

A Whole New Ballgame

By Phil Bildner • Illustrated by Tim Probert

Enjoy the Book Together

- Often, when a character has challenges, the author makes it clear right away. But author Phil Bildner is kind of sneaky about letting readers know what's up with his character Red. Discuss with your child when you both realized that Red is dealing with a challenge. What it was that tipped you off?
- Mr. Acevedo is, well, a funny goofball! Plus, he has long hair, tattoos, and piercings, and he wears wacky signs around his neck in class—in other words, he doesn't seem like the typical teacher. Discuss Mr. Acevedo's teaching style, and whether or not it's a good style for Rip, Red, and the other kids in the class. Explain your answers to each other.
- It's soooo satisfying when Red wins the game for Clifton! Discuss what you both think this moment means to Red, and also to Rip.

Make Personal Connections

- Rip and Red have a special friendship. Rip helps Red feel calm when he's anxious or worried. Think about a person in your life who can do that for you.
- The first thing Mr. Acevedo asks his students to do is tell him what name they prefer to be called, and "something about yourself—something serious, something funny, something kooky, whatever you want." Now, you try it! Tell each other what your favorite name or nickname is, and something about yourself—maybe even something you think the other person doesn't know about you.
- When Red's mother is talking to him about working with Avery, she suggests that he "pick his battles." Discuss what this phrase means to you, and come up with examples of picking your battles from your own life.

Literacy Tip

When an author writes a book, he or she gets to choose the point of view, or which character will tell the story. In *A Whole New Ballgame*, the story is told from Rip's point of view. Discuss why you think the author chose to tell the story through Rip's eyes.

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Who is the most important friend in your life? There are lots of different kinds of friendships. You can be friends with people in your class, friends with people in your family—you get the picture. Answer the questions in the chart below about Rip and Red’s friendship and your friendship.

	Red & Rip	You & Your Bestie
How do they/you like to spend time together?		
How do they/you bring out the best in one another?		
How do they/you support and encourage one another?		
How do they/you cheer one another up when they’re/you’re down?		