



# TeachersFirst READING TREKS

## *The 57 Bus:*

# *A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives*

### Teacher Guide

## Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading  
Trek Map

**Ages:** 14+

**Grades:** 8–12

**Reading Level:** 9<sup>th</sup> grade

**Lexile Measure:** 930L

**Guided Reading Level:** Z

**Developmental Reading**

**Assessment (DRA):** N/A

**Content Areas:** English/language arts, reading, literature, social studies, and history.

## Synopsis of Book

Dashka Slater—journalist for *Newsweek*, *Mother Jones*, and *New York Magazine*—ties together the actual life events of two teens whose only real connection was an Oakland transit bus. Sasha attends a private school in Berkley and identifies as agender—neither male nor female on the binary spectrum. Richard lives in an impoverished, crime-ridden area and attends a large public school. One fateful day, thrill-seeking, lack of forethought, and peer pressure lead him to an action with disastrous consequences. This eye-opening book offers firsthand accounts from those involved in the fire and its aftermath, and provides an empathetic look at the conflict between justice and the restoration through forgiveness.

## Standards

### Common Core State Standards for 6–12

#### Reading: Literature

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure

#### Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

## Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration

## National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 6: POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

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## Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying [Reading Trek map](#) as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

## Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for how to use this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

### Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book to the whole class by displaying the [Reading Trek map](#) on an interactive whiteboard and highlighting its various layers.
2. Have your students use the [AC Transit map and schedules](#) to calculate the distance Richard and Sasha traveled on the fateful day of the fire.
3. Use Mentimeter ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create a semantics activity to help students learn more about themselves and their perspectives by seeing other students' anonymous word-association responses. This will bring to light some colloquial misunderstandings within groups.
4. Review content details using these [The 57 Bus flashcards](#) on Quizlet ([TeachersFirst review](#)) or create your own questions for the class.
5. Challenge students to write an epilogue for one of the story's characters.
6. Have students learn more about the history of Oakland, California, using the [University of Richmond's Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America](#) site.

## Extension Activities:

1. Use the questions in Macmillan's [The 57 Bus Discussion Guide](#) as prompts for journaling.
2. Have students use Poem Generator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to write poems about who they are or want to be and include them in a writing portfolio.
3. Watch news and information clips about the incident from [Not in Our Town](#), [NBC4 Washington](#), [KPIX5](#), and [KRON4](#). Host a Restorative Justice Circle in which students assume the personas of individuals named in the text, as well as bystanders who did not intervene.
4. Forgiveness is an underlying theme in the text. Ask students to take on the role of a news journalist reporting a local or regional story on forgiveness. Use ClassTools Breaking News Generator ([TeachersFirst review](#)) to create an article with a headline, description, and image.
5. Create a game to review the book's themes or characters using Goose Chase EDU ([TeachersFirst review](#)). Premade games in the site's game library include [GooseChase for Student Engagement](#) (a great way to introduce this activity and book), [Constitution Review](#), [Government Review](#), and [Who Are You? Who Am I?](#).
6. Have students write a story or recount an incident where a person goes from feeling "different" or "on the fringe" to feeling accepted for the person that they are. Consider using Write the World ([TeachersFirst review](#))—a social sharing site where groups of students around the globe review and comment on each other's work. This is especially helpful in teaching tactful communication and empathy.

## Helpful Resources

### From TeachersFirst:

- [TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps](#)
- [TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps](#)
- [OK2Ask: Building Background Knowledge with Reading Treks](#)
- [OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps](#)

### Other Resources:

- [Dashka Slater](#)
- [Debbie Crandle Visit](#)
- ["Restorative Justice at Oakland's Fremont High"](#) (video)
- ["Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier One. Community Building Circle"](#) (video)
- ["Restorative Welcome and Re-entry Circle"](#) (video)
- [YALSA AWARD REMARKS by Dashka Slater](#)