

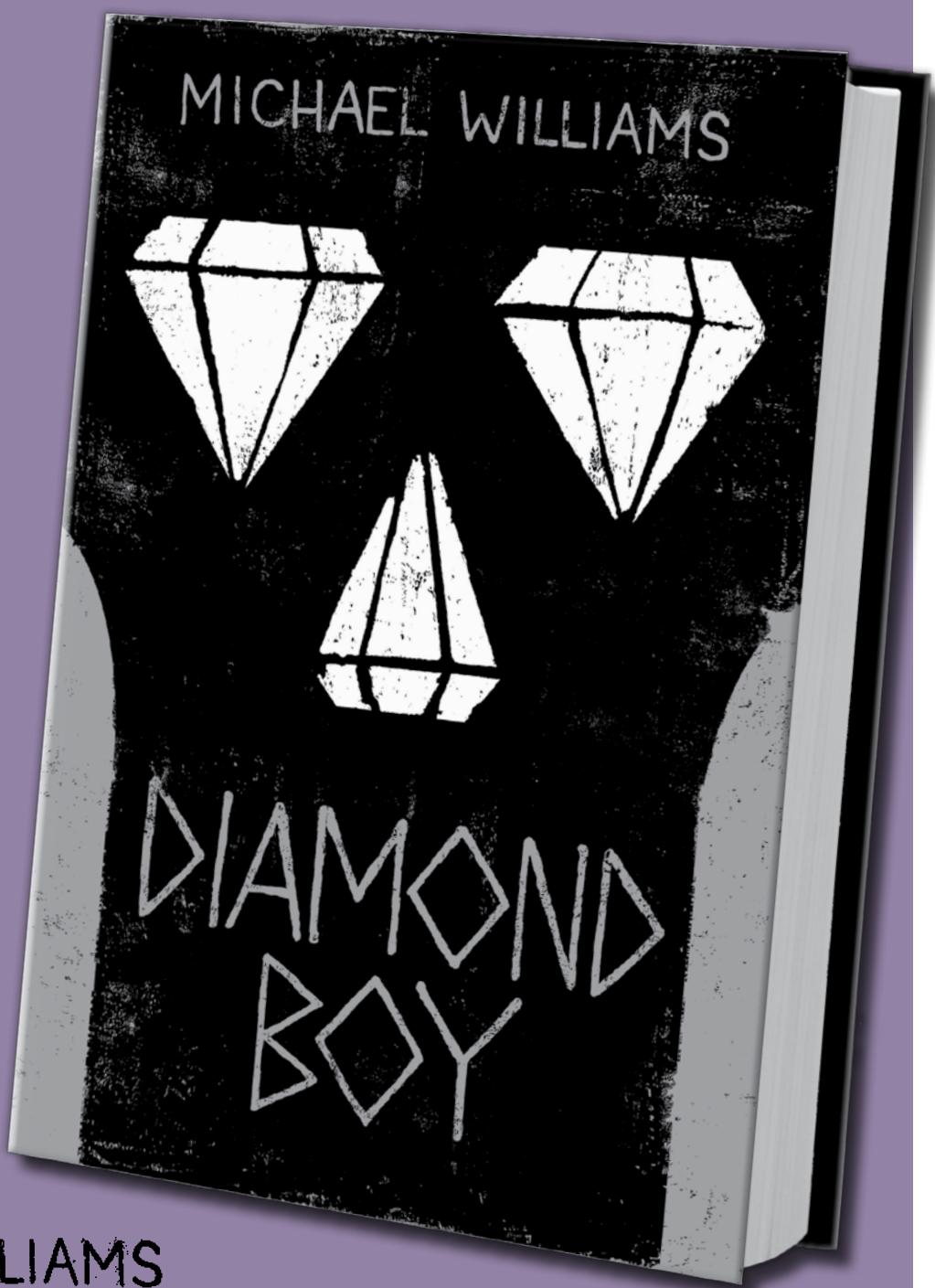
# educator's guide

# DIAMOND BOY

## Curriculum connections

❖ Social Studies

**Ages: 12 and up**



BY  
**MICHAEL WILLIAMS**

## COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

This guide is aligned with the 9-10 standards for literature. If you teach another grade, you may want to visit the common core website and find a similar standard in the same strand.

### **Reading Literature:**

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1**

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3**

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

### **Craft and Structure:**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5**

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

### **Speaking and Listening:**

#### **Comprehension and Collaboration:**

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A**

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

##### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C**

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

## PRE-READING

To prepare for reading Diamond Boy give students the opportunity to do some research on topics inside the novel. This prep work will work in two ways: first they can evaluate sources for quality and they can expand their understanding of the background and lay the groundwork for better comprehension. Consider assigning the following topics to research pairs, then have students join other pairs to share their research findings.

- Diamond mining
- History of Zimbabwe
- President Mugabe
- Shona People
- Land mines
- Child soldiers in Africa

### Website evaluation checklist for quality & reliability:

<b>The web address (home page):</b>	
<b>Type of website: com, edu, gov, org (commercial, educational, governmental)</b>	
<b>Author of article: Articles written without the denotation of its author are suspect.</b>	
<b>Copyright or date of publication: If there's no indication of when it was created then it is less reliable information</b>	
<b>Includes a BIBLIOGRAPHY or CITATION page for the information: A reputable source of news? Do other sources link to this site?</b>	
<b>OPINIONS are stated reasonably and justified with quality data and research.</b>	

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### JOURNEY:

1. List the facts you learn about Patson and his family after reading the first chapter in the novel. Put a star next to the three you think will be most important as the story unfolds.
2. Describe the Moyo's journey to the diamond mines in Marange. Keep a list of everything that goes wrong for them before they arrive.
3. Which part would be most terrifying as they try to make it to their destination and the safety of family?
4. Describe the people they see when the Moyo's stumble into the Mazezuru syndicate. What is the first lesson Patson learns about diamonds?
5. Who is Boubacar? What does he accuse Musi, the nephew of the Wife, of being?
6. How has Patson's life changed completely in just a single day? Is anyone's life capable of changing completely this quickly?
7. Who is James Banda? What is his effect on the people around him? How does Patson feel toward him? Why is he so intimidating? What punishment does he give his son? Why?
8. Explain how and why Patson's view of his father changed immensely. How has Mr. Moyo's plan turned to dust?
9. Summarize this first part of the book. What do you think are the most important plot points? Which characters are key to understanding the novel?
10. Why do you think the author decided to include a page from Patson's journal?

### MINING:

1. What is the most important information that Patson learns about mining from Jamu? What else does he come to realize about the family? What does he share with Jamu?
2. Describe the new accommodations of the Moyo family. What and who does it include (or not)?
3. Describe the first day at the Banda Hill diamond mine. How is Patson's father doing? How does Patson interact with his peers? Why?

4. What is the gwejana syndicate? How do they work together? What are the risks? What could be the rewards?
5. What does Patson find? Why is it still only a rock? What's the plan for the small collective of stones by the gwejana?
6. Why does Patson journey to Mutare? Why is it so dangerous?
7. Describe the negotiation and results of the arrangement Patson manages with Boubacar's boss, the baron?
8. What does Patson do with his share of the money? Find a quote which best reveals the fact that trouble is around the corner.
9. Summarize in a few sentences the important points of this part of the novel. How has Patson changed? How has life changed completely for the Moyo's?

### SOLDIERS:

1. Describe what happened when the soldiers took control of the mines for President Mugabe. How has Uncle James fallen from power?
2. Why do you think the army is being so violent against its own people? Find a quote that the commander uses to justify his actions and decisions.
3. What does Patson find again? Once he escapes the camp why does he decide to return once more?
4. What does Patson discover on his night away from the camp and his sister Jamu, and Sheena, his friend from home?
5. Describe Patson's encounter with Arves's granny, Mrs. Makupe. Why does he need to visit her? What does this reveal about Patson's character? What about when he threw the rock when he saw his stepmother dancing?
6. How did Patson find the third girazi? What happens to Patson when Commander Jesus insists he leave the camp?
7. Who is healing Patson? What does Jamu offer Patson? Why does Patson think he no longer cares about the stones? Would you?

## PATSON'S GAME:

1. What helps Patson feel a bit like himself for the first time in a long time? Why is he traveling? What is his destination?
2. When Patson is in the Mission hospital, how does it go for him? Why does Boubacar return and what news of Grace?
3. Why must Boubacar and Patson hide from Commander Jesus? How is Patson's fear and pain kept under control?
4. List everything that Patson has lost since the beginning of the novel. Could you recover from this much loss? How do people survive it?
5. Describe the River Woman's outpost and crossing. Are they safe? What may now be Grace's future if they don't figure out a way to get to her?
6. Explain why crossing the river is so dangerous. What waits on the other side for them?
7. Discuss their trek through the game reserve. What dangers await them? Who acted bravely? How?

## GRACE

1. Why does Boubacar help Patson and his family? What is his own story?
2. How do Boubacar and Patson escape the van once they're in custody? Why do people listen and help Boubacar?
3. Are they able to get to Grace in time before the train departs? What happens?
4. Why does the author include the fairytale retellings Patson was told as a child by his father and mother? What does it reveal about Patson's current condition?
5. At the hospital, how is Patson betrayed one last time by his step mother? How are she and the commander finally intercepted?
6. What surprise did Patson learn about in the hospital after the danger of the commander has passed?
7. Explain how Grace was able to act as the heroine of her own story. How are they finally reunited?
8. In the end, what is Patson's new life like? What has he lost? What has he gained?

## CCCS PROJECTS

### SUMMARY:

To find the theme of a particular work it is important to study closely the actions and changes of the main character, as well as the machinations of the plot. Fill out the following chart on the novel as you read the text to prepare for a discussion of its theme and other literary elements.

<b>Chapter:</b>	<b>Actions/choices of main character:</b>	<b>One sentence summary of the text:</b>
1	Annoyed by step mother Tries to talk to boys selling diamonds	Patson and his conflicted family journey toward diamond mines searching for a better life.
2		
3		
4		
5		

## THEME:

Theme is the statement about life or human nature that an author reveals through a story, most often unstated.

1. Study the choices/summary chart that you created while reading the novel. Highlight the moments where Patson made a key (often life changing) decision.

2. Then, create a list of topics that center around that decision.
3. Next, choose the two that you think are the most important to the novel. Then, create statements about those topics that the main character learned throughout his journey.

What a theme is:	What a theme is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statement about people or life that rings true after reading a story.</li> <li>• It's what a reader often remembers years after forgetting the details of a story.</li> <li>• Can be positive or negative in focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a single word (like friendship, hope, or courage)</li> <li>• A topic or moral</li> <li>• A cliché or worn out set of words</li> </ul>

## Topics explored in the novel:

Ex: providing for a family, loyalty, destiny, etc.

Topics:	Thematic statements:
1. Providing for a family	A person's dream may get sidelined in order to provide for his family.

\*Remember, thematic statements are often quite poetic so you may need to revise it extensively.

## VOCABULARY:

Throughout the novel, Williams tucks in vocabulary common to Zimbabwe and the mining of diamonds. Create a list of words that the reader needs to know to understand the story and use the list as a bookmark.

## THEN DISCUSS:

Why did the author choose to tuck in these authentic pieces of vocabulary? What does it reveal about the tone of the book? How does it help the reader to better understand the setting?

## VOCABULARY II:

It is important to be able to understand words in context, or where they appear in a novel. It is rare to have the time or intention to look up unknown vocabulary. Practice this useful skill by trying to decipher the definitions of the words by studying the context in which they appear. If you're unable to do so, then use a reference tool, like your bookmark. Then, create a chart of your own for at least three additional chapters.

Word in context:	What I think it means:	Word defined by a reference tool:	A new sentence:
"My eyelids were gently <b>prised</b> open, and my sister's face came into focus."			
"I could hear it in the <b>shrill</b> , hysterical voice of the Wife who ranted and wept as she hid from the neighbors out of shame."			
"You have been given a gift too, Patson, and you may not allow it to lie <b>fallow</b> ."			
"I hated the way she turned us into her <b>accomplices</b> ."			
"He was puzzled at how the <b>mundane</b> practicalities of food, money and rent seemed so unattainable."			

## CHARACTER DISCUSSION:

Patson's father, Joseph Moyo is contrasted against Patson's uncle by marriage, James Banda, as a foil.

The chart below lists quotes from these two patriarchs. Study the quotes and then discuss the questions below.

Joseph Moyo:	James Banda:
"Even though you don't know what your gift is yet, when you find it, you must nurture it, let it grow inside you, and let it become your life's work."	"Diamonds for everyone."
"[Do not] raise your voice, but rather improve your argument."	"And, more importantly, never take what belongs to me. If you do, I will hurt you badly."
"You must always keep your words soft and sweet....just in case you have to eat them."	"Instead of listening to the boss's son, use the brains God gave you and make your own decisions."
"Going to school is the most important thing in life...You don't just learn stuff in books; you learn how to understand the world."	"With those ugly ngodas (diamonds) you can have anything you want."
"Writing in your diary is a way of interpreting the things that happen to you, more than just a record of your day."	"Commander Jesus took it from me. And now he's taken my mine and wants me to work for him."
"Telling a secret to an unworthy person is like carrying grain in a bag with a hole."	

## DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think the author included these two characters as foils in the novel? What do their contrasting personalities provide for the reader?
2. How does the author use direct and indirect characterization methods to bring both of these patriarchs to life for the reader?
3. How does an author build empathy for a character?
4. What were the motivations behind these two characters? What did Patson learn from each of them?
5. How can studying characters and their motivations help us not only to understand literature but our everyday lives as well?

## about the book



**DIAMOND BOY**  
by Michael Williams  
HC 978-0-316-32069-6  
Also available as an ebook

*"Diamonds for everyone."*

That's what 15-year-old Patson Moyo hears when his family arrives in the Marange diamond fields. Soon Patson is working in the mines himself, hoping to find his *girazi*—the priceless stone that could change his life forever. But when the government's soldiers comes to Marange, Patson's world is shattered.

Set against the backdrop of President Robert Mugabe's brutal regime in Zimbabwe, *Diamond Boy* is the story of a young man who succumbs to greed, but finds his way out through a transformative journey to South Africa in search of his missing sister, in search of freedom, and in search of himself.

## also by Michael Williams



**NOW IS THE TIME FOR RUNNING**  
by Michael Williams  
HC 978-0-316-07790-3 • PB 978-0-316-07788-0  
Also available as an ebook

Just down the road from their families, Deo and his friends play soccer in the dusty fields of Zimbabwe, cheered on by Deo's older brother, Innocent. It is a day like any other...until the soldiers arrive and Deo and Innocent are forced to run for their lives, fleeing the wreckage of their village for the distant promise of safe haven in South Africa. Along the way, they face the prejudice and poverty that greet refugees everywhere, but eventually Deo finds hope, joining dozens of other homeless, displaced teens on the World Cup Street Soccer team—a possible ticket out of extreme hardship to a new life.

- ★ “A harrowing tale of modern Zimbabwe...gripping, suspenseful and deeply compassionate.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ “It’s the tender relationship between Deo and Innocent, along with some heart-breaking twists of fate, that will endure in readers’ minds.”  
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- ★ “Williams tells his story simply and unflinchingly with depictions of tremendous violence, hard-fought soccer matches, and the loving bond between the brothers. Deo’s narration provides an immediacy that is only compounded by the tale’s fast pacing and suspense.” —*School Library Journal*, starred review

## about the author



Photo © Bernard Bruwer

Michael Williams is a writer of plays, musicals, operas, and novels, and is the Managing Director of Cape Town Opera in South Africa. He is the author of several books, including the highly praised young adult novels *Crocodile Burning* and *Now Is the Time for Running*. He has written operas for young people based on African mythology as well as the libretti for symphonic operas that have premiered around the world. He finds writing fiction to be the perfect antidote to the drama of keeping an opera company alive in Africa.

