

## Young Adult Book Discussion Kits

Young Adult Book Discussion Kits are available to library patrons for use by home and community discussion groups, as well as teachers in the classroom setting. Each kit contains a set of thirty identical soft-cover books accompanied by a book discussion guide. The guides feature information about the author, reviews of the book, discussion questions, suggested further readings, and other pertinent information. Each kit is packaged in a canvas tote bag and may be borrowed for six weeks.

Young Adult Book Discussion Kits may be reserved and sent to the library branch of your choice for pick up. If you would like to reserve a kit, please stop by your local library branch or call **574-1611**. The kits may also be reserved through our website **www.lfpl.org**. A list of all the kits may be found in the LFPL catalog by typing **Book Discussion Kit Young Adult** at the title prompt.



**Children's & Young Adult Services**  
**301 York Street**  
**Louisville, KY 40203**  
**502-574-1620**

<http://www2.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jhtml?authorID=67&collateralID=5250&displayName=Biography>

<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/myers.html>

*Contemporary Authors Online*, Gale, 2003. Accessed 11/13/04



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A Reader's Guide to  
Young Adult Book  
Discussion Kit  
**Monster**  
By Walter Dean  
Myers

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Xtreme Reads  
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**Young Adult Book  
Discussion Kits**



The word echoes in his head: “MONSTER.” Steve Harmon finds it harder and harder not to think of himself as a monster. Sitting in jail, awaiting his trail for taking a part in a robbery that ended in murder. He feels like it is all a movie. Where he is the lead character, fighting for his life. He does not and cannot comprehend the reality of what is happening to him and how he came to be in this position. Read for yourself and decide if you think he’s guilty or not.

### About the Author

Walter Dean Myers is one of the most prolific African-American authors of children’s and young adult literature. His writings include picture books, teen fiction, poetry, and non-fiction.

He was born in West Virginia, but grew up in Harlem, New York with his foster parents. Growing up with a speech impediment helped him cultivate his love for reading and coming up with stories. In 1954 he quit high school and joined the army. He spent three years enlisted in the army before he was discharged. He continued to write through this time and during his various jobs following his stint with the army.

1969 became the turning point for his career as an author when he won a contest sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children for his book *Where Does the Day Go?* Because of this success Myers decided to write more picture books for children and became a well-known author. From then on he was able to support his family solely with the money he made as an author.

Myers incorporates much of what he has experienced about urban life in many of his books. Contemporary Authors states, “Myers strives to present characters for whom urban life is an uplifting experience despite the potentially dangerous influences.”

He has won many awards and honors including the Coretta Scott King Award, the Newbery and Caldecott Honor Award, the Michael L. Printz Award, and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

He has recently started collaborating with his son Christopher Myers who is an illustrator.

Of reading and writing Myers explains, “Books took me, not so much to foreign lands and fanciful adventures, but to a place within myself that I have been exploring ever since. The public library was my most treasured place. I couldn’t believe my luck in discovering that what I enjoyed most — reading — was free.”

### What the Critics Say...

“It’s an emotionally charged story that readers will find compelling and disturbing.”

~ Edward Sullivan, *New York Public Library*

“The tense drama of the courtroom scenes will enthrall readers, but it is the thorny moral questions raised in Steve’s journal that will endure in readers’ memories.”

~ Debbie Carton, *Booklist*

### Awards and Recognition

2000 Coretta Scott King Honor Book

2000 Michael L. Printz Award

2000 National Book Award Finalist

### Discussion Questions:

1) Do you like the format of the book? Do you think that reading it like a movie script makes the story more real? Do you think that Steve’s journal entries were honest?

2) Do you think that Steve’s lawyer thought he was guilty? If so, why? Do you think that it is right for a lawyer to defend someone even if they think that person is guilty?

3) Do you think Steve was guilty? Why or why not?

4) Do you think the title *Monster* is appropriate? If so, who is the “monster” or what are the qualities of a “monster?”

5) Steve writes in his journal, “I go to bed every night terrified out of my mind. I have nightmares whenever I close my eyes.” Do you think you would feel like this if you were in jail?

6) What kinds of lessons do you think Steve learned? How do you think he will live the rest of his life after going through this experience?

### Suggested Titles for Further Reading

*Like Sisters on the Homefront*  
By Rita Williams-Garcia (YP)

*In the Middle of the Night*  
By Robert Cormier (YP)

*Speak*  
By Laurie Halse Anderson (YP)

*Shooter*  
By Walter Dean Myers (Adult fiction)