

As of 11/20/19 all Middle School Principals have approved the use of this title.

Requested by NVUSD Library Services on behalf of Napa County Reads
Contact: kmacmillan@nvusd.org

***New Kid* by Jerry Craft**

Originally published: 2019

Page count: 256

Format: Graphic Novel

Publisher: HarperCollins

Summary:

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enrolled him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade.

As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds-and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Publication status

Print availability:

Paperback: \$7.79

978-0062691194

Available in digital and audio format

Ebook: \$12.99

Audiobook: \$34.95

10/3/2019

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About Napa County Reads: NCR, coordinated by the Napa County Office of Education, is a coalition of educators and community members dedicated to improving the reading experiences of students throughout Napa County with an emphasis on middle schools. Each year the Committee selects a book which is read in the fall, followed by special events that include a visit from the author. The community is invited to join students in reading the selected book and attending the author events.

Selection criteria and process: Each year the Committee reviews a wide variety of potential titles curated by local educators. No book is selected without first being read and recommended by several members of the Committee. While there is no concrete criteria for book selection, there are several factors taken into account when narrowing down the list. These include in no particular order:

- Relevance: Can students identify or empathize with the main character? Does the story offer a broader view of the human experience?
- Readability and appeal: Although there is no hard rule regarding genre, the Committee typically looks for realistic fiction. The main goal is to select a book that will appeal to a wide audience, including reluctant readers. Although the selected title may be enjoyed by younger children or even adults, the target audience is middle school.
- Title availability: Book must be available in paperback and preferably also available in digital formats, including audio.
- Preferred male protagonist: Trends and research show that male readers of this age favor books about boys whereas female readers are less likely to have a preference.

The 2019/20 Committee has chosen *New Kid* as the 2020 Napa County Reads title. Additional materials including discussion guides, lesson plans, interdisciplinary activities, supplemental resources and engagement tools have been developed and will be distributed to all Napa County teachers for use in the classroom.

Please see attached reviews

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist starred (November 15, 2018 (Vol. 115, No. 6))

Grades 4-7. Don't let the title fool you. Seventh-grader Jordan Banks may be the new kid at his upper-crust private school, but this remarkably honest and accessible story is not just about being new; it's unabashedly about race. Example after uncomfortable example hits the mark: casual assumptions about black students' families and financial status, black students being mistaken for one another, well-intentioned teachers awkwardly stumbling over language, competition over skin tones among the black students themselves. Yet it's clear that everyone has a burden to bear, from the weird girl to the blond boy who lives in a mansion, and, indeed, Jordan only learns to navigate his new world by not falling back on his own assumptions. Craft's easy-going art and ingenious use of visual metaphor loosen things up considerably, and excerpts from Jordan's sketch book provide several funny, poignant, and insightful asides. It helps keep things light and approachable even as Jordan's parents tussle over the question of what's best for their son—to follow the world's harsh rules so he can fit in or try to pave his own difficult road. A few climactic moments of resolution feel a touch too pat, but Craft's voice rings urgent and empathetic. Speaking up about the unrepresented experience of so many students makes this a necessary book, particularly for this age group. Possibly one of the most important graphic novels of the year.

Kirkus Reviews starred (November 1, 2018)

Jordan Banks takes readers down the rabbit hole and into his mostly white prep school in this heartbreakingly accurate middle-grade tale of race, class, microaggressions, and the quest for self-identity. He may be the new kid, but as an African-American boy from Washington Heights, that stigma entails so much more than getting lost on the way to homeroom. Riverdale Academy Day School, located at the opposite end of Manhattan, is a world away, and Jordan finds himself a stranger in a foreign land, where pink clothing is called salmon, white administrators mistake a veteran African-American teacher for the football coach, and white classmates ape African-American Vernacular English to make themselves sound cool. Jordan's a gifted artist, and his drawings blend with the narrative to give readers a full sense of his two worlds and his methods of coping with existing in between. Craft skillfully employs the graphic-novel format to its full advantage, giving his readers a delightful and authentic cast of characters who, along with New York itself, pop off the page with vibrancy and nuance. Shrinking Jordan to ant-sized proportions upon his entering the school cafeteria, for instance, transforms the lunchroom into a grotesque Wonderland in which his lack of social standing becomes visually arresting and viscerally uncomfortable. An engrossing, humorous, and vitally important graphic novel that should be required reading in every middle school in America. (Graphic fiction. 10-14)

Publishers Weekly (November 26, 2018)

Riverdale Academy Day School is every parent's dream for their child: it has a beautiful sprawling campus, a rigorous academic curriculum, and ample extracurricular activities. It's also distinctly lacking in diversity. African-American new kid Jordan Banks would rather go to art school, but his parents have enrolled him, so he dutifully commutes to the Bronx from his home in Washington Heights, Manhattan. When he's not being confused with the few other students of color, he is being spoken to in slang, is receiving looks when financial aid is mentioned, or is forced to navigate many more micro-aggressions. Artwork by Craft interweaves the story with Jordan's sketchbook drawings, which convey the tension of existing in two markedly different places. The sketches show him being called "angry" for his observations, feeling minuscule in a cafeteria, and traveling by public transportation across different socioeconomic and racially segregated neighborhoods, changing his outfit and demeanor to fit in. This engaging story offers an authentic secondary cast and captures the high jinks of middle schoolers and the tensions that come with being a person of color in a traditionally white space. Ages 8-12. Agent: Judy Hansen, Hansen Literary. (Feb.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (November 1, 2018)

Gr 4-7-Jordan Banks is anxious about being the new kid at Riverdale, especially since he'd rather be going to art school. He's even more nervous when he realizes that, unlike in his Washington Heights neighborhood, at Riverdale, he's one of the few kids of color. Despite some setbacks, Jordan eventually makes a few friends and chronicles his experiences in his sketch pad. This is more than a story about being the new kid-it's a complex examination of the micro- and macroaggressions that Jordan endures from classmates and teachers. He is regularly mistaken for the other black kids at school. A teacher calls another black student by the wrong name and singles him out during discussions on financial aid. Even

Jordan's supportive parents don't always understand the extent of the racism he faces. This book opens doors for additional discussion. Craft's illustrations are at their best during the vibrant full-page spreads. The art loses a bit of detail during crowd scenes, but the characters' emotions are always well conveyed. Jordan's black-and-white notebook drawings are the highlight of this work, combining effective social commentary with the protagonist's humorous voice. VERDICT Highly recommended for all middle grade shelves.-Gretchen Hardin, Sterling Municipal Library, Baytown, TX © Copyright 201