

Suitcase
Discussion Guide
Grades 3-6

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

- What is your favorite class in school? Why do you like it?
- Which is more important: doing things someone that someone you really care for wants or following your heart? Why?
- Do first impressions matter? Have you ever tried anything that you were not interested in at first? What could change your mind?
- Frontload vocabulary: Chapter1-3 (see vocabulary list)

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

- What does Xander like to do? Do you think “see more thing” is helpful or not? Why or why not? (Ch.1)
- What happened in the gym? How would you feel if you were in a similar situation? (Ch.2)
- How is Xander different when he is painting? (Ch.3)
- Who is Jeff? Why does Xander think Jeff is different from others? Why does Xander appreciate Jeff? (Ch.4)
- What are the reasons why Xander starts to practice with Jeff? (Ch.5)
- Who is Brandy? What do you know about her? What characteristics do you find in her? (Ch.6)
- What happened in the park? (Ch.7)
- What changes can you find in Xander so far? (Ch.1-7)
- What does drawing well have to do with playing basketball? Does it make sense to you? What other activities need hand-eye coordination as well? (Ch.8)
- How has Xander been practicing recently? What does he get from his practice? How does his attitude toward his nickname change? (Ch.9)
- What are Xander’s parents’ attitudes towards banner design? Why did Xander hesitate when Mrs. Cloud invited him to design the banner? (Ch.10)
- What might Xander’s dream suggest? Use as many details as possible to support your thinking. (Ch.1-11)
- How was Xander’s debut? Why did Xander say “suitcase” and “see-more” would not bother him anymore? (Ch.12)
- Why did Xander start playing sports at the beginning? Do you think he is still playing for the same reason? Use details from the story to support your thinking. (Ch.13)

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After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Soon, it will be Xander's second game! This time, he will be introduced before the game, officially. Write a short but exciting introduction for Xander and remember to add details to make the introduction exciting.
- If you were Xander's best friend, what would you do to support him when he is nervous and not feeling confident?

If your students enjoyed this book...

- 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.