



Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading

By Lawrence Goldstone, Nancy Goldstone

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“Books are like puzzles,” write Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone. “The author’s ideas are hidden, and it is up to all of us to figure them out.” In this indispensable reading companion, the Goldstones—noted parent-child book club experts—encourage grownups and young readers alike to adopt an approach that will unlock the magic and power of reading.

With the Goldstones help, parents can inspire kids’ lifelong love of reading by teaching them how to unlock a book’s hidden meaning. Featuring fun and incisive discussions of numerous children’s classics, this dynamic guide highlights key elements—theme, setting, character, point of view, climax, and conflict—and paves the way for meaningful conversations between parents and children.

“Best of all,” the Goldstones note, “you don’t need an advanced degree in English literature or forty hours a week of free time to effectively discuss a book with your child. This isn’t Crime and Punishment, it’s Charlotte’s Web.”

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. The benefits of learning to understand rich, layered narratives extend "far beyond the scope of fiction," say the authors, who lead a renowned book group for children and their parents at their small town library and who have written several other books on the subject of reading (*Warmly Inscribed*, etc.). Competing against Superbowl Sunday and countless other activities, their first attempt at a reading group was stacked against the odds. But because of their unusual ability to make reading fun and meaningful, their program has become a standard for parent-child reading groups around the country. This book, meant as a guide for those who want to set up their own reading clubs, offers a fantastic reading list beginning with Mr. Popper's Penguins for second graders and ending with *The Time Machine* for fifth graders. Many of the actual library sessions are discussed in detail, demonstrating the authors' terrific techniques for helping kids and parents see and debate the layers underlying the story, plot, characterizations, point of view and themes. "The highlight of almost any discussion is the discovery of what the author has implanted at the core of the book," they say. A distinguished work full of humor and wisdom, their book suggests that by encouraging children to read and talk about the mystery of complex, substantial books, parents and teachers can greatly expand young peoples' worlds and ultimately their life choices. As a lesson in how to enrich child-parent relationships, this book is great.

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From School Library Journal

Even though many librarians around the country are already running successful book-discussion groups, the Goldstones have mapped out an approach that merits librarians' and teachers' valuable reading time by translating sophisticated concepts into accessible ideas and user-friendly strategies. By turning books into puzzles and suggesting that "the author's ideas are hidden," children are guided to go beneath superficial readings and initial responses to more in-depth discussion. Youngsters are encouraged to express their opinions with a single caveat—"interpretation must be consistent with the facts." The authors recycle traditional literary questions and tools with incredible clarity as they help kids address questions of who the protagonist/antagonist is until, ultimately, they discover what the book is *really* about. It is a thrilling journey. This wise, insightful book empowers readers, young and old, to engage more deeply with literature and shows with clarity the rewards for doing so. It is also a pleasure to read.—*Judith Rovenger, Westchester Library System, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

This account of a husband-wife team's experience leading a parent-child book group is not so much a how-to guide as a general description of one approach to multigenerational book discussion. The Goldstones, who are parents themselves, formulated an overarching method for every title that centered on a discussion of the identities of the protagonist and antagonist (which wasn't always as obvious as it seemed), leading members to the book's deeper meanings. Given the dearth of titles on book groups for adults and children, this book covers important ground, even though at times the Goldstones' efforts to lead participants to a predetermined conclusion appear to stymie true give-and-take discussion. Also, while classics certainly deserve a place in a parent-child book group, the emphasis on so many here—including *Animal Farm*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Call of the Wild*, and even *Lost Horizon*--leaves one wondering why more of the many outstanding examples of recent children's literature weren't represented. Despite these quibbles, anyone organizing an elementary-level parent-child book group will find this volume both useful and inspiring. *Laura Tillotson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frederick Warren:

Here thing why this Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading are different and trusted to be yours. First of all examining a book is good but it really depends in the content from it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any guide out there but there is no guide that similar with Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading. It gives you thrill examining journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is maybe can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your technique home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading in e-book can be your substitute.

Tony Sanford:

Reading a e-book tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world could share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire their own reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the publications. But also they write about the data about something that you need example of this. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors on earth always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write to the book. One of them is this Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading.

Lynn Hardie:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading, you can enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

James Waddell:

Don't be worry for anyone who is afraid that this book can filled the space in your house, you could have it in e-book way, more simple and reachable. That Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading can give you a lot of close friends because by you investigating this one book you have matter that they don't and make anyone more like an interesting person. This specific book can be one of one step for

you to get success. This guide offer you information that perhaps your friend doesn't learn, by knowing more than different make you to be great people. So , why hesitate? Let us have Deconstructing Penguins: Parents, Kids, and the Bond of Reading.

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