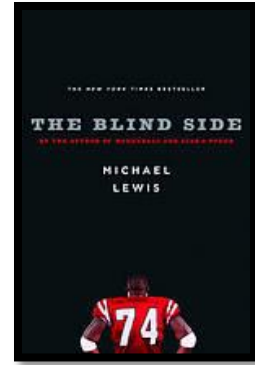


Title: The Blind Side
Author: Michael Lewis
Grade Level: 6th Grade



SUMMARY

The Blind Side is the real life story of NFL player Michael Oher and his rise out of the depths of poverty, neglect, and homelessness to becoming one of the NFL's greatest athletes. In 2009, this wonderfully told novel was turned into an Oscar winning movie featuring Sandra Bullock and Quinton Aaron. Your family will connect emotionally with the struggles Michael faced as an abandoned young black teenager with nowhere to turn and no one to count on. You'll be amazed at how the strength of a family gives Michael the second chance he deserves. This book touches on the social and racial inequalities that still exist in our world today. *The Blind Side* provides a wonderful opportunity for you to have difficult but important conversations with your family. Football fans will love reading this biography, but even if you're not interested in football, you'll be amazed at the action-filled game day scenes.

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:

- preposterous (pg. 16)
- grandiose (pg. 18)
- sensationally (pg. 52)
- docile (pg. 53)
- rookie (pg. 124)
- fundamentalists (pg. 153)
- booster (pg. 202)
- wattage (pg. 1232)
- fatalism (pg. 263)
- analogy (pg. 263)
- social dysfunction (pg. 302)

You might use a question like:

On page 302, the author describes Hurt Village, the place where Michael grew up before he moved in with the Tuohy family, as a portrait of "social dysfunction." What does "social dysfunction" mean? What contextual clues help you figure out what it means? What does the author mean by this?

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

- 1) This story touches on many themes of social and racial injustice that exist in our world today. What are some examples? What bothered you the most about those scenes?
- 2) Throughout this book, particularly beginning on page 53, there seems to be some extreme difference between Briarcrest, the wealthy private high school Oher attends, and the urban public schools he went to before. What are some of the biggest differences? Why do you think those differences exist?
- 3) What do you think was the driving force behind why Leigh Ann and Sean chose to become the legal guardians of Michael? What were their motives? What information from the story led you to this conclusion? (Hint: you might want to read the Author's Note at the end of the book.)
- 4) Why do you think the author chose to title this book, *The Blind Side*? Is there a double meaning? How does the title relate to the overall theme of the story?
- 5) Many people describe Michael as a "gentle giant." How is this description supported by the story? In what parts do you see him as a "gentle giant"?
- 6) When Michael first began attending Briarcrest, his IQ and performance in class indicated that he was in the lowest 99th percentile of students. Many teachers turned their back on him, thinking he was unable to learn and perform academically. A few special teachers and his tutor, along with Michael's own determination, proved them wrong. What were some of the strategies they used to improve Michael's academic performance?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the movie, *The Blind Side*. Create a [T-Chart](#) comparing and contrasting the plot and characters in the book and movie. Did anything surprise, intrigue, or disappoint you about the movie? Did the actors in the movie do justice to the real people in Michael Oher's life?
2. Before recently being traded to the Tennessee Titan's, Michael Oher played for the 2013 Super Bowl Champions, the Baltimore Ravens, where he received his first Super Bowl ring. Use the Internet to watch some of Michael Oher's games and interviews. What does he say about his rise from poor kid from Memphis to Super Bowl champion?