

CRASH COURSE: THEME 1 - COMPETITION

Understanding

Coach Webber helps Maryn prepare for her races (see pages 18, 19, 41, 42, 43, 47, 66, and 68/69), but Maryn also applies her coach's lessons to other aspects of her life. Find some examples (pages 111, 137, and 174, for instance) of this and explain how she does it.

Thinking

Why does Maryn compete with Gil and Joe, even though her sport keeps them in separate categories? Do you believe that boys and girls should be separated in sport? Why do you think this way?

Creating

Divide the class into two groups and have one group research the benefits (the pros) of competitive sports for youth and the other group research the negative impact (the cons) of competitive sports for kids. Now engage in a debate about competitive sports—are they a good thing or a bad thing for kids, and why?

THEME 2 - TEAMWORK

Understanding

Mountain biking is an individual sport, but the Radical Off-Roadies are a racing team. Can you find and explain the ways in which the Radical Off-Roadies behave as a team? (See pages 11-14, 18-20, 46/47, 49, 58, 62, 68-70, 87/88, 140, and 154.)

Thinking

Maryn acts as a mentor for her young teammates. Do you have a mentor? If so, write about the impact of this person on your life. If not, write about what kind of person you would want as a mentor, and explain why.

Creating

Part A. - Prepare and perform a skit in which a group of people fail to work together to accomplish something meaningful, and, therefore, fail to complete their task/project/mission.

Part B. - Prepare and perform a skit in which the same group of people work together as a team to accomplish that same task/project/mission successfully.

THEME 3 - BULLYING

Understanding

List some examples of bullying in the book, including cyber bullying. (See pages 37-39, 53, 69/70, 85, 114, 130/131, 139/140, and 175.) What strategies does Maryn employ for dealing/coping with the bullying? (See pages 37-39, 53, 69-71, 85, 114, 131-133, 135-139, 141-142, and 176.)

Thinking

Does your school have a zero tolerance policy on bullying? If so, do you believe this policy has eliminated bullying? If not, do you believe that your school should put such a policy in place? Why do you think how you do?

Creating

Write a fictional blog or fictional social media posts from the perspective of a person who is being bullied at school.

THEME 4 - SUPPORT

Understanding

Maryn strives for excellence with the support of her coach, but also with the support of her family, friends, and teachers. How do Maryn’s family members support her in achieving her athletic and other goals? (See pages 3, 6-8, 22, 29/30, 33/34, 45/46, 49/50, 58, 78-80, 81/82, 101, 107-110, 120-122, 131-133, 153-156, 167/168, 172/173, and 184/185.) How do Maryn’s friends provide support? (See pages 3, 12-14, 26, 37, 46, 49, 51/52, 53-55, 59/60, 116, 129/130, 135-138, 140/141, 150, 154-156, 160/161, 164, 171-173, and 179/180.) How do Maryn’s teachers provide support? (See pages 8, 113/114, 146, 169, and 180/181.)

Thinking

In your opinion, does Maryn “suck at friendship” as she says on page 137? Explain why you think as you do.

Creating

Create a newspaper or online advertisement in which a person seeks a good friend. In the ad, define what it means to be a friend and include what you consider to be the fundamental qualities of a good friend.

THEME 5 - SANCTUARY

Understanding

How did Maryn find her secret sanctuary? (See pages 58/59.) Tell us the story in your own words. Describe this place and what it means to her. (See pages 20, 58/59, 73, 116/117, and 141/142)

Thinking

Define the word sanctuary. Do you believe that every human being needs sanctuary at some point in his or her life? Tell why you think as you do.

Creating

Write a poem, story, or song, or make a video telling a story about a person needing, seeking, and finding (or not finding) sanctuary.

THEME 6 - SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Understanding

What negative impact did the energy drops have on Maryn? Find at least five examples from the book. (See pages 30, 32, 34/35, 41-43, 48, 57, 80, 110/111, 122, 143, and 145-147.) How did Maryn justify her own use of energy drops, even when they were banned from use at her school? (See pages 21/22, 32, 44, 54/55, 78, 83, 102, and 115.)

Thinking

Why do you think Maryn continued using the energy drops even though Coach Webber (page 43), Janey (page 54), and Principal Topping (page 54) all spoke out against using them? In your opinion, was there a better way for Maryn to have dealt with her workload and fatigue? Why would this have been a better way?

Creating

Write the newspaper article that could have run in J.T. Seeley Collegiate Online Review if Maryn had been caught with energy drops on school property. Include a sensationalistic headline and some information on the health implications (and other effects) of energy drops on young people.

THEME 7 - HONESTY AND COMMUNICATION

Understanding

Describe the impact of Stephanie and Julie's false accusation of Coach Webber on: a) Coach Webber himself (see pages 96, 104, and 106); b) Maryn (see pages 91, 101, 120, 126/127, 131, and 146/147); and c) the team (see pages 108-111, and 120). What Stephanie and Julie did in falsely accusing Coach Webber of improper behaviour was not only mean, it was against the law. What offense could the girls have been charged with? (The answer appears in the chapter entitled: Consequences.)

Thinking

In your opinion, do you think the consequences to Stephanie and Julie for their bullying and criminal behaviour were appropriate? Tell why you think as you do.

Creating

Why do you think that Maryn did not speak up right away and tell the truth about Stephanie and Julie's lie? Discuss this. After the discussion, prepare and perform a skit about another person's dilemma.

THEME 8 - STRESS AND "*BUSYNESS*"

Understanding

Throughout the book, Maryn shows signs that she is having trouble coping with the stresses in her life. Provide some examples of this. (See pages 25-27, 34/35, 39, 41, 43, 52, 73, 75, 78-80, 81/82, 109, 111, 115, and 146/147.)

Thinking

In your opinion, are young people too busy these days? Why do you think the way you do?

Creating

What are some coping strategies for managing stress and busyness? Make a poster geared for school kids highlighting the best of these stress-busting strategies.