



TeachersFirst READING TREKS

The 57 Bus:

A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading
Trek Map

Ages: 13+

Grades: 7-12

Reading Level: 6.5 - 6.9

Lexile Measure: 930L

Guided Reading Level: Z

Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA): N/A

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, literature, social studies, and history.

Synopsis of Book

Dashka Slater—journalist for *Newsweek*, *Mother Jones*, and *The New York Magazine*—ties together the actual life events of two teens whose only real connection was an Oakland transit bus. Sasha attends a private school in Berkley and identifies as agender—neither male or female on the binary spectrum. Richard lives in an impoverished, crime-ridden area and attends a large public school. One fateful day, thrill-seeking, lack of forethought, and peer pressure lead him to an action with disastrous consequences.^[MW1] This eye-opening book offers firsthand accounts from those involved in the fire and its aftermath and provides an empathetic look into the conflict between justice and restoration through forgiveness.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for 6–12

Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 6: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class on an interactive whiteboard using the Reading Trek map and highlighting its various layers.
2. Create a game using Goose Chase EDU ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Premade games in the site's game library include [Scavenger Hunts in the Classroom](#) (a great way to introduce this activity and book), [Constitution Review](#), [Government Review](#), and [Who are You? Who am I?](#)
3. Create a semantics activity using Mentimeter ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to help students learn more about themselves and their perspectives by seeing others' anonymous word association responses. This will bring to light some colloquial misunderstandings within groups.
4. Review content details using *The 57 Bus* flashcards at [Quizlet](#) ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or by creating new questions to use in class.
5. Challenge students to write an epilogue for one of the characters from the story.
6. Consider having students write a story or recount an incident where a person goes from feeling "different" or "on the fringe" to feeling accepted for the person that they are using Write the World ([TeachersFirst review](#)) - a social sharing site where groups of students around the globe review and comment on each other's work. This is especially helpful in teaching tactful communication and empathy.
7. Have your students use the map and schedules from [ACTransit](#) to calculate the

distance Richard and Sasha travel on the fateful day of the fire.

Extension Activities:

1. Use Macmillian's [The 57 Bus Discussion Guide](#) as prompts for journaling.
2. Write poems about who you are or want to be using Poem Generator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) and include them in a writing portfolio.
3. Watch news and information clips about the incident from [Not in Our Town](#), [NBC4 Washington](#), [KPIX5](#), [KRON4](#), and [Youth Voices](#). Host a Restorative Justice Circle where students take on the personas of individuals named in the text as well as bystanders who did not get involved.
4. Forgiveness is an underlying theme in the text. Take on the role of a news journalist reporting a local or regional story on forgiveness using ClassTools Breaking News Generator ([TeachersFirst review](#)), complete with a headline, description, and image.

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks](#)

Other Resources:

- [Dashka Slater](#)
- [Debbie Crandle Visit](#)
- ["Restorative Justice at Oakland's Fremont High"](#) (video)
- ["Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier One. Community Building Circle"](#) (video)
- ["Restorative Welcome and Re-entry Circle"](#) (video)