

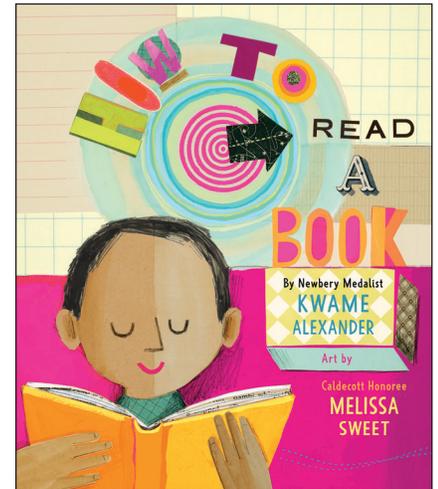
HOW TO READ A BOOK

BY KWAME ALEXANDER; ILLUSTRATIONS BY MELISSA SWEET

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK

This mesmerizing ode to reading invites you to “let your fingers wonder as they wander” while it gives instructions on how to read a book. First, find a comfortable place to sit. Will you choose a spot under a tree, or a stoop like Langston Hughes? Next, peel open your book like you would a clementine, with care and delicious anticipation. With the opening of the book begins a brand new adventure into reading. Lyrical text and intricate collage illustrations combine to take readers on a sensory journey that will delight all ages. A colorful instruction manual that encourages readers not to rush: “Your eyes need time to taste. Your soul needs room to bloom,” *How to Read a Book* is an ideal book for individuals and groups alike.



INTEREST LEVEL: K-3
GUIDED READING LEVEL: N
THEMES: BOOKS, READING, SENSES



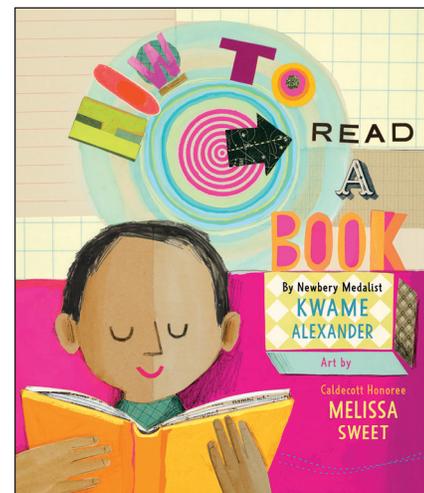
KWAME ALEXANDER is a poet, an educator, and the *New York Times* bestselling author of 29 books, including *Rebound*, the follow-up to his Newbery Medal-winning middle grade novel, *The Crossover*. Kwame writes for children of all ages. His other picture books include *Undeclared*, *Animal Ark*, and *Out of Wonder*. A regular contributor to NPR's *Morning Edition*, Kwame is the recipient of several awards, including the Coretta Scott King Author Honor, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, three NAACP Image Award nominations, and the 2018 inaugural Pat Conroy Legacy Award. He believes that poetry can change the world, and he uses it to inspire and empower young people around the world through his writing workshop, *The Write Thing*. Kwame is also the host and producer of the literary variety/talk show, *Bookish*.



MELISSA SWEET has illustrated more than one hundred books. Her work has been in magazines, on greeting cards, and on her living room walls. Melissa has received the Caldecott Honor Medal twice, among many other awards, including the Sibert Medal, and is a *New York Times* bestselling author and artist. Melissa lives in Maine.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

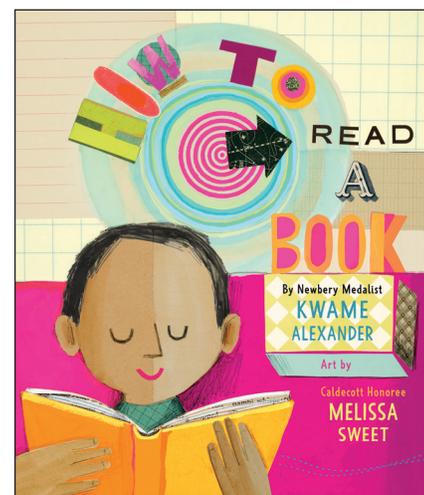
- Read the book title out loud and ask the students to share what suggestions they think the author might include in this book. Revisit this after you read the book.
- Read the first two pages. Ask the students where their favorite places are to read. Why?
- What does the author mean when he writes, “Once you’re comfy, peel its gentle skin, like you would a clementine”?
- What senses does the author refer to when he writes, “the color of sunrise, the scent of morning air and sweet butterfly kisses. Dig your thumb at the bottom of each juicy section and pop the words out page by rustling page”?
- Read the page that includes “watch a novel world unfurl right before your eyes.” What two meanings does the word “novel” have? Why would the author choose that word?



- What does the author mean when he writes, “let your fingers wonder as they wander”?
- How do you feel when you read the pages, “And bursts of orange EXPLODE beneath a perfect purple moon”? Why do you think these pages were designed this way?
- Have the students look carefully at the illustrations. Ask, “What details do you notice that celebrate books and reading?” (For example, the wheels of the bus say “R-E-A-D,” and the boy’s guitar is in the shape of a book and the letter “B.”)
- After reading the book, revisit the first question. Ask the students if this book was what they expected it would be. Why or why not?
- Ask the students if they would describe this book as a story, a poem, or a how-to book. Why? (After they respond, you can tell them that Kwame Alexander originally wrote it as a poem.)

AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

Here Comes the Bus. On a large piece of mural paper, draw a triple-decker book bus like the one on the foldout page of this story. Ask the students to choose a favorite book. Give each student a piece of paper that matches the size of the bus windows. Have them decorate their paper by writing the title of their favorite book in fancy letters, by writing down a few lines from the book, or by drawing a picture of their favorite part of the book. To create the mural, affix each paper in a bus window. Then have the students paint or decorate the bus. Display the mural of “The Book Bus” in the classroom.



Come to Your Senses! Reread the story and discuss what senses the author suggests a person should use when reading. Then have the students write a poem that includes sensory details. In their poem, have the students convey what they feel, see, hear, smell, and taste. Ask them to add a colorful picture, like this illustrator did, to bring their poem to life.

Every Picture Tells a Story. Melissa Sweet, the book’s illustrator, used pages from an old copy of *Bambi* in her collages. Provide the students with pages from newspapers, magazines, or old books to create their own collage. Discuss how creating a picture out of words looks different from a drawing or painting. What effect does it have? Why?

Don’t Judge a Book. Provide the students with a collection of books that they have not previously read. Have the students choose one book to read. Then have a group discussion about whether their book was what they expected after looking at the cover. Why or why not? As an extension, have the students design a new cover for the book they have read.

It’s a Book Party! Reread the page, “Surprise! it’s a book party stacked with all your favorite friends: a picnic of words + sounds in leaps + bounds.” Then plan a book party with the students. Have them choose two or three of their favorite books to bring into school. Place picnic blankets around the classroom, and at the book party have the children sit in small groups on the blankets, sharing their favorite books with each other while enjoying some treats.

AND THE WINNER IS . . .

Provide the students with an outline of an award ribbon.

It should have preprinted lines for a title, the author/illustrator, and a sentence describing the book. Have the students choose their favorite book and write about why, in their opinion, it is an award-winning book.

