



HEAD GAMES By: Keri Mikulski



Standardize Test Tie Ins: Writing Prompts and Literature Activities Using Multiple Intelligences

Writing:

Speculative Writing:

Taylor Thomas is prepping for her first big game with her new club team, the So Cal Suns. Her rival, Nikki Rodriguez, is now her teammate. The coach is about to announce the starter for the first game. What happens next?

Persuasive Writing:

Write a letter to the So Cal Suns coach persuading the coach to choose Taylor to play for the team.

Do you think students spend too much time on social networking sites? Research and take a stand whether or not students should limit their time social networking.

Letter Writing:

Taylor has a lot on her plate. Write a letter to Taylor. Give her advice on how to deal with her problems with Zach, basketball, her dad, and Kylie.

Fiction Writing:

Continue the story of HEAD GAMES. Add another chapter. What happens to Taylor, Matt, Zach, Hannah, and Kylie?

Write an alternate ending to HEAD GAMES.

Literature:

Characterization:

How does Taylor Thomas change throughout the novel? Using passages from the book, back up your answers and describe Taylor's growth throughout the book. Note the changes she experiences.

Character Sketch:

Create a cardboard character sketch of Taylor, Kylie, Hannah, Zach, or Matt. What's in their hearts? What do they hold? What kind of clothes do they wear?

Setting:

How does the Southern California setting play a role in the book? How would the book itself change if it were set somewhere else?

Figurative Language:

1. Locate and write five similes.
2. Find an example of a metaphor, personification, and an onomatopoeia.

Compare and Contrast:

1. Compare and contrast Zachary Murphy to Matthew Moore.
2. Compare and contrast Hannah Montgomery to Taylor Thomas.
3. Compare and contrast Taylor Thomas to Kylie Collins.
4. Compare and contrast the Beachwood Academy basketball team before the list and after the list.
5. Compare and contrast the first basketball game against Richland and the last game against Richland.

Grammar:

1. Write out five sentences from HEAD GAMES. Underline the verb and circle the subject in each sentence.
2. Find a sentence with a direct object. Write this sentence and underline the direct object.
3. Find a sentence with an indirect object. Write this sentence and underline the indirect object.
4. Locate and write ten adjectives found in HEAD GAMES.

Making Connections:

Use post-its to...

1. Make a text-to-text connection to HEAD GAMES.
2. Make a text-to-world connection to HEAD GAMES.
3. Make a text-to-self connection to HEAD GAMES.

Inferring:

1. Why do you think the author wrote the book, HEAD GAMES?

2. Why do you think the author chose to make best friends, Hannah and Taylor, complete opposites? Are they similar in any way? How?
3. How did the author create the love triangle between Zach, Taylor, and Matt?
4. What details in Taylor's life did the author include to show how Taylor became a people pleaser? Why did the author include this?
5. What obstacles did the author place in front of Taylor? Why do you think the author chose these obstacles?



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Guided Reading Teacher's Guide

Head Games tells the story of six-foot-tall Taylor Thomas, a high school freshman basketball superstar, attending the prestigious and elite prep school, Beachwood Academy, located in Southern California. Taylor is a beast on the court, but super shy off. Taylor's best friend, Hannah (AKA Banana) is the exact opposite. An eccentric fashion designer, Hannah ropes Taylor into walking the catwalk for her and wearing Hannah's designs. At the same time, Taylor is dealing with insane pressure off the court as well as Taylor's ex-professional basketball player Type A dad is psyched about Taylor's basketball career, vying to help make Taylor 'the best center in Southern California'. Both Taylor and her father are anticipating Taylor's big shot with the SoCal Suns Club basketball team and her re-match against Richland and star center and nemesis, Nikki Rodriguez. Sprinkle in some major boy drama, including Taylor's long-time crush finally noticing her (who also happens to be her teammate's ex-boyfriend) and another 'too short' boy causing her puzzling flutters, Taylor is feeling the heat. In the end, Taylor learns to reach for her dreams, perform under pressure, and strike a confident pose, all while accepting herself for who she really is. Taylor uses her experiences on the court to transform from a people pleaser to a confident young adult off the court. With a quick pace and page turning sports action, both girls and boys alike will enjoy this realistic sports coming of age novel.

- Two-hundred and ninety pages with sixty-five chapters
- Quick pace
- Sports action
- Main character shows growth and change
- Written in first-person narrative
- Appeals to students interested in sports and/or fashion
- Teammates and sports relationships
- Deals with school bullying, cyber-bullying, girl-boy relationships, parental relationships, learning to cope with a disabled parent, people pleasing, sports pressures, and dealing with social networking
- Multiple sub-plots

- Fast moving events and time line
- Vocabulary familiar to most upper-elementary and middle school students
- Similes, metaphors, and personification
- Many multi-syllable words
- Multiple settings



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Reading Workshop
Book Talk



Hook:

If you like sports, you'll love Keri Mikulski's Head Games, the third book in the sporty series for girls, Pretty Tough.

Body:

Taylor Thomas is a total all-star on the court. She may be a model-tall, gorgeous, and quite a catch, but try telling her that. With a showcase and playoffs fast approaching, Taylor's basketball career is totally on the line. She doesn't know which way to turn first when her BFF ropes her in a fashion show and she finds herself torn between Zach, the super-tall, super-off limits basketball star and Matt, the super-sweet guy from her English class. Can Taylor stop her head from spinning long enough strike a pose, land the boy of her dreams and win the game?

Author Information:

Author, Keri Mikulski, was a three-sport athlete in high school and a two-sport athlete in college. During middle school, Keri fell out of love with reading. No matter how hard she searched, she could never find a sporty character she connected with, a character that played sports, but also had a life outside the court, field, and/or diamond. Keri sat down and wrote the fun, sporty book that she always wanted to read as a tween and the result was HEAD GAMES. You can email Keri at kerimikulski@gmail.com or check out her website at www.kerimikulski.com.

Read a passage:

When Kylie first runs into Zach on the basketball court – Chapter 1

When Kylie first notices that Zach is interested in Taylor – Chapter 3 – page 22

Girls vs. Boys Basketball action – Chapter 10 – page 55

Fashion show – Chapter 6 – page 36

Closing:

If you like sports, fashion, and/or action-packed first person narratives, you'll love HEAD GAMES. And don't miss the next book, STEALING BASES, told in the point of view of Taylor Thomas teammate and Zach's ex-girlfriend, Kylie Collins.



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Discussion Questions

Chapter 1 – 10:

1. After reading Chapter One, what type of person is Taylor? How is she feeling about Zach? About basketball?
2. Who is Matt Moore?
3. Describe Beachwood Academy. Compare Beachwood Academy to your school.
4. List Taylor's basketball teammates.
5. What does Hannah want Taylor to do? How does Taylor feel about it? Would you do it?
6. Describe Ms. Sealer and the fashion show rehearsal. What happens?
7. What is Hannah's room like? Compare and contrast Hannah's room to your own.
8. Describe Hannah and Taylor's relationship. How are your friendships the same and/or different from Hannah and Taylor's?
9. Who is Violet? Describe Violet and Hannah's relationship.
10. What does Hannah do to Taylor?
11. What happens at the beach courts?
12. How does Kylie react to Taylor? Why does she have this reaction?
13. What does Zach do to Taylor?

Chapter 11 – 20:

1. What is Taylor's dad like? How does Taylor react to her father? Compare and contrast your relationship with a parent to Taylor's relationship with her father.
2. Describe Taylor's mom.
3. What happens after Taylor tries on her mother's dress? How does Taylor react?
4. How does Taylor feel about playing basketball with Zach in front of her dad? Why? Have you ever felt this way?
5. What happens at the beach courts?
6. What happens the next day at school? How does Hannah react? Kylie?
7. What kind of relationship does Taylor have with Matt Moore?
8. Describe Matt Moore.
9. What happens during lunch? How does Taylor attempt to fix things? Does it work? Have you ever felt like Taylor? Describe.
10. What does Kylie do at the basketball game? How do Taylor's teammates react?

Chapter 21 – 30:

1. What happens to Taylor at the basketball game? How does the Coach react? How does her father react?
2. Have you ever felt like Taylor during a game? Describe your experience.
3. Tamika calls a meeting. What happens? What contract does Taylor sign? Why does Tamika draw up a contract? Do you think the contract will work?
4. What is Hannah's reaction to the contract?
5. How is Taylor's life changing? What is happening since Zach?
6. What happens at school with Zach a few days later? How does Taylor react?
7. What does Taylor notice on Matt Moore's forearm? What do you think it's from?
8. What does Taylor know about Matt Moore so far?
9. Who do you like better, Zach or Matt? Who do you think is better for Taylor?
10. What happens before the basketball game? Why is this game important to Taylor?

Chapter 31 – 40:

1. Who is Nikki Rodriguez? How does she affect Taylor?
2. What does Kylie do during the game?
3. What happens with the SoCal Suns? Does Taylor make the team?
4. Have you ever tried out for a team? Describe what happened.
5. Describe the team building activities. What happens when Kylie and Taylor are forced to work together?
6. Describe Kylie Collins. Why does she act the way that she does?
7. Who shows up at the beach first? How does Taylor react?
8. After the girls are done running, what happens? What does Zach do to Taylor?
9. What does Missy find on the beach? How does Kylie react? How does Taylor feel about the list?
10. Describe how you would feel if you were Taylor.
11. What happens at Sprinkles?
12. Describe the fashion show rehearsal. If you were Taylor, would you continue to walk the runway?
13. What is Hannah's reaction to the list?
14. What happens at Hannah's house?
15. Describe what Taylor does in her room. Do you act differently in your room? Describe your room.

Chapter 41 – 50:

1. Why do you think Taylor is trying out new fashions? What does Hannah think of Taylor's new style?
2. Have you ever tried a new style? Why? What happened?
3. What does Allison say to Taylor? What is Taylor's reaction? Has this ever happened to you? Describe.
4. What does Taylor find out about Matt during their beach walk? How does she feel about Matt?
5. Describe what happens when Taylor arrives home. What would you do?
6. What happened to Taylor at practice? Why do you think this happened?
7. Who is in Taylor's room after practice? What happens?
8. What does Taylor find in her locker the next day at school? Who do you think wrote it?
9. What does Matt ask Taylor the next day at school?
10. What happens after homeroom? Why do you think Matt reacted this way?
11. What does Taylor do during English class?
12. What happens when Taylor arrives home?

Chapter 51 – 60

1. How does Taylor feel about her teammates? What does Hannah think?
2. What would you do if you were Taylor?
3. What happens in the locker room? Why do you think Taylor's teammates feel this way?
4. Where does Taylor go after the locker room incident? Where is Taylor's mom? What do you think is going on with Taylor?
5. Describe the meeting between Coach Jackson, Kylie, Taylor, and Zach. How does Taylor feel? What would you do if you were Taylor, Kylie, or Zach?
6. What do Taylor's teammates tell her? How does Taylor react? Would you do the same thing? Why or why not?
7. What does Matt do backstage at the fashion show? What does Taylor do?
8. Who does Taylor spot at the hospital? What is he doing there? What does Taylor find out?
9. What does Taylor's parents tell her at the hospital? How does Taylor feel about the news? How would you feel if you were Taylor?

Chapter 61 – 65

1. Describe what happens when Taylor sees Kylie in the locker room.
2. What does Taylor begin to learn about herself? How is Taylor changing?
3. Describe the game against Richland. Who wins? Does Taylor play well?
4. What happens at the end of the game? What does Taylor find out?
5. How does the novel end?
6. Write an alternate ending to HEAD GAMES.