

Grade 5 Unit 1: Book Title: Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

Synopsis:

He wasn't born with the name Maniac Magee. He came into this world named Jeffrey Lionel Magee, but when his parents died and his life changed, so did his name. And Maniac Magee became a legend. Even today kids talk about how fast he could run; about how he hit an inside-the-park "frog" homer; how no knot, no matter how snarled, would stay that way once he began to untie it. But the thing Mania Magee is best known for is what he did for the kids from the East Side and those from the West Side.

Big Ideas and Key Understanding:

Family Life

Prejudice

Tolerance

Individuality

Key words and Vocabulary activities: Using the vocabulary words below, create a 2 paragraph addition to any chapter in Maniac Magee:

Chaotic

Finicky

Flinched

Grungy

Ludicrous

Stupefied

Urchin

Pre Reading Questions:

Based on the picture on the cover of the book, what do you think the book Maniac Magee is about?

What do you think a character with the name of “Maniac Magee” would be like in real life?

What does it mean to be a “maniac?”

What does the word “home” mean to you? How does it differ from the word “house”?

Read Story:

Discussion Prompts:

How would you feel if you didn't have a home?

On Thanksgiving Day Maniac says grace. What is he thankful for? Were you surprised by what he said? What are you grateful for?

Maniac Magee asks Grayson lots and lots of questions. What kinds of questions would you ask Maniac Magee?

What is Maniac Magee's most powerful memory? What is yours? Why?

Extension Activities:

Based on your favorite parts of this book, design a new book cover. What would you include on the cover?

Write a sequel to the book with Maniac Magee turning 13 years old. What is he up to?

Pick your favorite chapter of this book and turn it into a play:

- Write the scene– imagine what would happen there, make sure you include a conflict that builds suspense and excitement.