



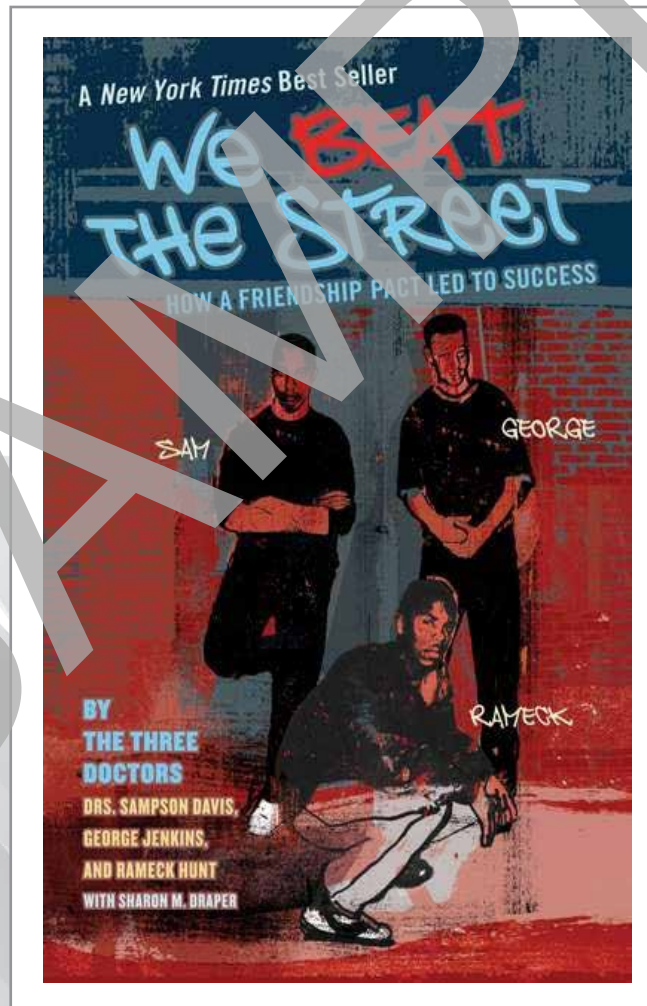
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

We Beat the Street

Rameck Hunt



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

We Beat the Street

Rameck Hunt

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Table of Contents

Summary	3
About the Authors	3
Characters	4
Background Information	5
Initiating Activities	5
Five Sections	6
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	15
Post-reading Extension Activities	18
Assessment	19
Scoring Rubric	28
Glossary	29

Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Analysis, compare/contrast,
research, critical thinking,
evaluation, interpretation

Comprehension

Cause/effect, prediction,
inference

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,
application

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, report, debate,
interview

Writing

Essay, prose, letter, poetry

Literary Elements

Point of view, characterization,
setting, theme, genre

Across the Curriculum

Art—painting;
Music—songwriting;
Social Studies—current events

Genre: nonfiction; memoir

Setting: New Jersey, primarily inner-city Newark

Point of View: third person with first-person commentaries at the end of each chapter

Themes: peer pressure—positive and negative; setting goals; friendship; perseverance through adversity; the power of dreams

Style: narrative with direct commentary at the end of each chapter

Tone: serious, didactic, inspirational

Conflict: person vs. person; person vs. self; person vs. society

Date of First Publication: 2005

Summary

“The Three Doctors,” as the authors have come to be known, first meet and become friends in high school in Newark, New Jersey during the 1980s. All three are intelligent boys, but growing up in the inner city seems to limit their life options. Further, street life poses temptations to the boys and threatens to swallow them up as it has so many other young people. By chance, they find themselves at a presentation about a Seton Hall University program for promising minority students. The boys decide to seize this opportunity; they form a pact to help one another journey through the program. This is a story of friendship and perseverance as the young men set out to pursue a dream that once seemed impossible.

About the Authors

The Three Doctors grew up in Newark, New Jersey and attended University High, a school for high-performing students. It was there that they met and formed their pact to go through the Seton Hall Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program. Dr. George Jenkins went on to graduate from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and to practice and teach dentistry. Drs. Sampson Davis and Rameck Hunt graduated from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Davis became an emergency-medicine physician, while Dr. Hunt pursued a career in internal medicine. The Three Doctors maintained their friendship throughout and went on to create The Three Doctors Foundation. Their foundation helps inner-city youth through education and mentoring. They have written two other books describing their experiences: *The Pact*, their story for older audiences, and *The Bond*, which details their relationships with their fathers.

Sharon M. Draper is a professional educator and author with numerous awards and honors to her name. She received the National Teacher of the Year award in 1997, is a winner of several Coretta Scott King awards, and is a *New York Times* bestselling author. She has taught English at the junior high and high school levels for over 30 years. In addition, she has served on many boards that promote effective teaching practices. Her novels, written for young adults, include the highly acclaimed *Tears of a Tiger*, *Forged by Fire*, *Darkness Before Dawn*, *Romiette and Julio*, *Double Dutch*, *Copper Sun*, and *November Blues*. Mrs. Draper lives with her husband in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Chapters 18–Conclusion

George and Rameck start to pursue a rap music career and think about giving up medical school, but finances return them to their original goal. The three young men finish college and begin medical and dental school; they become separated for the first time in years. They struggle to adapt themselves to new worlds, but all three persevere and graduate. Sampson, the one who struggles the most with medical school, initially lands a residency in a medical field that is unexciting to him. With further effort and a stroke of luck, he ends up working in the Newark hospital in which he was born. The boys' story ends with lessons-learned advice from the three doctors to their young readers.

Vocabulary

tumultuous
acclimated
livid
genially
limbo
palatable

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the boys should have abandoned their pursuit of a rap career for less flashy but more stable medical careers? Did they owe it to anyone to stick to their original plan? *(Answers will vary. One might argue that Rameck has had a passion for the stage since a young age, and he might have enjoyed a performing career more than medicine. On the other hand, they worked hard to get into the program. Their families and others, like Carla Dickson, sacrificed to help these young men. They took spots in a program that other minority students could have had, and it might seem unfair to throw that away for an uncertain career in entertainment.)*
2. Although academics don't seem to pose great problems for the three doctors, Chapter Nineteen illustrates some of the challenges their schooling creates. Discuss some of the difficulties the young men and their families face throughout their education. *(Although the boys are on scholarships, their families still face additional costs plus lack of income while the boys are in school. George talks about his mother working 14-hour days to help him. They also have trouble adapting to a new environment where they are minorities. They often feel alone and out of place. George's inability to knot a tie illustrates the disadvantaged positions in which the young men often find themselves.)*
3. Discuss Rameck's final brush with the police. Note the variety of emotions he feels throughout. How does this scrape differ from others Rameck has been in with the law? What does it illustrate about the injustices the men face despite their accomplishments? *(Unlike the other times Rameck gets into trouble, this time he is completely innocent. He reports feeling embarrassed, angry, and afraid. He has no control over this event, and it could derail all of his plans. "Driving While Black" [p. 162] constitutes racial prejudice against minorities and is another example of the challenges these young men face.)*
4. Discuss the improbability of Sampson ending up in his desired specialty at his home hospital. How does this one experience illustrate any number of the themes and lessons of the three doctors' stories? *(The way in which Sampson lands this job underscores the theme that with hard work and determination any dream can become possible, even for poor kids in the inner city. It's also an example of turning failure into success. Had he initially matched in emergency medicine, he likely never would have learned of the opening in Newark. And, instead of giving up, Sampson tried again and landed his dream job. Faith, hard work, and determination all come into play.)*

Supplementary Activities

1. We're told the meaning of "*Ujima*," one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Research the names and meanings of the other six principles. Choose one of the six, and as a class discuss how the doctors live their lives to reflect that principle.
2. Sampson relates feeling very out of sorts in medical school. He has a lot of trouble adjusting to what seems to be a foreign environment. Write a narrative about a time you felt out of place. Describe what about the situation made you feel out of place and how you responded.
3. Complete your Character Chart. Go back and circle words that appear multiple times. For each of the three doctors, choose three adjectives you feel best sum up his character.
4. Examine the dialogue between Sampson and Jacquie Johnson, the resident coordinator for Newark Beth Israel Hospital, with the Using Dialogue chart on page 23 of this guide.
5. Use the Effects of Reading chart on page 24 of this guide to record your reactions to the book.

Characterization

Directions: Write the name of a character from the book in the center rectangle. In each oval, write an adjective that describes the character's personality. Then fill in each dotted rectangle with a detail about the character that illustrates that part of the character's personality.

