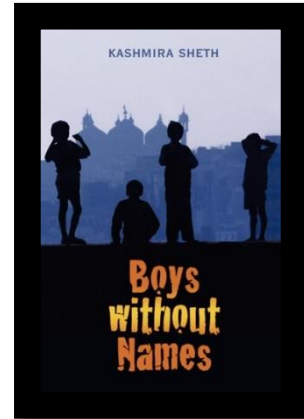


**Title:** Boys Without Names  
**Author:** Kashmiri Sheth  
**Grade Level:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



### **SUMMARY**

Gopal's family is deep in debt and knows they can no longer stay in their village. As Gopal's baba, or father, dreams of a better life for his family, he believes that Mumbai, India will hold greater opportunities. As soon as the family sets out for Mumbai, they encounter trouble. First, Baba becomes separated from the family. Then, Gopal is kidnapped and forced to work in a sweatshop with five other boys. Through telling *kahanis*, or stories, Gopal inspires hope and courage in his new friends. Will teamwork and renewed hope be enough to help the boys escape? This book is an eye-opening story of the perils of child labor and poverty, which impact children all over the world. As you and your child read this together, you will be inspired to talk about these tragic conditions and find out what is being done about them.

### **QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING**

#### **VOCABULARY**

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words.

In this book, you might talk about these words:

- meandering (pg. 10)
- timid (pg. 33)
- whim (pg. 74)
- dank (pg. 83)
- horrendous (pg.102)
- cunning (pg. 131)
- export (pg. 153)
- seeped (pg. 192)
- subsides (pg. 256)
- auspicious (pg. 262)

You might use a question like:

*In the book, what does the word "dank" mean (pg. 83)? Reread the sentences surrounding this word. What do you envision as the author describes this setting? How does this help you understand the meaning of the word dank?*

#### **KEY IDEAS and THEMES**

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:



## Raise the Bar Reading Library Book Discussion Guide

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1. How do Aai and Baba view moving to Mumbai? Compare Aai and Baba's point of view of the city. As you talk about this, ask your child to use dialogue between the characters to support what he or she thinks. What does Gopal think and feel about leaving his village?
2. After arriving in Mumbai, Gopal often compares the new city to his village. How is life different in Mumbai? As you talk about this, ask your child to find Gopal's words and thoughts that help picture the scene.
3. Throughout the book, Gopal tells stories, first to his siblings and then to the boys in Scar's factory. Where does Gopal get the inspiration for his stories? Talk about the importance of Gopal's stories and the boys' story circle. How does telling stories help the boys?
4. What kind of person is Gopal? Ask your child to find examples of Gopal's actions, words, and thoughts. What do these words show you about Gopal's character? As you read the book, talk about the challenges Gopal encounters. How does he respond? What can you learn from his experiences?
5. How do the boys' relationships between each other change after Gopal's arrival? As a family, talk about how the boys' relationships grow and change throughout the book. What causes them to draw closer together? What causes their relationships to fall apart?
6. After reading the book and the author's note at the end, talk about the author's purpose for writing this story. What does she want you to be aware of? Ask your child to describe the conditions in Scar's sweatshop. How do these conditions affect the boys in the story?

### EXTRA ACTIVITIES

1. After reading the author's note, talk as a family about the causes of child labor. Why does this still exist today? Use the Internet to find current examples of child labor and learn more about what is being done to combat it. To get started, you might look at an article on the site [newsela.com](http://newsela.com) called "Despite efforts, child labor abuse hasn't stopped on cocoa farms."
2. The United Nation's organization, UNICEF, also offers resources for learning more about child labor and other injustices experienced by children all over the world. Check out the video called "Young Bolivians on working in one of the world's most dangerous mines" to find out more about child labor in another part of the world. After watching the video, explore the website together to learn more about how you can help prevent and stop child labor.