



Discussion Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

Inspired by the Guys Read initiative, aimed at hooking up young guys with books and the authors they love, *Guys Read: Funny Business* is a collection of ten hilarious stories from some of the funniest writers around. As Guys Read founder and collection editor Jon Scieszka says, “Your brain is doing some great work when it’s laughing,” so start working out your brain with this first volume in the official Guys Read Library.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEST OF FRIENDS

by Mac Barnett

Is it cool that Dean only wants to be friends with Ernest because of the Nesquik sweepstakes? What do you think about Ernest’s big lie to make friends? What should friendship really be about?

What are *your* top three best commercials of the year? Describe them, like Dean describes his favorites. Then have your friends rank their top three and compile the results to determine the number one best commercial.

WILL

by Adam Rex

Which would you most want to be—an alien, a demigod, a fairy, a superhero, a time traveler, a vampire, a witch, or a wizard? Why?

So what if Will doesn’t have special powers—he has something else. What is that something? How does Will act heroically?

ARTEMIS BEGINS

by Eoin Colfer

What is your assigned “boy band role” in your family?

Why might it *not* be a good idea to elbow your baby brother down the stairs, even if it is to save him from DEFCON four?

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

by Jeff Kinney

Do you have a younger sibling on whom you inflict psychological damage? Or are you maybe the younger one who gets picked on? Why do bigger, older kids prey on smaller, younger ones? Is it fair? Do younger siblings benefit in any way from being tortured? Explain.

This story is bursting with things from the ‘80s—Atari, *He-Man*, light sabers, *Meatballs*, Smurfs, VCRs, and more. What games, movies, TV shows, and other things from your childhood will you one day remember with nostalgia?



YOUR QUESTION FOR AUTHOR HERE

by Kate DiCamillo and Jon Scieszka

What is a Perfunctory Letter, and why don't they teach you how to write one in school?

How does Maureen O'Toople lure Joe Jones into doing his assignment and also into becoming friends? Why do you think Joe only gets a C minus on the project, and how does Maureen step in to fix things?

A FISTFUL OF FEATHERS

by David Yoo

How does Sam's dad make it hard for Sam to be a boy who isn't into "boy" things?

Why is Sam jealous of Travis, and why does he give up his vegetarian ways at the end of the story?

KID APPEAL

by David Lubar

What things make your best friend great? Do you each think that the other is an idiot, like Charlie and Dwight do? How can being an idiot, especially with your best friend, be okay?

Reading this story as a fable, what might its moral be?

"WHAT? YOU THINK YOU GOT IT ROUGH?"

by Christopher Paul Curtis

How is Papa Red "a mean old fart"? How is he also a vulnerable and sad old man?

Why do you think adults are always telling kids how things were worse when they were young? Is it inevitable that you'll talk about life back in your day when you're old? Why or why not?

MY PARENTS GIVE MY BEDROOM TO A BIKER

by Paul Feig

Do you ever gripe about having parents who are "too normal"? How might boring parents be preferable to crazy ones who give your bedroom away to a biker?

How would you feel if someone shared your private thoughts aloud, like Carl does when he reads the journal to his friends? Why is it cool to respect other people's privacy?

THE BLOODY SOUVENIR

by Jack Gantos

Have you ever done anything "Pagoda-stupid"? Did you regret it? Why or why not?

Is it possible to be a "casual thrill seeker"? Or are thrills necessarily a more serious occupation? Does doing dangerous things mean that you're "addicted to stupidity"? Explain.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



JON SCIESZKA is the author of some of the best known and funniest books for children, including the Caldecott Honor Book *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. In 2007, Jon was named the first National Ambassador for Children's Literature by the Library of Congress. He grew up with five brothers in Flint, Michigan, and now lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York. You can visit him online at www.jsworldwide.com.

MAC BARNETT is the author of the picture books *Billy Twitter and His Blue Whale Problem*, *Guess Again*, and the middle grade series *The Brixton Brothers*. He lives in California. Visit him online at www.macbarnett.com.

EOIN COLFER is the author of the phenomenally successful *Artemis Fowl* series, as well as many other books for kids. He lives in Ireland. You can visit him online at www.eoincolfer.com.

CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS is the Newbery Medal-winning author of *Bud, Not Buddy* and *Bucking the Sarge*. He lives with his family in Ontario, Canada.

KATE DiCAMILLO won the Newbery Medal for her book *The Tale of Despereaux*. Her other books include *Because of Winn-Dixie*, a Newbery Honor Book, and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. She lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. You can find her on the web at www.katedicamillo.com.

PAUL FEIG is an acclaimed television writer, producer, and director. He has also written two memoirs and a children's book, *Ignatius MacFarland: Frequenter!* He lives in Los Angeles, California.

JACK GANTOS is the author of many funny books for kids, including the *Joey Pigza* series. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts. You can read more about him online at www.jackgantos.com.

JEFF KINNEY is best known as the creator of the internet comic-turned-publishing sensation *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, which has spawned three sequels and a live-action movie. He lives in southern Massachusetts with his wife and two sons. You can visit him online at www.wimpykid.com.

DAVID LUBAR is the author of many hilarious books for kids, including the *Nathan Abercrombie: Accidental Zombie* and *Weenies* series. He lives in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. You can find out more about him online at www.davidlubar.com.

ADAM REX is the author of the middle grade novel *The True Meaning of Smekday*, in development as a feature film, and the teen novel *Fat Vampire*. He lives in Arizona, but you'd do better looking for information about him online at www.adamrex.com.

DAVID YOO is the acclaimed author of *Girls for Breakfast* and *Stop Me If You've Heard This One Before*. He's also just about the best blogger on Earth. You can find that out at www.daveyoo.com.

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