

# Sometimes a Dream Needs a Push

After a terrible accident, can Chris and his dad find a way to reconnect?

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 750L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to the Story tab.

**Learning Objective:** to analyze a character in a work of fiction from the perspective of another character in the story

**Key Skills:** character, figurative language, inference, plot, text features

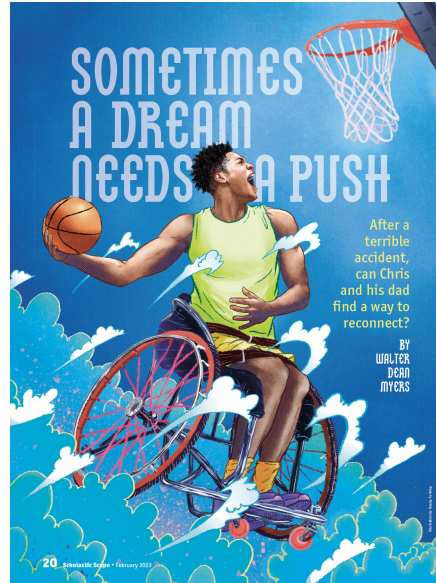
### Essential Questions:

- How can we strengthen our relationships with others?
- What does it mean to succeed?
- How can failure be important?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.2, W.3, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Story read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "Hard to Say"
- "Aftershocks"
- "Home"
- "The Perfects"

### Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Writing Planner: Chris's Dad
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close-Reading and Critical Thinking
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

10 minutes

### Do-Now: Student panel of experts (10 minutes)

- Identify a panel of basketball experts from among your students and give them the following list of terms: drills, minigame, air ball, foul line, foul shot, court, baseline/baseline plays, shots/shooting, rims, backboards, passes, turnovers, fast break, traveling, dribbling, tip-off, guard, halftime, layup, basket. (If none of your students play basketball, you could recruit a panel of experts from the school basketball team and invite them to join your class.) Let the panel know you will be asking them to briefly explain—and even demonstrate, as appropriate—these terms to the rest of the class.
- As your class begins, explain to students that they are about to read a story that contains quite a few basketball terms, and that a panel of experts is going to briefly explain what these terms mean for those who might not be familiar with them. Then invite the student panel of experts to go through the list.

### Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *congestion*, *dejected*, *equipped*, *executive*, *fundamentals*, *stabilizing*. Optionally, print or share the interactive link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity beforehand. (Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud are embedded in the interactive slides.)

## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Read the As You Read box on page 21 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Point out the directions at the top of the column on the far-right side of page 21 and read them aloud to your students.

- Optionally, for students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Divide students into groups to read the story again, pausing to discuss the close-reading questions that appear in the margins of the print magazine or by clicking on the bolded words on the digital story page. Have students record their answers in their own document or on the **Close-Reading Questions activity**.

### Close-Reading Questions (30 minutes)

*The close-reading questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

- 1. How does Dad handle Chris's injury compared with how Chris and Mom handle it?**  
(character) *Compared to Chris and Mom, Dad has a much harder time accepting Chris's injury. Chris says that he and Mom "learned to live with it," while Dad "took it hard, real hard." Mom says she thinks that Dad—who was driving when the car accident occurred that led to Chris being unable to walk—blames himself for Chris's injury and finds it difficult to see Chris in his wheelchair.*
- 2. What does Mom mean when she says Dad chews up his words to see how they taste?**  
(figurative language) *Perhaps Mom means that Dad likes to really think about what he says before he says it—or at least, before he says it in a way that anyone else can understand.*
- 3. Why are Mom and Chris surprised by what Dad said?** (inference) *Mom and Chris may be surprised by Dad's comments because at the Madison-Rosedale game, Dad didn't seem to be paying much attention—and when Mom asked him a question about the game, he muttered something impossible to understand. What's more, Dad normally tries to avoid thinking about the fact that Chris is in a wheelchair, but here he is, talking about getting involved in Chris's wheelchair basketball team—a place where Dad cannot avoid facing the fact that Chris is in a wheelchair.*
- 4. Why is Chris nervous? How does Dad react to Chris's poor performance?** (character) *Chris is probably nervous because he wants to impress his dad. Chris knows that basketball means a lot to Dad, which likely makes the stakes feel higher. Plus, Chris says earlier that he was pretty good at basketball before the accident, so he might feel pressure to show that he can still be good at the sport. As for Dad, he is patient and encouraging with Chris. Dad doesn't show any sign of being disappointed or unhappy with Chris at all.*
- 5. A collision derby is a sport where drivers ram vehicles into each other. What does the simile help you understand?** (figurative language) *The simile comparing the practice to a collision derby helps you understand that the basketball players are running into each other and still have a long way to go before they have any hope of winning a game.*

6. **How has the wheelchair basketball team affected Chris and Dad's relationship?** (plot) *The team has brought Chris and Dad closer together and given them an opportunity to connect. Dad comes to games when they are on the weekends and sometimes attends practices, where he coaches the players. This gives Dad an opportunity to share his knowledge with Chris. Also, by being involved with the team, Dad is constantly confronting the fact that Chris is in a wheelchair; you sense that Dad has begun to make peace with Chris's injury from the fact that Dad continues to be involved with the team. Chris clearly enjoys his dad being involved—he says he likes it when Dad is talking about the team and says “we,” that it makes him feel good when Dad teaches the players fundamental skills, and that he likes having Dad come to practice.*
  7. **Speaking of pushing, what might the title of this story refer to?** (text features) *Answers will vary, but the title may refer to Chris needing a little push—that is, a little encouragement or something to get him started—to achieve his dream of playing basketball, which he stopped doing after the accident. Chris gets such a push from the invitation to join the basketball team and also from his dad's coaching. The title could also refer to Chris dreaming of having a closer relationship with his dad or of Dad letting go of his guilt over the accident and allowing life to go on, both of which also happened with a “push” from getting involved in the basketball team. And the title could refer to Dad getting a push to be more communicative and more involved in Chris's life from Chris's mom, who pushes him to talk more than once in the story.*
- As a class, discuss the following questions.

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

*The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **Consider the last paragraph of the story. Do you think Chris really believes that Dad said there was no way he could play as well as Chris in a chair? Why or why not? If not, why might Chris say this?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that Chris probably doesn't really think that Dad said he could never play as well as Chris in a chair. It's possible, of course, but it seems a bit out of character for Dad. Given the way Dad mumbles, it seems likely that Chris has no idea what Dad said—he's making a joke and expressing confidence in himself, perhaps, or imagining Dad saying what Chris thinks is the truth.*
2. **How did you feel about Dad while you were reading this story? Was there anything you wished you could tell him? Explain.** *Answers will vary.*
3. **What message do you think this story has about success? Do you agree with it?** *Students may say that the story contains the message that success isn't about winning or being the best, it's about making an effort, learning and growing, and doing the best you can.*

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete the **Writing Planner: Chris's Dad**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 24 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

#### Connected fiction from the *Scope* archives about family relationships:

- ["Hard to Say"](#) (November 2021)
- ["Aftershocks"](#) (February 2020)
- ["Home"](#) (September 2020)
- ["The Perfects"](#) (February 2019)