

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

## FOR YOUNG READERS

### GET YOUR KIDS & TEENS TALKING

Your whole family can take part in our One Book, One Community thanks to our titles for young readers. Just like *The Vanishing Half*, these books address themes of belonging, racism, family and identity. Help your kids join the discussion using these conversation starters.

- **Read with your kids.** Whether you read aloud together or read the book separately, it's good practice to read what your kids are reading.
- **Make it fun.** Keep it casual by asking questions while you read. It shouldn't feel like a pop quiz for your kids.
- **You know your kids best.** Ask the questions that you think will really get your kids talking. Or ask your own questions based on your kids' interests.
- **Pause.** Be sure to give your kids time to think and answer before you jump in with your own answer to every question.

### **BLACK IS A RAINBOW COLOR BY ANGELA JOY** (Recommended for ages 5-8)

- What is the difference between the color black and Black people? Are Black people black? Why or why not?
- What is your favorite thing that is the color black? Why is it your favorite?
- Being Black is about more than skin color - it's also about Black community and culture. What is one thing that this book showed you about Black culture?
- There are many cultural references throughout the book. Are there any you don't understand? Take some time to learn about them and then go back through the book, looking for ways they are slipped into the text and pictures.

Head to the author's website, [AngelaJoyBooks.com](https://www.angelaJoyBooks.com), for more resources to help you read, discuss and enjoy this book with your child, including:

- Video introduction to *Black is a Rainbow Color*
- Video of Angela Joy reading *Black is a Rainbow Color*
- Music playlist to accompany the book
- At-home activities to accompany the book
- Two podcast discussions about *Black is a Rainbow Color* and its themes - for adults

**CLASS ACT BY JERRY CRAFT** (Recommended for ages 9-12)

- Drew gets attention from Ashley and Mr. Roche throughout the story. How does Drew feel about it? Why? How can seemingly positive things like compliments become negative or cross boundaries?
- Drew literally feels invisible after leading the sister school tour, and Jordan feels overlooked because of his light skin. What are some other ways that characters feel like they are and aren't seen? Why is feeling seen important? What makes you feel seen or unseen?
- Drew refuses to play basketball because he feels like he is expected to play just because he is Black. Why does Drew feel he must avoid conforming to a stereotype even if it means not playing a sport he loves? Have you ever avoided doing something because you felt it was what other people expected of you?
- Drew has several people come up and touch his hair. While usually not intended badly, it is wrong. Have you ever had someone do something in a well-meaning way that made you uncomfortable? What boundaries do you set for people regarding your hair and body?
- Mr. Roche has made lots of missteps. Can people who are genuinely trying to be inclusive and change the system make missteps? Does being willing to learn from your mistakes make a difference? Why or why not?

**YOU SHOULD SEE ME IN A CROWN BY LEAH JOHNSON** (Recommended for ages 12-19)

While reading, pay attention to how Liz is treated compared to her other classmates as she navigates the predominantly white school in a small midwestern town. How do racism, classism and homophobia reveal themselves?

Here are some questions to consider after you've finished the book:

- Liz navigates many different kinds of relationships in the book including family, friendship and love. What does she learn and experience about each relationship as she grows throughout the book?
- *School Library Journal* notes that *You Should See Me in a Crown* "celebrates the beauty of individuality." Do you agree? If so, what do you feel makes this book a celebration of individuality?
- Liz Lighty's town is obsessed with the tradition of prom, and students at Campbell County High School stage elaborate prom-posals. Do you think the town's obsession with prom was realistic? How would you react to a dramatic prom-posal?
- Liz's grandmother forbade her and Robbie from using the school's Campbell Confidential where gossip and rumors were spread. How can social media platforms (official and unofficial) affect how we feel about our peers and how we feel about ourselves in comparison?
  - How does it affect characters within the story?
  - What kinds of problems does social media create both online and in person?
  - How is Campbell Confidential used positively in the story and how do we translate that to our own lives?
- Who would you cast in a film adaptation of this book?