

Jerry Craft

Prepared for you by:

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About the Author

Jerry Craft was born in 1963 in Harlem, New York and grew up in Washington Heights, New York. He attended the School Of Visual Arts and graduated in 1984.

Before becoming an author and illustrator of his own books, Craft...

- Worked as copywriter for 12 years
- Worked as a cartoonist (even some Marvel and Harvey Comics)/assistant to Barbara Slate
- Worked at King Features Syndicate writing sales brochures for comic strips
- Became the editorial director for Sports Illustrated

Fun Facts About Craft



- Craft only read Marvel Comics and things he absolutely had to read for school
 - He wanted to be a writer so he could create the books he wished had been around when he was a kid
 - He has always loved drawing
 - He loves being able to represent the African American community
-

<https://youtu.be/J9J1t8AYGfk>

1:14-2:00

In this interview, Craft states how his passion for telling stories and writing stemmed from when his dad would tell him bedtime stories and ask Craft to make up one too. He soon started drawing and creating his own stories.

His inspiration for writing and illustrating stories is life and the experiences that comes with it. Craft did not have a favorite author growing up because there were never any books that he could relate to as a person of color.



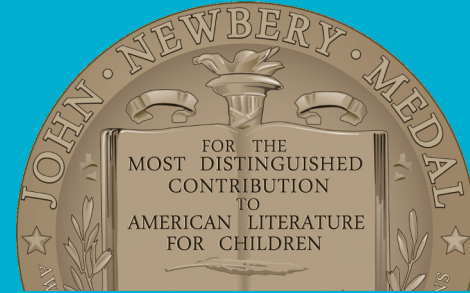
Awards

Mama's Boyz

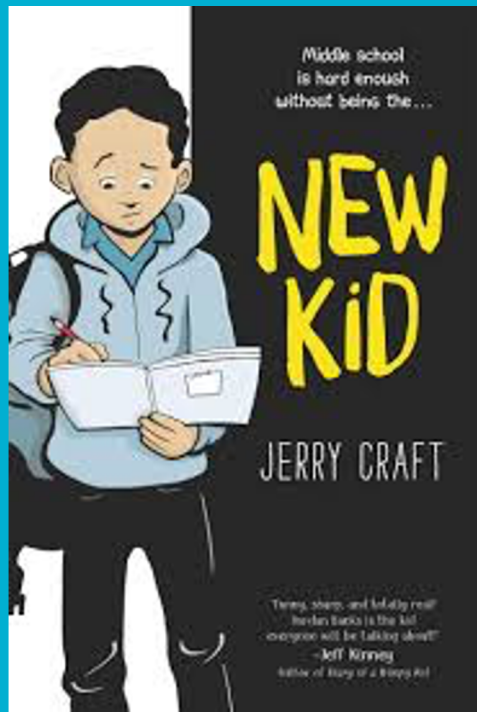
- won five African American Literacy Awards for “best comic strip” in 2004, 2009, 2011, 2012, and 2013. New Kid.

New Kid (2019)

- First graphic novel to win the Kirkus Prize in the “Young Readers Literature” section.
- First graphic novel to win the John Newbery Medal for “the most outstanding contribution to children’s literature.
- Coretta Scott King Award



New Kid



What its about: New Kid follows Jordan Banks who experiences a major culture shock when enrolled at a new private school. He quickly befriends Liam, his guide, and meets other students, some who are very different from him. He faces a lot of new things at Riverdale including struggling with where to sit at lunch, joining soccer and later being dared to join the baseball team. Being one of the few African American students in the school, Jordan confides in Drew about his struggles and the two, along with Liam, become close.

Fun Facts:

- Universal Pictures acquired the film rights to New Kid
- LeBron James' company is on board to produce the film

New Kid Reviews



New Kid holds a 4.16 star rating on Goodreads out of over 28,000 ratings

New Kid is full of so many important perspectives that are crucial for kids to read about. Students need to be able to have a way to connect to characters like Drew and Jordan to better understand and be aware of racial issues that students of color face. In addition, it's so important that students of color also have books with characters that they can relate to so they don't feel alone or like they aren't being represented in literature.

-Megan, Hailey, Mia

"This book is packed with bias and microaggressions that are important for kids to read and understand - especially kids that live in areas with little to no racial diversity."

-Amber K

The Message Behind New Kid

Craft hopes that Jordan will convey that children of color should be seen as kids first. Jordan and other people of color face microaggressions and racial stereotypes daily and are often forced to grow up quickly. In New Kid, Jordan fights the racism and classism that is very prevalent at his school, bringing awareness to people who often don't know that they are doing anything wrong.

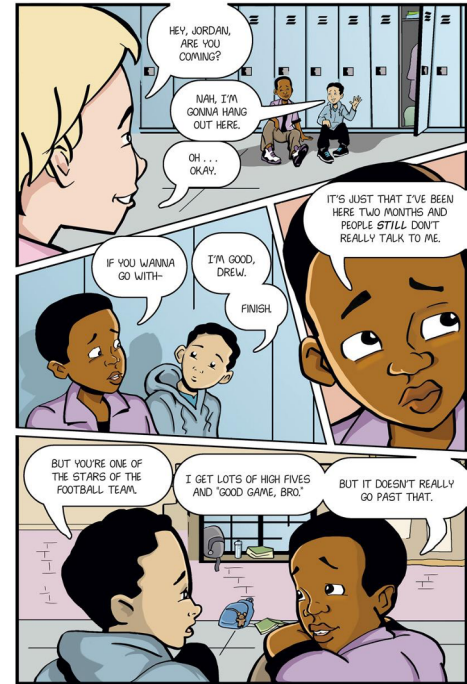


Why students should read New Kid

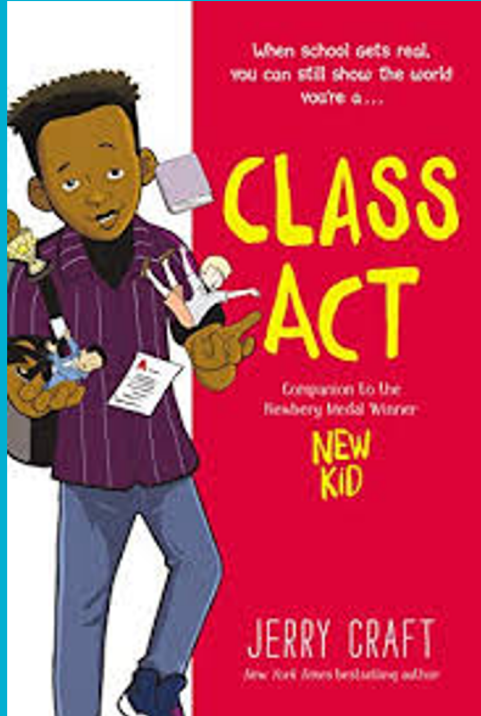
— New Kid is a book that exposes children to other ethnicities and normalizes diversity. It is important to have young readers look at works like this so that we can end stereotyping and discrimination.

When we present early readers with literature that opens their eyes to how it is not ok to discriminate we are able to potentially put an end to it.

The way that the artist did the drawing for this book draws kids in because with every sentence they read there is an image to go along with it.



Up & Coming: Class Act



What it's about: Class Act follows Drew who thinks his friend Liam might be one of those privileged kids, Jordan struggles to keep the friend group together.

Release Date: October 6th, 2020

Fun Facts:

- Class Act is the follow up to his best selling book, New Kid
- The story follows one of the few kids of color at the private school and captures his experience

Why students should read Class Act

Students who read New Kid automatically have another book about life as a person of color in school. Continuing the idea of opening students' eyes to what it is like to not be "the same" as everyone else.

Looking into the teachers' perspective, books like these need to be kept in classrooms to make every student feel like they are represented when in class literature.



Thank You Jerry Craft

With bold colors, jokes, and drawings Craft is able to reach the young crowd and expose them to what life is like as an African American student. Books like these allow children to see themselves and relate to the books that they read and listen to. As future teachers, we plan to read and provide books like *New Kid* that represent children and people of all colors and backgrounds so that our students feel celebrated and acknowledged.



Sources

“Amber K. (3,738 Books).” *Goodreads*, Goodreads, www.goodreads.com/user/show/4372123-amber-k.

Craft, Jerry. “Children's Book Author & Illustrator.” *Jerry Craft*, 25 Sept. 2020, jerrycraft.com/.

“New Kid (New Kid, #1) by Jerry Craft.” *Goodreads*, Goodreads, 5 Feb. 2019, www.goodreads.com/book/show/39893619-new-kid?from_search=true.