

**Title:** *New Kid*  
**Author:** Jerry Craft  
**Genre:** Young Adult - Socio-Economic Differences

**Respondent's Name and Grade:** Zahra V., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Responded To:** August 12, 2022

**Questions:**

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

The main plot of this novel follows 12 year old Jordan Banks, who is one of the only colored kids in his new school. Jordan has a love for cartoons and art, but his parents want him to have the best opportunities, sending him to a prestigious private school called Riverdale Academy Day. There he has to learn to make new friends, find school activities, like any other kid. However, the biggest challenge is dealing with racist comments and finding a friend group where he fits in.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I identified with Jordan the most because like his school, the majority of my school is white, and being a person of color makes you stand out. I enjoyed how I related to him, and saw how he had to navigate his way to finding a friend group that supported him because that is also something I have had to navigate.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

I believe the main message of this novel is that judgment will come to you in any situation, but you must persevere through it and find your own way. I believe that this is the main message because Jordan had to fight racist comments and privilege standards in his new school. Despite his struggles, he persevered through them and found his own friends and place to fit in.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story. The reason I say this is because throughout the entire novel, we see how Jordan has to fight his way through hardships in his new school. I did not find this to be preachy, as it is an experience many people of color have had to deal with in America.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Two perspectives that were introduced in the story were whether Jordan should give up and not try to find his own way to fit in or if she should persevere and keep trying. I agree with the latter perspective because in life many challenges will be thrown at you, but you must keep persevering, otherwise you will fail. Jordan showed many examples of this throughout the novel.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

This book reaffirmed my belief that everyone is unique in their own way and that everyone deserves to find friends who understand and accept them for who they are. This book showed me the importance of friendship and not allowing your boundaries to falter because you deserve to have friends, despite being different from others.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I think the perspective of having a Black friend at school is missing and they could have acted as a refuge for Jordan and helped guide him with Liam. This would have brought hope to Jordan in the beginning and would also have been good for Jordan as he would have had more friends at the start of the story, and therefore be more confident.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book encouraged me to further look into the topic of people of color in majority white schools. I feel as though doing a survey in my school would be interesting to see how different kids fit in, and if any hardships and racist comments came along the way.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would recommend this book to grades 5-10. I say this because it shows the journey of how any kid of any age can face hardships of fitting in, especially as a person of color. I also think it would be interesting to people who like graphic novels, since they are easier to read through for younger levels. I think that many ages who read this would be able to see the perspective of Jordan and relate to and understand how he feels.

10. *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Another book I believe would be a good addition to this category is *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond. I believe this because it shows how kids who are poor or different looking than others have a strugglesome time to fit in and how they persevere through. I also think this book is great for many age levels, since it is easy to understand the perspective of the main character and what hardships and trials they are going through.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Tatjana T., Grade 11**

**Date Reviewed: April 10, 2023**

1. The main plot of "New Kid" by Jerry Craft revolves around Jordan Banks, a seventh-grade African American boy who starts attending a prestigious private school, Riverdale Academy. The book follows Jordan's experiences as he navigates microaggressions, racism, and code-switching, while trying to fit in and find his identity in a predominantly white environment.

2. I most identify with Jordan because, like him, I also struggle with issues of identity and belonging. I can relate to his experiences of feeling like an outsider in certain social settings, and his desire to express his true self despite societal expectations.
3. The main message of this book is about the challenges of navigating identity, racism, and microaggressions in a predominantly white environment. It emphasizes the importance of representation, self-acceptance, and standing up against racism and discrimination.
4. I believe that the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story without coming off as preachy. The author uses Jordan's experiences and interactions with his peers, teachers, and family members to portray the complexities of racism and identity in a realistic and relatable way, without being didactic.
5. In "New Kid," multiple perspectives on important topics such as racism, microaggressions, and code-switching are explored. I agree with Jordan's perspective on the importance of self-acceptance, embracing one's identity, and speaking up against racism. I also appreciate the perspective of Jordan's friend, Liam, who tries to understand and support Jordan's experiences, showing empathy and allyship.
6. Reading this book reaffirmed my beliefs about the importance of representation, inclusivity, and the need to stand up against racism and discrimination. It deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by individuals from marginalized communities in predominantly white spaces, and the impact of microaggressions on mental health and self-esteem.
7. While the book provides a valuable perspective on Jordan's experiences as an African American boy, it could benefit from including perspectives from other marginalized groups, such as individuals from different racial or cultural backgrounds, to provide a more intersectional lens.
8. Yes, this book encouraged me to pursue further reading, research, and action on topics related to racism, microaggressions, and diversity and inclusion. It inspired me to educate myself and engage in conversations and actions to promote inclusivity and combat racism in my own community.
9. I would suggest this book to readers who are interested in realistic fiction, stories about identity, racism, and social justice. It may particularly resonate with readers who have experienced or witnessed racism, microaggressions, or discrimination, or those who are interested in learning more about these topics from a perspective of a young person of color.
10. Another book that would make a good addition to this category of perspectives biography is "Ghost" by Jason Reynolds, which also explores the experiences of a young African American boy navigating issues of identity, racism, and self-acceptance. It provides a similar perspective on the challenges faced by young people of color in predominantly white spaces, but from a different narrative and can complement the themes explored in "New Kid."

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Kylee K., 11th Grade**

**Date Reviewed: 7/30/2023**

*1. What is the main plot of this book?*

The main plot of "New Kid" follows Jordan Banks, a young African American boy, as he navigates his first year at a prestigious private school where he grapples with issues of race,

identity, and belonging. Throughout the story, Jordan struggles to find his place in a predominantly white environment while balancing the expectations of his family and friends.

*2. Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I identified most with Jordan's experiences and emotions, especially with when he expressed his struggles regarding isolation and alienation as I have also experienced this when I first moved to the US from a different country and struggled with communicating with my peers because of a language barrier.

*3. What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

The main message of "New Kid" centers on the importance of embracing one's identity and challenging societal expectations, as depicted through Jordan's journey of self-discovery. This is exemplified in Jordan's encounters with microaggressions and stereotypes, highlighting the need for empathy, understanding, and authentic representation in diverse communities.

*4. Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

The main message of "New Kid" is seamlessly integrated into the narrative through Jordan's experiences and interactions, avoiding a preachy tone. For instance, when Jordan confronts his teacher about being assigned to the same group as the only other black student, he articulates his frustration with humor and vulnerability, fostering empathy and encouraging readers to reflect on their own biases.

*5. If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

In "New Kid," the perspectives on racial identity and belonging are multifaceted, but I resonated most with Jordan's perspective, which emphasizes the importance of authenticity and self-acceptance. When Jordan challenges stereotypes and asserts his individuality, he inspires readers to confront their own biases and embrace diversity.

*6. In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

Reading "New Kid" reaffirmed my belief in the power of representation and the importance of fostering inclusive environments where individuals of all backgrounds feel valued and respected. Jordan's experiences shed light on the complexities of navigating identity in predominantly white spaces, prompting reflection and empathy.

*7. What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

While "New Kid" offers valuable insights into the experiences of African American students in predominantly white schools, it could have delved deeper into the intersections of race, gender, and class to provide a more comprehensive exploration of identity and belonging.

*8. Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

"New Kid" sparked my interest in exploring literature and resources on diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational settings, prompting further reading and research to better understand the challenges faced by marginalized students and ways to create more inclusive environments.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would recommend "New Kid" to readers of all ages, especially young adolescents who are navigating issues of identity and belonging. The book's engaging narrative and relatable characters make it accessible to a wide audience, while its themes of diversity and empathy make it particularly relevant in today's society.

10. *What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Another book that would complement "New Kid" is "Ghost Boys" by Jewell Parker Rhodes, which similarly explores themes of racial identity and social justice through the perspective of a young black boy. Both books offer poignant insights into the challenges faced by African American youth and the importance of empathy and understanding in building a more inclusive society.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Kate G., 10th Grade**

**Date Reviewed: March 18, 2024**

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

New Kid by Jerry Craft is a graphic novel about Jordan Banks, a 7th grader who loves drawing cartoons. Jordan's parents enroll him in private school and he is one of the few students of color in his grade. Jordan struggles with fitting in and is forced to learn how to stand up for himself and fight prejudice.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I most identify with Liam. Liam is Jordan's white friend at Riverdale Academy Day School and he is consistently supportive of Jordan and Drew— another student of color who is experiencing the same challenges as Jordan. I identify with Liam because like him, I am always supportive of my friends and try my best to help them through hard times, despite what others may think.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

The main message of the book New Kid is the importance of accepting diversity, fostering empathy and understanding, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and respected for who they are— especially at school.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I didn't think that the message of this book was "preachy" at all! In fact, the opposite! I loved that this book was written as a graphic novel— especially because the main character loves to draw cartoons. I found that even though the message of the book was a delicate one, the author found a way to make the book funny while addressing the seriousness of the topic.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Jordan and Drew both struggle with their identities as students of color in a predominantly white school. They feel pressured to assimilate while at the same time staying true to who they are. I

agree with the way that both Jordan and Drew ultimately decided to embrace their unique selves despite the pressure from peers and often feeling like they didn't belong.

*6. In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

The idea that racism still exists and is something that school-age kids continue to be faced with was confirmed while reading this book. Jordan and Drew are the victims of racial stereotyping and suffer attacks from their peers as a result. They have to find ways to rise above the discrimination they are subjected to and find ways to respond to it.

*7. What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I didn't feel that any perspective was missing from this book. I think that the author made it very clear how the different characters felt about specific events in the book.

*8. Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book did make me curious about the importance of inclusiveness and what schools are doing to combat discrimination of any kind among its students. I looked particularly at my school and the different clubs and organizations that are offered for students of all differences to find a place where they can be themselves.

*9. What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I think that readers ages 8-12 who enjoy reading graphic novels would like this book. Also, readers who are interested in realistic fiction stories and are experiencing similar transitions or who enjoy stories about school life and friendships would likely enjoy this book.

*10. What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

A book that would make a good addition to the Socio-Economic Differences category of the Perspectives Bibliography would be *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone. It is the story of a black teenager, Justyce McAllister, who attends a predominately white prep school during the time in America where racial profiling and police brutality were at an all time high. Justyce begins to write letters to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a way to process what he is going through.