



Kicker

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Reading level: 3.8

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AR Quiz # 114175

Book Summary

Izzy and Julia have been on the same soccer team for years. Izzy is frustrated that Julia spends too much time cherry-picking and getting all the credit when they score. But when someone starts threatening the team and their home field is sabotaged, the friends must work together to find the answers. Why would someone threaten their star player? And what is the connection to a century-old train robbery and the rumor of buried treasure? Izzy and Julia put themselves in danger as they get closer to the truth, and Izzy starts to understand the true meaning of teamwork and the importance of friendship.

Prereading Ideas

- Which environmental issues are of most concern in your students' communities?
- Is it difficult for best friends to play on the same teams or do the same activities? Is competition between friends positive or negative?

Connecting to the Text***Plot***

What is the meaning of the term “red herring”? Is there one in *Kicker*? If there is one, what does it accomplish in the plot?

Creative Writing

Write a newspaper article about the events that happen in *Kicker*. Include brief quotes from imaginary interviews with Izzy, Julia and Drew.

Connecting to the Curriculum***Science***

Izzy wrecks Drew's science project on viscosity (ch.3). He says he is using gelatin and colored water. Ask students to try and reproduce his experiment.

Law

- There are numerous criminal activities in *Kicker*: vandalism, uttering threats, cyberstalking, fraud and breaking and entering. Have students describe each crime and research the possible legal repercussions of each.
- Which crime is committed by Izzy and her friends? How do they justify their behavior? Are they right?
- Environmental laws are broken in many ways, sometimes by large companies (chemical pollution) and sometimes by individuals (putting old paint in landfills). Find examples of some of the big offenders—oil companies, mining, pesticide use, nuclear waste disposal. How have their crimes been dealt with? Should we be fining private citizens for not recycling or for over-watering?

Media

- Izzy threatens to call the media when the city parks department won't give her information. What is it she is threatening to expose?
- Is alerting the media an effective way for citizens to make their voices heard? Have students search in their local papers for stories that have originated with concerned citizens.

History

- Izzy and her friends find the treasure in an underground storage area from the last century. In days before refrigeration, there were many ways of preserving food. Ask students to research some of these methods and write a brief description of how they might keep the contents of their refrigerators and freezers from going bad if the power went out.
- Bank robbers often become folk heroes. Ask students to research famous bank robbers and discuss why they were often admired.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Izzy says that vandalism, including graffiti, is “sending a message of rebellion to the world.” Is this always true? What other reasons might make someone become a vandal. Is graffiti vandalism or art?
2. Is winning more important than teamwork?

Resources**Pollution**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pollution>

Plot

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_herring_%28idiom%2

Graffiti

www.fullspectrumottawa.com/exposure/exposure_graffiti.html

<http://painting.about.com/b/2006/05/01/is-graffiti-art-or-vandalism.htm>

<http://socyberty.com/subcultures/graffiti-art-or-vandalism>

History

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Root_cellar

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_storage

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_bank_robbers_and_robberies

Author Biography

Michele Martin Bossley is the author of a number of sports books for young readers. She is also the author of *Swiped*, *Cracked* and *Bio-pirate* in the Orca Currents series and *Jumper* in the Orca Sports series. Michele lives with her family in Calgary, Alberta.