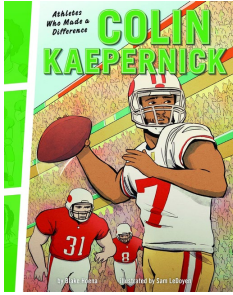




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Colin Kaepernick

Blake Hoena
Sam LeDoyen
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

This graphic biography shows readers the moments that have defined Colin Kaepernick's life as a quarterback and an activist. His talent and determination made him a college football success and brought him to the National Football League. As a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, he led his team to multiple playoffs and even competed in the Super Bowl. When outrage over violence against African Americans became a national movement, Kaepernick joined the protests. His decision cost him his career in football, but he gained a voice heard worldwide.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Blake Hoena has written more than one hundred books for children, including an original graphic novel series, *Eek & Ack*, and graphic novel retellings of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Peter Pan*. Blake lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota, with his wife, two dogs, two cats, and hundreds of comics.

Sam LeDoyen is a freelance Illustrator from the UK. Sam specializes in narrative imagery with a touch of fantasy and surrealism, and also likes to play with animation.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary 3-6
- Ages 8-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Graphic Novel
- Non-Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Sport
- Activism
- Football
- Protests



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Have any students heard of Colin Kaepernick? If so, what do they already know about him? Do they have any questions they hope the book will answer?

What do students know about American football? Can they name any team positions, rules, famous teams or players? Make a list of facts about American football.

Exploring the Text

How does being adopted affect Colin's childhood and adolescence?

Read the glossary and then revisit the class list of American football facts. Do they have any new pieces of information to add? Do you know any more rules of the game? How is American football similar or different to other sports the class may be familiar with, like rugby or soccer?

How was Colin's early career affected by both skill and by chance? How might his life have been different if he wasn't adopted by the Kaepernick family, if there hadn't been team injuries that enabled him to play, or if he'd pursued baseball instead?

Watch this video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek0Hqy_bT_A) of Colin Kaepernick playing as the quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers. How was watching the sport different to reading about it in the book? Do you think the graphic novel captured the spirit and energy of the game? If so, how and why?

Colin's decision to kneel during the anthem proved very controversial, and contributed to the end of his football career. Have a class debate about whether or not kneeling was the 'right' thing for Colin to do. Remember, the issues are sensitive and there may not be a correct side.

The book references the Black Lives Matter protests that took place across the United States in response to police violence against African Americans. What do students know about these protests, and the movement as a whole? Why is it significant?

After leaving the NFL, Colin founds Know Your Rights Camp (KYRC). As a class, visit <https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/> to learn more about the foundation. Why do you think Colin chose to found KYRC? On their 'Who We Are' page, KYRC say "Love is at the root of our resistance". What do you think this means, and how does it impact the work they do?

Colin writes a letter to his future self about his dreams – and even ended up playing for the team he'd dreamed of! Write a letter to your future self about the things you hope to do and achieve.

Colin Kaepernick is part of a series of graphic novels about 'Athletes Who Made a Difference,' to 'showcase activism in sports.' Can you think of any other athletes, Australian or international, that you would include in the series? Write a short paragraph using persuasive language about the athlete you chose, how do they make a difference, and why they should be included in the graphic novel series.

Take a section of one of the book and recreate it as unillustrated prose. Think about how to convey the mood, imagery, action and dialogue in words, rather than in graphic novel style. After completing this exercise, have a class discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of each style. Which do you prefer writing?

In most graphic novels (and comics), there is usually a white space between the panels called the gutter. Consider the difference between large and small panels, square and irregular shapes and full page illustrations. Copy a page of the book, cut out the frames and arrange them on a piece of paper with a smaller gutter between each frame and then with a larger gutter. What difference does this make to our reading?



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Choose several spreads from the book and perform a visual analysis by responding to the following points:

- Objects – What objects and people can you see?
- Size – What size are the objects in relation to each other?
- Setting – Is a setting obvious? What is it?
- Colours – What are the predominant colours used?
- Position – Where are objects in relation to each other? Are they in the fore-, middle- or background?
- ‘Camera’ angle – From what angle do the pictures appear to be drawn? For example: high eye level, low, bird’s eye view.
- ‘Shot’ type – What type of ‘shot’ has been used: close-up, medium, long, very long, etc.?
- Depth of Field – What is and isn’t in focus?
- Light – Is the picture light or dark? Is it the same all over?
- Lines and vectors – In what direction do lines in the picture lead the eye?
- Body language and clothing – What facial expressions, gestures and use of space can you see? What is being worn?

Colin Kaepernick is a non-fiction graphic novel. How would the book be different if it was fiction? Visit your school or public library and collect several other graphic novels. Compare them with *Colin Kaepernick*. How is *Colin Kaepernick* similar or different to other graphic novels?