with your parents or an adult you look up to. What would be included in your contract, such as setting guidelines for school work, rules about schedules and free time, and establishing consequences if the contract isn't followed. What are some of the rewards that would be included?

Close Reading

Read a passage from *The Contract* and identify different types of sentences (e.g., simple, complex, compound, simple, declarative, exclamatory, imperative, interrogative, etc.).

Have Fun with Math and Baseball

Derek's mom was good at reminding Derek how schoolwork was applicable to his passion and they often did baseball math together. Baseball is a game of statistics. Have fun with math by making a bulletin board of your school or town team's record, team batting averages, etc. Visit MLB's Stats 101 page to get started:

http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/baseball_basics/stats_101.jsp

Guide written in 2014 by Edward T. Sullivan, a librarian and writer.

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