

# Perfect Game by Fred Bowen

## Common Core Lesson Plan

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Perfect Game is the perfect text to use as a read aloud, literature circle or guided reading book. It offers a comprehensive vehicle to study character development and compare and contrast characters. At the end of this plan there is a list of the Common Core Standards for Key Ideas and Details in Reading, Grades 3 to 6. They provide a reference for you to easily modify the focus of the discussion or lesson.

### Objective and Goals by Grade Level:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

### Materials and Resources:

- A copy of the book for each student (unless used as a read aloud)
- A reading journal (student-made for this book or a spiral notebook)

Depending on the grade level of your students and your discussion format, the reading journal can be used to keep notes *for* or *from* your discussions. For each chapter, there are questions that will lead students to explore character development and use the text to make inferences about that development. **Students should always support their ideas and answers with text references.**

### Introduction:

Perfect Game is a book about two boys who are very different. One plays for his school baseball team and the other plays on a Special Olympics team. As they get to know each other, they change in very interesting and surprising ways. You don't need to know a lot about either sport to enjoy this story; you'll learn more as we read. But together let's write a few things that we know about the sports before we start reading.

Now let's read the book and meet Isaac and Kevin!

**NOTE:** See next page for writing prompts and discussion questions for students.

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## Writing Prompts/Discussion Questions

Directions: Use details from the text to support ALL of your answers.

### Chapter 1

Describe Isaac. What does the author tell you about him just by showing you how he puts on his baseball uniform? What is a perfect game in baseball?

### Chapter 2

Look at your description of Isaac. What more can you say about him? What scene in this chapter supports your description?

**Note:** Some baseball terms may be unfamiliar, but don't worry. Almost all these words can be defined through the use of context clues. Examples:

- **Error:** missing a catch during a game
- **Patter:** players talking on the field to keep themselves pumped up
- **Dugout:** where the team sits

### Chapter 3

What does the scene of Isaac and his dad in the backyard tell you about the dad and their relationship?

### Chapter 4

Isaac thinks he pitched a strike, but the umpire calls out, "Ball one." Later Coach Park says to Isaac, "I thought you were going to lose it when the umpire made that call." What does Coach Park mean by "going to lose it."

**Note:** More baseball terms that can be defined with context clues:

- **Bullpen:** area near the field where pitchers warm up by throwing practice pitches
- **Infielders:** the players who play close in, near the bases
- Foul ball:** when a batter hits a ball into foul territory, off the playing field.

### Chapter 5

Coach Park's basketball team is part of Special Olympics Unified Sports. Why is this kind of team called Unified Sports? Why do you think Coach Park wants Isaac to be part of the team? What is Isaac's first impression?

### Chapter 6

Why is Isaac glancing around the field while he is talking with Kevin? Why does he just want the conversation to end?

### Chapter 7

How is Kevin changing? How is Isaac changing? How are they similar to each other?

## Chapter 8

Isaac says that the way he plays sports is a lot different than the way Special Olympics athletes play sports. What reasons does he give? Maya completely disagrees. What reasons does she give?

## Chapter 9

Why does Coach Park tell Isaac about pro-baseball players who pitched perfect games? What does Maya mean when she tells Isaac to “Just be perfect enough.”

## Chapter 10

What scenes in this chapter show that Kevin is changing in important ways? How does Isaac react to those changes?

## Chapter 11

Compare Chapter 3 to Chapter 11. They are both about Isaac and his dad practicing pitching. What gives you clues that things are different for Isaac in this chapter?

## Chapter 12

Mrs. Canavan tells Isaac a lot of details about Kevin that he didn't know. How do you think that changes the way Isaac thinks about Kevin?

## Chapter 13

In Chapter 5, Isaac used the word “retarded” to describe the Special Olympic athletes. But in this chapter, he gets mad when Jackson uses the word. Why does Isaac feel so differently about the use of that word now?

## Chapter 14

When Kevin makes a basket at the end of the chapter, Isaac is so thrilled that he feels like he pitched the last out in a perfect game. Why is Isaac so excited?

## Chapter 15

Do you think Isaac would have made the Thunderbolts if he had tried out before he joined the Unified Sports team? Why or why not?

## Chapter 16

Reread the last two paragraphs. Earlier Isaac told Coach Park that he really didn't bowl, but when Kevin says, “I'm a bowler,” Isaac says, “Then I am too.” Why does he say that?

## 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 (The nonfiction section at the end)

What did you learn about Special Olympics Unified Sports that you did not know before? What did you learn about pro-baseball players who pitched perfect games?

## **After Reading Perfect Game:**

Has this book changed you or the way you think about some of the topics explored or characters introduced? Do you have any ideas about things you might do differently or try to do now because of reading this book?

### **Independent Practice and Assessment**

- Create character boards (poster board, 3"x7" white paper and markers). Students draw the main character—Isaac or Kevin—on the paper, writing their beginning description of him on the paper with the picture. Fold over top of paper like a hinge and glue hinge to board so picture can be lifted. Underneath draw the character and write description of him at the end of the story. All around him draw the characters that influence him and how. Every character affects the main character in some way good or bad. This is a great way to make those connections visible.
- Draw a story map, add the character's changes as the story develops for visual reinforcement (poster board, markers, rulers). Draw out the story beginning to end, using the details that lead to the climax and resolution. Students can discuss as a group and then add their own descriptors of Isaac and Kevin as they change through the action. Additional thoughts: Is the story climax the same for both? Are any other characters changed during the story?

### **Key Ideas and Details**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

### **Key Ideas and Details**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story from details in the text; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

### **Key Ideas and Details**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

### **Key Ideas and Details**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.