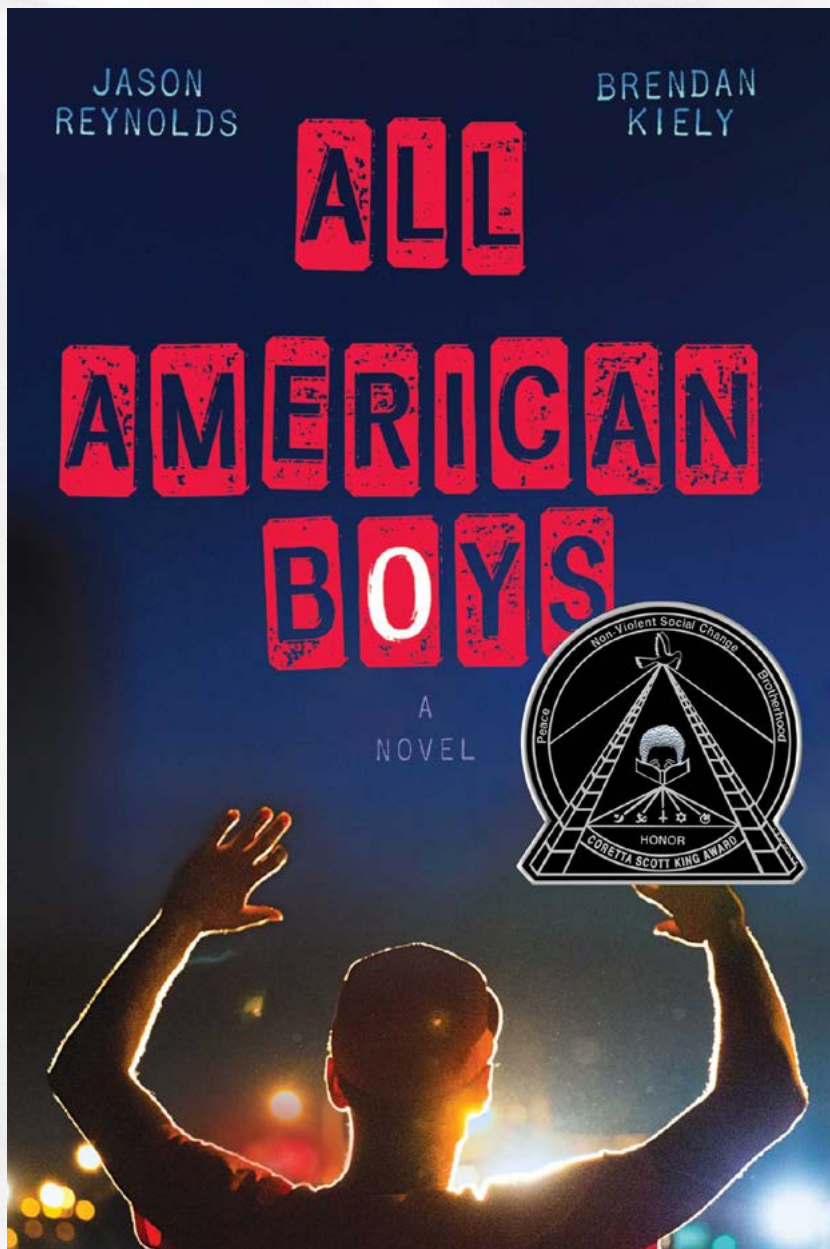


All American Boys

BY JASON REYNOLDS & BRENDAN KIELY



ABOUT THIS BOOK

In the award-winning *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, Rashad, a young Black teen, is mistaken for a shoplifter and ends up hospitalized after a brutal arrest by a police officer. Quinn, Rashad's white classmate, can't believe that he's witnessed such violence from the man who has been a substitute father to him. The boys are faced with decisions to make and sides to choose as an act of police violence exposes deep divisions, the consequences of racial profiling, and the real lives beyond the headlines.

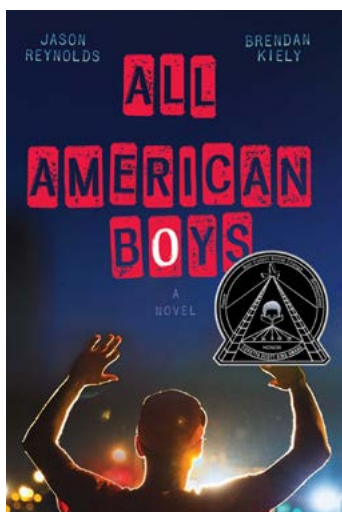
Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Recommended for: Grades 9-12

Lexile: HL770L

Age Range: 14 and up

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE



Publisher: Simon & Schuster
Recommended for: Grades 9-12
Lexile: HL770L
Age Range: 14 and up

As almost daily reports of police misconduct and violence against unarmed civilians flood our news feeds, and citizens demand answers and accountability, today's challenges might seem insurmountable, and discussion of them often brings discomfort and challenges of its own. However, we are dealing in matters of life and death. That discomfort can bring

about authentic and lasting learning experiences; what do we educate our students for, if not to engage productively with the world we live in? We hope that this guide will help encourage and empower communities with a variety of age-appropriate tools and strategies to foster fruitful conversation, thoughtful reflection, and responsible action.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Jason Reynolds earned a BA in English from The University of Maryland, College Park, before moving to Brooklyn, New York to pursue a career in writing. He is the author of the critically acclaimed *When I Was the Greatest*, for which he was the recipient of the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent, the Coretta Scott

King Honor books *Boy in the Black Suit* and *All American Boys* (co-written with Brendan Kiely), and *As Brave as You*, his middle grade debut. You can find his ramblings at JasonWritesBooks.com.



Brendan Kiely received his MFA from the City College of New York. He is the author, with Jason Reynolds, of the Coretta Scott King Author Honor book *All American Boys*. His debut novel, *The Gospel of Winter*, has been published in ten languages, was selected as one of the American Library Association's Top Ten Best Fiction for Young

Adults 2015, and was a Kirkus Reviews selection for the Best of 2014. He is also the author of *The Last True Love Story*. Originally from the Boston area, he now lives with his wife in Greenwich Village. Find out more at BrendanKiely.com.

PRAISE FOR *ALL AMERICAN BOYS*

“The scenario that Reynolds and Kiely depict has become a recurrent feature of news reports, and a book that lets readers think it through outside of the roiling emotions of a real-life event is both welcome and necessary.”

—**Publishers Weekly**

“With Reynolds writing Rashad’s first-person narrative and Kiely Quinn’s, this hard-edged, ripped-from-the-headlines book is more than a problem novel; it’s a carefully plotted, psychologically acute, character-driven work of fiction that dramatizes an all-too-frequent occurrence. Police brutality and race relations in America are issues that demand debate and discussion, which his superb book powerfully enables.”

—**Booklist, starred review**



AWARDS

2016 Coretta Scott King Author Honor

2016 Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding
Children's Literature

Suggested Guidelines for Educators

Before beginning these conversations, educate yourself; examine your own points of view as well as a variety of opinions on these topics. Consider possible “triggers” in your community, and make plans for the possibility of expression of strong emotions and ideas.

With your group, review and/or establish guidelines for respectful dialogue. These may include instructions to listen without interrupting the speaker, to avoid generalizations or stereotypes and name-calling, and to claim and respect the right to “pass” in a discussion at any point. For additional discussion resources, see **“Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations About Race and Racism”** (<http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/race-talk.html>); **“How To Talk To Kids About Race: Books and Resources That Can Help”** <http://www.readbrightly.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-books-and-resources-that-can-help/>)

Before Reading the Book: Community Building & Intro Activities

Use one or more of these activities to introduce the themes in *All American Boys*.

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the themes and topics in the novel *All American Boys*.
- To foster community and build trust between students.



“GRAFFITI WALLS”

Soft music plays as participants silently walk around the room and “tag” the chart paper hanging throughout the space. **Each chart paper has one prompt written in the middle. Participants are instructed not to talk or respond to anyone’s statement. Encourage students to write what comes to mind when they see that word, they can also ask a question.** *Suggested prompts: American, Police, Bystander, Ally, Community, Racism, Activism, Loyalty*

Reflection: Teacher reads out a few answers from each chart paper and leads a discussion about “who’s in the room” [“As a class we think of American as...” etc.] Then introduce the book and let students know that these words will be explored more throughout the unit.

Modification Tips

- Be sure to instruct students that they should not talk or respond to each other’s posts. If they agree with what someone already wrote, they can write it again.
- Be intentional about the music you choose. Select music that complements the topics in the book.
[Song suggestions: Glory by John Legend Common, What’s Going On by Marvin Gaye, Baltimore by Jazmine Sullivan]
- For students who may not want to write, they can respond by drawing an image in response to the word.
- If you prefer for students to stay in their seats, keep them with their table groups and give each group a sheet of paper with a prompt on it. Students can work with their table groups. They can pass their papers after a certain amount of time, or you can have each group share out about their prompt.
- If you would like students to have more anonymity, give everyone the same color of marker.

STAND UP IF...

Teacher gives the following instructions: **“This is a silent activity. I will make a statement and if the answer is ‘Yes’ for you, please stand. Take a look at those who are standing with you and those who are not to notice who you have something in common with.”**

Teacher reads a statement, starting with something less personal or serious and eventually asks more personal/serious questions. **Note: make 5-8 statements, more than that can be too many and less than that can lessen the impact.**

Reflection: How did it feel to stand up for the statements you heard? Did you have anything in common with someone else? If so, how did that make you feel? Did anything surprise you?

Modification Tips: You can have students raise their hand instead of standing.

Suggested Questions:

Stand up if...

1. ...you like to hang out with your friends on the weekend.
2. ...you’ve ever kept a secret from someone you love.
3. ...you’ve ever been treated unfairly based on your race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability
4. ...you’ve watched a news broadcast or read an article about police brutality
5. ...you’ve ever stood up for a friend.
6. ...you’ve ever witnessed or experienced unfair treatment from a police officer
7. ...you’ve ever used your art [*poetry, visual, music, dance, theater, etc.*] to spread a message
8. ...you’ve ever posted something political on social media
9. ...you’ve ever witnessed a violent act of any kind
10. ...you’ve ever been afraid of disappointing someone you care about

PUZZLES

Participants work in small groups to put a puzzle together in a certain amount of time (*about 3 minutes*). Each group has a different puzzle, each puzzle is the face of a person affected by police brutality. The puzzle should be simple and easy to put together, as the point is to encourage team work and to introduce a person affected by police brutality. *[see note on making puzzles]*

Once students piece the puzzle together, give them a short written summary about their person and have each group share what they learned with the rest of the class. After each group has gone, ask students to compare and contrast the people in the puzzles and list out their answers on the board/on chart paper. Keep this list visible as students read the book and ask students to think about how these names relate to the story.

[Names: Aiyana Jones, Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Tarika Wilson]

Reflection: Ask students to do a free-write check in with themselves: What questions do I have? How do I feel about what I just learned?

Modification Tips:

The names above are taken from page 308. If you want to add more names to show the historical context of violence against black men and women in America, add the following names: Emmett Till, Henry Dumas, Fred Hampton.

MAKING PUZZLES

1. Print out the image you want to make a puzzle of.
2. Glue it to cardboard (*you can use a shoebox*) or cardstock paper.
3. Turn the image face down (*so that you are looking at the back of the cardboard*).
4. Take a sharpie marker and make curved lines dividing the cardstock into sections of different sizes.
5. Cut along the lines to create your puzzle.
6. Put the puzzle pieces in a zip lock bag to keep all the pieces together.

While Reading The Book: Topics for Conversation

1. Throughout the book, both Rashad and Quinn reflect on their changing community. Ask students to explore and define the meaning of gentrification. What are its perceived positive and negative impacts? (References: p29-30; p166-167)

Conduct a “Community Study”. Students may use observation, research and interviews to answer:

- Where are the gathering places in your community? What boundaries do you notice (by race, age, interest, etc.)?
- What areas of your community seem most vibrant? Most challenged?
- What do you notice about the ways people are grouped and socialize at your school? Where do you notice rigid boundaries? Where are they more fluid? What brings your school community together?

Additional Reading/Resources:

There Goes The Neighborhood <http://www.wnyc.org/story/there-goes-neighborhood-brooklyn-gentrification/>

Beyond Gentrification: A Roundtable of Experts <http://www.pbs.org/pov/flagwars/expert-roundtable/>

The Case for Reparations

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

2. After the attack, Rashad’s father reminds him of his “rules for engagement” (p49-50). “Never fight back. Never talk back. Keep your hands up. Keep your mouth shut. Just do what they ask you to do, and you’ll be fine.” How does his perspective change as the story goes on? What do we learn about his own background as a police officer? How do you think his experiences as a Black male and as a police officer shaped his perspective? How does his perspective compare to Spoony’s? Do you notice generational differences, differences between people of different races, in terms of what is assumed to be appropriate interaction with law enforcement officials? Of appropriate responses to perceived injustice? What do you notice? Why do you think there are these differences in points of view?

Additional Reading/Resources:

The Other Student Activists

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/11/student-activism-history-injustice/417129/>

The Next Civil Rights Movement

<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/black-lives-matter-new-civil-rights-movement-fredrick-harris>

3. Rashad's brother Spoony talks about "controlling the narrative" (p94). What does he mean? Why do you think that might be important in this case? How does media shape news narratives? How does media shape the narrative? What parallels to Rashad's story do you see in current events? Compare/contrast coverage of the same event from different sources, including television/print/radio. What do you notice?

Additional Reading/Resources:

On "Individuation", from The Perception Institute:

<http://perception.org/blog/solutionsmonday-individuation/>

How To Detect Bias in News Media

<http://fair.org/take-action-now/media-activism-kit/how-to-detect-bias-in-news-media/>

"How Fox News' Primetime Lineup Demonized Black Lives Matter In 2015"

<http://mediamatters.org/blog/2015/12/29/how-fox-news-primetime-lineup-demonized-black-l/207637>

Challenging Stereotypes: Michael Brown and #IfTheyGunnedMeDown, from the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

<http://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/challenging-stereotypes-michael-brown-and-iftheygunnedmedown>

4. What does it mean to be a bystander? An upstander? Which role does Rashad play? Quinn? Why? Who acts as a whistleblower in the book? How do we decide when to take on each role? What challenges do we face with those decisions? What strategies can you use to overcome them?

Additional Reading/Resources:

The Swedish Students Who Rescued An Unconscious Sexual Assault Victim Speak Out

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/06/07/the-swedish-stanford-students-who-rescued-an-unconscious-sexual-assault-victim-speak-out/>

Teacher's Guide for Coexist, a documentary film about government project of reconciliation in Rwanda; focus on how "othering" destructs.

<http://upstanderproject.org/coexist/guide>

(Film available for rent/purchase: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-E8kUhPA7A>)

5. Art is prominent as an expression of anger, protest, and identity throughout the book; from Rashad's own work with Carlos to the "Rashad is Absent Again Today" graffiti that draws increasing attention to his story. What role does "street art" play in our culture today? In your community? Where is it found? Who are the artists? Why do you think visual art can have a big impact on social movements?

- **Activity: Collage.** Students create a collage, word, image, or combination of both, to create a message about an issue they care about. Some helps: "Collaging for Beginners" <http://www.rookiemag.com/2012/03/collaging-for-beginners/>; "Six Unique Paper Collage Techniques" <http://www.craftsy.com/blog/2014/04/paper-collage-techniques/>

Additional Reading/Resources:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/18/protest-art_n_6344892.html

<http://fusion.net/story/102767/graffiti-artists-turn-mexico-citys-walls-into-a-collective-cry-of-protest/>

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/prominent-street-artist-just-destroyed-all-his-works-180958408/?no-ist>

6. What role does social media play in the story?

How would you design social justice campaign using social media? What are the strengths and challenges of "hashtag organizing"? What are the differences and similarities between modern-day activism and the movements of the past, such as the Civil Rights Movement?

Additional Reading/Resources:

"How Black Lives Matter Uses Social Media to Fight the Power"

<http://www.wired.com/2015/10/how-black-lives-matter-uses-social-media-to-fight-the-power/>

This hashtag kills fascists: Does social media activism actually work?

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/4/2/hashtag-activismcancelcolbert.html>

New Study Quantifies Use of Social Media in Arab Spring

<http://www.washington.edu/news/2011/09/12/new-study-quantifies-use-of-social-media-in-arab-spring/>

"So Was Facebook Responsible for the Arab Spring After All?"

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/09/so-was-facebook-responsible-for-the-arab-spring-after-all/244314/>

7. What does Quinn believe about loyalty? How does he define it? How does Guzzo define it? How is Quinn's relationship with his teammates affected by his perspective on what happened to Rashad? What does he decide, and why? What are the consequences of his decision?

Additional Reading/Resources:

The Man Who Raised A Black Power Salute at the 1968 Olympic Games

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics>

Punished By The League for Black Lives Matter Activism, WNBA Players Fight Back

<https://thinkprogress.org/punished-by-the-league-for-black-lives-matter-activism-wnba-players-fight-back-11abb0006d33#.q6qfuc7nb>

The WNBA's Black Lives Matter Protest Has Set a New Standard for Sports Activism

http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2016/07/25/the_wnba_s_black_lives_matter_protest_has_set_new_standard_for_sports_activism.html

Watch the Black Lives Matter Speech Four NBA Stars Gave At the ESPYs

http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2016/07/13/nba_stars_opened_the_espys_with_a_black_lives_matter_speech.html

Venus Williams' Other Career: Pay Equity Activist

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/venus-williams-other-career-pay-equity-activist/>

Venus Was 'At the Forefront' <http://www.espn.com/espnw/w-in-action/nine-for-ix/article/9441441/venus-williams-equality-change-espnw>

After Reading the Book

Questions for Discussion

- Which characters did you most identify with? Why?
- Was there anything that surprised you about *All American Boys*?
- What do you think you'll most remember from this book? Why?
- What action are you inspired to after reading this book?

Projects & Activities:

OBJECTIVES

- To respond to learning through art-making
 - To study and respond to the work of performing artists who engaged in activism
 - To provide opportunities for students to take small actions and speak out about social issues.
-

RESEARCH PROJECT: MUSIC AND ACTIVISM

“An artist’s duty, as far as I’m concerned, is to reflect the times. I think that is true of painters, sculptors, poets, musicians. As far as I’m concerned, it’s their choice, but I CHOOSE to reflect the times and situations in which I find myself. That, to me, is my duty. And at this crucial time in our lives, when everything is so desperate, when everyday is a matter of survival, I don’t think you can help but be involved. Young people, black and white, know this. That’s why they’re so involved in politics. We will shape and mold this country or it will not be molded and shaped at all anymore. So I don’t think you have a choice. How can you be an artist and NOT reflect the times? That to me is the definition of an artist.” —Nina Simone

Study the life and work of musicians like Bob Marley, Pete Seeger, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Public Enemy, and Nina Simone. How and when did protest/activism become a part of their lives and work? What was its impact? What did it cost them? What was its legacy? Examine more recent “protest” music from artists such as Janelle Monae (Hell You Talmbout), Alicia Keys (We Pray), J.Cole (We Free), Common/John Legend (Glory). How does this music compare and contrast to the music of the past? What is its impact today? How does it affect artists’ lives? Listeners’ lives?

Students choose one or two songs for in-depth study:

- Annotate the lyrics -- what words or phrases resonate? What memories do they evoke?
- Play the songs, and analyze the music -- how does it complement the lyrics? (*Student musicians can analyze composition, musical devices, etc.*)
- Who is singing the song (*character*)? What’s their emotional state?
- Pull out key words or phrases that evoke the theme/mood.
- What emotions does this song evoke? How do you feel about what it’s saying? Pull out key words or phrases that evoke the theme/mood.
- Why do you think this song was written? A response to something? To get people to do something?

Bonus Activity: Students write their own protest songs.

Additional Reading/Resources:

Bernice Johnson Reagon: Civil Rights Song Leader

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/bernice-johnson-reagon-civil-rights-song-leader/african-american-struggle-protest-folk/music/article/smithsonian>

A Serendipitous Life: Ysaye Barnwell and the Healing Power of Music

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/a-serendipitous-life-ysaye-barnwell-and-the-healing-power-of-music/2015/05/01/718db920-e52e-11e4-905f-cc896d379a32_story.html

“The Return of the Protest Song”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/01/the-return-of-the-protest-song/384631/>

Not Talking Bout A Revolution: Where Are All The Protest Songs?

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/22/protest-songs-folk-music-nancy-kerr-martin-carthy>

A History of Rap Songs Protesting Police Brutality

<http://www.complex.com/music/2014/08/rap-songs-police-brutality/>

When Rap Raged Against Racism: 2015 and the Black Protest Anthem

<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/dec/29/rap-racism-race-issues-america-black-protest-anthem-kendrick-lamar-janelle-monae-asap-rocky-prince>

10 Hip-Hop Songs in Response to Questlove’s Call for Protest Music

<http://theboombox.com/10-hip-hop-songs-questloves-call-for-protest-music/>

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Activity: Have students write a poem to honor a person affected by police brutality. They can write as the victim, an officer, the bullet, a family member, the sky. *[Use Willie Perdomo's 41 Bullets off Broadway and Aracelis Girmay's Night for model texts.]*

Action(s):

- Have students post their poems on social media
- Mail the poems to the family who lost a loved one.
- Film students saying their poem and share the videos online or show them at a special screening for another class.
- Do a “teach in” with another class and have students lead their peers through the poetry lesson they experienced with you.

Activity: Imagine you are attending the rally that happens at the end of the book. If you were going to make a speech, what would you say?

Action(s):

- Hold a mock rally in your auditorium or cafeteria and ask students to make their speeches. Consider inviting other classes to participate
- Record the speeches and share them on a class podcast. Share the podcast with the community.

Relevant Common Core Standards

(<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10/>)

Comprehension and Collaboration

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.b

Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.a

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.