

- 0. Basketball and rules - Story Preface
 - 1. What is a crossover?
 - 2. Basketball is a powerful sport
 - 3. Basketball and rules**
 - 4. The Crossover -- Yes!

Kwame Alexander's poetry is interesting to look at and is meaningful. His words make readers think about deep connections in life. In *The Crossover*, twins Josh and Jordan find out that brotherhood and love come first when families face big problems. In the book, one brother is jealous of the other, their father becomes ill, rules are made and rules are broken.

Josh Bell writes rules of basketball which mirror his rules for life. Here is ***Basketball Rule #1:***

Basketball Rule #1

In this game of life
your family is the court
and the ball is your heart.
No matter how good you are,
no matter how down you get,
always leave
your heart
on the court.



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Books for Young Readers

In other words, your family, your team, and the people you care about should always have your heart and your love. This rule, and the others that appear in *The Crossover*, are rules that the Bell family learns to live by. They are rules that readers of *The Crossover* can take into their hearts. Mr. Alexander's poetry delivers big messages. He writes poems from the inside out.

Kwame Alexander wants his readers to cross over to a new way of thinking about poetry.



TRY THIS: Think of three rules (school, home, government). Write each rule and the result of breaking the rule in free verse. Read the rules out loud in a rhythmic beat. Sing the rules to the melody of a favorite song.

Footnotes:

1) Brown, Jeffrey, Poet's novel turns young sports lovers into book lovers, PBS.org, Mar/26/2015, Dec/18/2015, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/poets-novel-turns-young-sports-lovers-book-lovers/>

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Basketball-and-rules-Crossover-Poet-and-Inspiration-Kwame-Alexander>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Basketball-and-rules-Crossover-Poet-and-Inspiration-Kwame-Alexander>

Questions 2 Ponder

Rules - Should They Be Flexible or Unchangeable?

In his book *Crossover*, Kwame Alexander likens basketball (and its rules) to life. He examines what is important in life and compares that to what's important in the game

When we play basketball, we have to follow the rules. Should living our lives require us to follow rules, too?

Do you think Kwame Alexander is right when he compares playing basketball to living life? Why, or why not?

Should rules be flexible and allowed to be changed over time? Why, or why not?