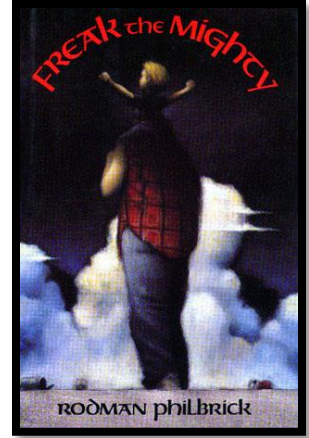


Title: Freak the Mighty
Author: Rodman Philbrick
Grade Level: 6th Grade



SUMMARY

Freak the Mighty is the moving story of an unlikely but powerful friendship between two boys who couldn't be more opposite. Max is unusually large for his age and is often teased by bullying classmates. Kevin, or Freak, as Max affectionately calls him, is extra tiny with various health issues but with a huge intellect. This book is sure to bring your family laughs and tears as Max and Freak accomplish the seemingly impossible on their adventures. *Freak the Mighty* is great as a family read aloud or as independent reading for a sixth grader. The book touches on some very important topics for young people like bullying, and mental and physical disabilities. It is an engaging way for you to talk about difficult and sensitive topics.

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:

- decibel (pg. 55)
- nicotine (pg. 93)
- ruckus (pg. 91)
- trajectory (pg. 34)
- converging (pg. 34)
- cripple (pg. 121)
- Neanderthals (pg. 142)

You might use a question like:

In the book, what does the word Neanderthal mean? What context clues on page 142 help you to understand the word? Why do you think Freak chooses to use this word instead of a simpler one that means the same thing?

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:

- 1) The power of friendship is a strong theme in this book. Ask your child what specific qualities of Max and Freak's relationship made their friendship so strong. How do they come together to form "Freak the Mighty?" What do you think is the overall message the author is trying to send his readers about friendship? What tells you so in the story?



Raise the Bar Reading Library Book Discussion Guide

- 2) Bullying is a big issue in today's world, especially in middle and high schools. What are some positive examples from the book that show how bullying can be combated by both victims and witnesses to the bullying?
- 3) Max and Freak both have disabilities of some kind. Can you describe each of their disabilities and their challenges because of them? How do these characters overcome their disabilities and find a way to succeed or achieve despite their challenges?
- 4) How does Freak use knowledge to get himself and Max out of some tricky situations? What are some examples from the story where Freak does this? Why do you think Freak chooses this strategy?
- 5) Read through the words and definitions in Freak's Dictionary located on page 161. Choose 5 -10 of your favorite words and look them up in a dictionary. Now, find those words in the story and talk about how Freak's definition is slightly different than the real definition of that word. Why would Freak have different definitions for those words? Use the story to explain why.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

1. Read *Freak the Mighty's Make-Your-Own-Quest Guide (in Four Easy Steps)* at the end of the book. Add some additional tips of your own or create your own list of ways to achieve the seemingly impossible in your own life.
2. Read the follow up sequel to this novel, *Max the Mighty*, and see how Max's adventures continue. Compare the plot lines and themes of the two novels. How are the stories similar and different? How do the characters change from one story to the next?