



Book Guide for New Kid by Jerry Craft

Designed by Chloe Eyerman and Sasha Godsil, October 2020

About the Book: Jordan Banks is a seventh grade boy who spends his time doodling his life in cartoons. Despite his passion for the arts, his parents enroll him in a private school to focus solely on his academics. At this school, Jordan experiences being one of the few African American people in his environment. Throughout the book we see Jordan go through the challenges of feeling like he doesn't belong, whether it be micro-aggressions from his own teachers to seeing privilege he had never seen before. Between the kids at school and his friends from home, Jordan does his best to balance the time and effort he puts into both worlds.

About the Author: Jerry Craft is a 57 year old author and cartoonist from New York, New York. Craft is best known for his comics, “**Mama’s Boyz**”, and has written two childrens books as well, **New Kid** and **Class Act**. Jerry Craft did not enjoy reading when he was a child, unless he was reading comic books. On his own website (<https://jerrycraft.com/>), Jerry Craft states “When I was young, I never had a book that I bonded with. Or absolutely loved, like how my two sons and their friends loved the **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** series. As I got older, I felt that the lack of books with characters who looked and acted like me and my friends, was probably the biggest reason. So I decided to make the books I wished I had when I was a kid.”

Jerry spent his younger years drawing passionately, just like the character Jordan Banks in Craft’s book, **New Kid**. Craft says that he felt the biggest problems with getting into reading as a child was the lack of books about people that looked and acted like him. With that realization, Craft began his career as a children’s books author and illustrator. Craft won both the Newberry Medal and the Coretta Scott King award for **New Kid**, the second person to have simultaneously won both awards in the same year.

Grade Level: 4-7 grade (Amazon) or ages 8-12 ([Publisher's Weekly](#))

Discussion questions:

- Identity is a large theme of **New Kid**. What does identity mean to you? How does Jordan's identity change throughout the novel?
- Have you ever been the new kid like Jordan, or had to switch schools? What was this like for you?
- In the novel, Jordan experiences micro-aggressions of many kinds. What are micro-aggressions? How can you educate the people around you about micro-aggressions?
- Jordan has a passion for comics and drawing, and they are shown throughout the book. How do these comics Jordan draws connect to his life? Choose a specific comic and connect it to what is happening in Jordan's life at the time.
- Jordan's grandpa compares Chinese food and having changing tastes to growing up and making new friends and keeping old ones. What has your experience been in making new friends while keeping old ones? Can you relate to this metaphor?
- Jordan finds himself in the middle of the conflict between Drew and Andy, but decides to break his silence towards the middle of the novel. Do you think he did the right thing? What would you do in that situation?
- If you were in Jordan's position at the end of the novel, what would you do? Would you want to stay at the new school?

Extension Idea: Using Jordan's comics as inspiration, create your own mini comic about a significant event in your life. Make sure to include specific details about the event (who was there, how you felt) and to be creative!

Visit Jerry Craft's website at <https://jerrycraft.com/>, and find more information about the book at <https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780062691194>.