

*Freak The Mighty*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 4-7

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

Before using this book with your class or recommending the book to students we suggest reading the book closely to determine if it is a good fit. Consider saying to your students: "This book contains topics and language that may be sensitive. Not all books fit all readers. If you are uncomfortable with this book, you have the right to stop reading it, but please pick another."

- How would you describe yourself?
- Share your experience of someone who changed your beliefs about yourself.
- How do you define a true friend?
- What is courage?
- Before reading, have a class discussion to complete the [anticipation guide](#)
- Frontload vocabulary: Chapters 1-3 (see vocabulary guide)

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- How would you describe Max and Freak's personalities? Why did the author portray them in such a different way? What are the similarities and differences? (Ch. 1-2)
- "Books are like truth serum—if you don't read, you can't figure out what's real" (p. 9). There is misinformation in the media. How can reading help us find the truth? Please give some examples. (Ch. 3-4)
- Do you think Gwen's reaction when she first saw Max was understandable? Why or why not? (Ch. 4)
- How does Max's room, "down under," show his beliefs about himself? (Ch. 1-5)
- What does the story imply about Max's and Freak's dads? How are they similar? (Ch. 5-6)
- How do Max and Freak feel when other classmates mocked them about their fathers? (Ch. 7)
- Why did Max believe that he had a dinosaur brain? How would this belief affect Max? (Ch. 7-8)
- Grim never called Max son. What could possibly change Grim? How were his behaviors before the incident? How were they after the incident? (Ch. 8)
- Do you think Freak truly believes he will be the first bionic robot in the world? If not, why would he say that? (Ch. 9)
- Irony is using words that are opposite of what you really mean. What is the irony in calling the tenements the New Testaments? (Ch. 11)
- What was Max's reaction when he heard what the principal wanted to say about his father? Why do you think he reacted this way? (Ch. 13)
- What are Max's beliefs about his abilities? Do you think people around us can shape the way we feel about ourselves? Give some examples. (Ch. 1-14)

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**During Reading (continued)**

- Freak said, “I am growing on the outside but not the inside” (p. 89). Can you relate to that? Or do you feel the opposite way? (Ch.14)
- How does the Christmas gift show Freak’s faith in Max? What is unique about it? (Ch. 15)
- Why did Max do whatever Kenny Kane wanted without fighting or escaping? (Ch. 16)
- How are Kenny Kane’s words and behaviors contradictory? What do the contradictions tell us about him? (Ch. 16-19)
- A dynamic character is one who learns a lesson or changes as a person (either for better or for worse). Which character from these chapters could be described as a dynamic character? Why? (Ch. 19-20)
- How does Grim’s advice, “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” relate to the characters in the book? (Ch. 11-21)
- Freak said, “you can remember anything, whether it happened or not” (p. 141). Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Why would Freak say it? (Ch. 22)
- Why do you think Freak decided that remembering is just an invention in the mind? (Ch. 21-22)
- Why did Freak want Max to tell the story? How did Max react to that? (Ch. 23)
- Do you think Freak lied about getting a bionic body? Why or Why not? (Ch. 24)
- Do you think Max changed his mind about how he perceived himself? Support your thinking with details from the book. (Ch1-24)

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- What can fundamentally change one’s beliefs?
- How can we respond to losing out significant others and seek out help?
- From the author’s perspective, what is the significance of self-perceptions and self-beliefs?

**If your students enjoyed this book...**

- Extend the significant topics in the book, such as self-perceptions, friendship, and family relationships, into a writing task, using multiliteracies as a medium to integrate more perspectives.
- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.