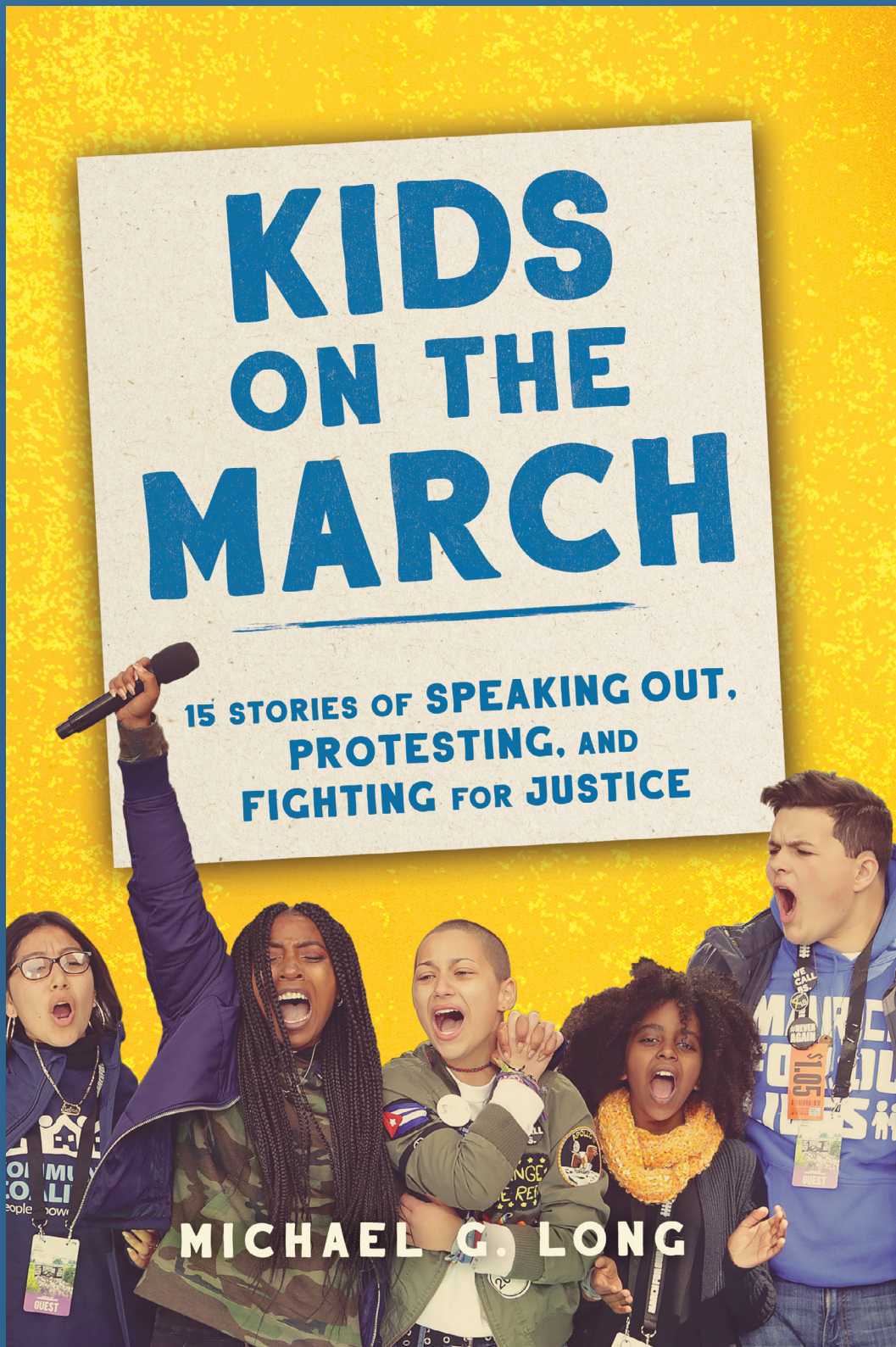


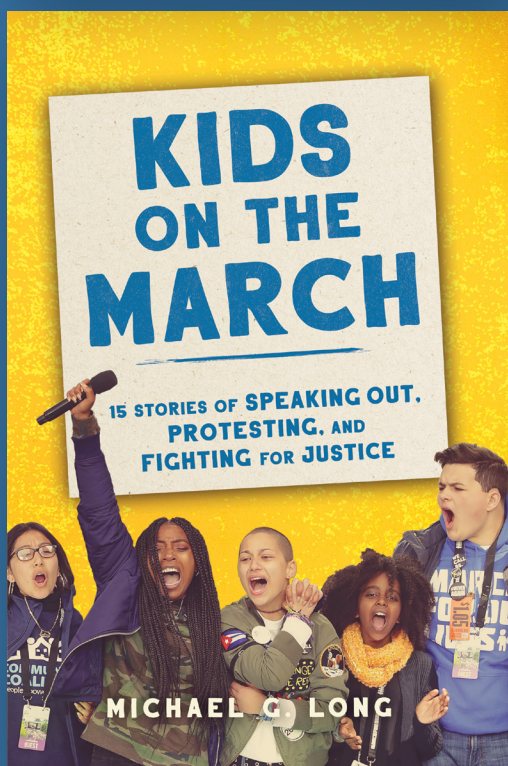
DISCUSSION GUIDE





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ABOUT THE BOOK

Powerfully told and inspiring, *Kids on the March* shows how standing up, speaking out, and marching for what you believe in can advance the causes of justice, and that no one is too small or too young to make a difference. Long tells the stories of these protests, from the **March of the Mill Children**, who walked out of factories in 1903 for a shorter work week, to 1951's **Strike for a Better School**, which helped build the case for *Brown v. Board of Education*, to the twenty-first century's most iconic movements, including **March for Our Lives**, the **Climate Strike**, and the recent **Black Lives Matter** protests reshaping our nation.

★ "HISTORICAL AND TIMELY."

—*Booklist*

★ "READERS WILL BE INSPIRED BY THE ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP, AND DETERMINATION OF THE YOUNG CHANGE AGENTS."

—*Kirkus Reviews*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Kids on the March* opens with the following epigraph by Marjory Stoneman Douglas H.S. student Demetri Hoth, who was protesting gun violence in schools: Let us pray with our legs. *Let us march in unison to the rhythm of justice, because I say enough is enough.*

What do you think he means by asking his fellow students and allies to use their legs to pray? Think about people marching in unison (as seen in real life, online, or in a movie) and list as many ideas as you can about what that action involves. What does marching symbolize and what effect does it have on spectators?

2. In the introduction, the author mentions that the protests he writes about involve kids demanding peace, justice, and freedom. Why do you think the author wanted to highlight the role of children throughout our country's history of physically marching to uphold these bedrock national values? In what other ways did the kids in this book protest? List as many as you can.
3. From the **Bonus March** in 1932 to the **March for Dreamers** in 2019, protesters have assembled in Washington, DC, to unite their voices in support of a social cause. What do you think it means symbolically for groups of people to gather in the nation's capital and physically take up space there?
4. In Chapter 3 we learn about Barbara Johns, a fifteen-year-old Black student from Virginia whose protest efforts that began in 1950 eventually contributed to the national desegregation of public schools.

What did Johns initially demand when she organized the strike for a better school, and how did her mission change after the NAACP became involved? Why should her fight for a better school be recognized as an important moment during the early days of the civil rights movement?

5. A major element of marching and protesting is making and displaying signs that convey a unifying group message, such as "**Chicano Power**" or "**Black Lives Matter**." The art of creating a sign, however, offers a chance to add a personal touch using devices such as emotion, humor, or startling language to make a point. Look at the images of kids holding up signs found in various chapters (e.g., pgs. 9, 117, 137, 141, 146, 167, 182, 207, 226, 235, 249, 253, 265) and choose one or two that speak to you. What is the cause the kids were fighting for in the images you chose, and what makes these particular messages powerful or impactful to you?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. The most essential element of any march or demonstration is the physical body. The author tells us that every young protester needed courage and bravery to march, because physically being somewhere comes with the threat of danger.

Look back over the chapters and find examples of when the children faced dangerous obstacles (e.g., Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 15). What was the role of the police or military in some of these situations? Did these authority figures keep the peace and protect the protesters or were they acting as an “opposing” side? How did they use force or engage in violence against the protesters? Explore whether race and/or social class may have been a factor in the escalation of violence.

7. Part 2 of the book focuses on the 21st century. How does social media work as a tool of empowerment for kids today? In what ways do you find social media an effective platform for kids to be seen and heard? In contrast, what do you think are the pitfalls of using social media to support protest movements or global causes? Research news articles to find examples of how individuals using social media have inadvertently caused problems for the movements they intended to support (e.g., blackout campaigns, hashtag misuse, funding intended to get people out of jail, etc.). Discuss.
8. In Chapter 13, Alexandria Villaseñor’s climate change protests were inspired by Greta Thunberg’s. In Sweden, Thunberg was inspired by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas H.S. student protesters. What do you find impressive or inspiring about the global community of kid protesters? What did both of these activists do first as a single-person demonstration and how did that one action evolve into something much larger? How do you see environmental justice factoring into your future, and which areas of helping save the planet are interesting to you?
9. In the “Running for Water” chapter (pgs. 160-179), the **Standing Rock** youth took on both the government and an oil company, part of one of the nation’s most economically and politically influential sectors. In this struggle, the kids did more than march to raise awareness for their cause—they ran.

What effect did using traditional symbols, language, and drumming have on the protesters’ message? What is the importance of historical conflict between the US government and Native American peoples? How did this history affect the Standing Rock protests? How did the digital petition the kids created bridge the historical and current ways of protesting?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

10. In 2017, after the election of Donald J. Trump, women and girls gathered in Washington D.C., across the nation, and around the world to celebrate sisterhood and to demand gender equality. Looking at the images found in the **Women's March** (Chapter 11) we see girls of different ages and backgrounds. What are the symbols or sentiments that unite them in their cause? What other groups of people at these demonstrations were fighting for equality and demanding to be heard that day? Why do you think the issues of gender diversity and ethnic equality were such important elements of that particular march at that time in our nation?
11. From the first to the last chapter of the book, the inequalities that result from wealth and social class drove protesters to voice their demands. The **March of the Mill Children** (Chapter 1), for instance, pushed back against the abuse of child labor in factories. Which other marches highlight kids who were pushing back against economic and social injustices? What is the role of commerce and wealth in the inclusion or exclusion of people into our national identity?
12. Several chapters describe protesters facing physical violence. For example, during the civil rights era, brown and black students protested against racism and discrimination, and decades later, **Native American** youth and **BLM** protesters demanded protection of their bodies and land. In some cases, the police or hired security forces perpetrated violent acts (see photo on pg. 71). What sort of physical force was used against these protesters, and why is it important for people to know about police brutality and racism in these settings? What is an argument for or against kids putting themselves in danger to stand up for what they believe in?
13. Chapter 6, "The Fight for Free Speech at School," and Chapter 8, "The Children's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament," share a theme of kids speaking up for peace and asking political leaders to take action. In chapter 6, however, the students are accused of disrupting the educational setting, whereas the protesters in chapter 8 take a less disruptive approach to call attention to their cause.

What strategies did the kids in each chapter use to convey their disagreement with the US government? What is the First Amendment of the US Constitution and how does it protect students' right to enact free speech? Which chapter left a stronger impression on you and why?



ACTIVITIES

1. Brainstorm different social, political, or global issues that people are fighting for or against today and pick one that speaks to you personally, one for which you would show up to march or take another active role. Create a message that you could put on a sign. How does the message highlight your topic, and what makes the message distinctly your own?
2. One important issue children throughout the book advocated for is equality in education for people of color. Why do you think it is important for every child in the United States to have access to the same standard of education and resources, regardless of their racial or social background? Write a persuasive essay or speech in which you present 3 reasons why education is a social justice issue worth fighting for.
3. In chapters 3 and 6, the students' protests at school established a foundation for two legal cases that were argued before the Supreme Court. Choose one of the cases to learn more about. Conduct research to understand the legal arguments made for or against the case and the Court's ultimate reasoning to rule as it did. Write a short essay that presents the background of the case and explains both how the Supreme Court ruled and how US society was transformed as a result.
4. At the end of the book, the author provides a section called "Tips for Marching" that outlines the various components involved in organizing a march. Using what you learned in this section, create 5 to 8 questions to ask someone in your family or community who has participated in a march. Set up an interview with this person. Record the interview using video, audio, or a notepad to capture the interviewee's responses. Be sure to ask for and document the person's permission to record and share their responses.

After the interview, choose the most impressive or impactful parts of the information you gathered about the interviewee's experience and use it to create a presentation that will help others better understand what a march is like for that particular individual. You can create your presentation using PowerPoint, dramatic monologue, poster board, or even an edited version of your video to share with the class.

