

The Man Decides *By Fleur Beale*

Introduction

In the *Man Decides*, continuing Fleur Beale's story of *The Man*, Carlos has to make up his mind. Will he let his boys join Jonny's group and learn capoeira and risk losing his status as the man? They might be better at it than him! Or will he ignore the appeal of the martial art game and keep looking for action on the streets, secure in his position as group leader?

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students to:

- explore the topic of leadership and the importance of identity
- explore how students see gangs – Why do gangs exist? What is their appeal? Do they have a place in society?
- learn about capoeira and its non-violent message.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Brainstorm ideas about leadership. What does leadership mean? Does a good leader maintain control over others or allow others to make choices for themselves? Why is "being the leader" important to some but not to others?
- Students explore the cover and determine what they think the story is about.
- Students explore their knowledge about martial arts. Print the KWLH chart (Template A) or create a KWLH chart on the board. Students, before reading, fill in the first two columns of this chart with what they know and what they want to know about martial arts. After reading, they complete the final two columns with what they have learned and how they gained that knowledge.
- Introduce vocabulary that the students may need to access the text. Refer to the vocabulary worksheets (3, 4a and 4b) for words that are unfamiliar.

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images. The meanings of words in bold text are in the glossary at the back of the book.

- End of page 5 – "The man makes a decision. What is it and why does he make it?"
- End of page 8 – "Why do you think the boys go looking for action? Who gets hurt?"
- End of page 12 – "How do you think the boys feel about school? How long is it before the boys see some action again?"
- End of page 18 – "Why does Mario need an operation? Why does the doctor need Mario's father to sign the paper?"
- End of page 21 – "The man decides to stay with Mario. Why? Why does the doctor give the boys a lecture?"
- End of page 23 – "The man makes another decision. What is it and why does he make it?"

- End of page 27 – “How do the boys feel about the man’s decision?”
- End of page 30 – “The man makes a final decision. Do you think he has made the right one?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- Ask for your students’ opinions of this story. How do they feel about it and why? Why do they think the author decided to write this sequel to *The Man*? Did they enjoy it? Does it reach the conclusion they wanted? In what ways do they identify with the man and his dilemma? Can they identify with the boys? Encourage the students to make connections with their own experiences.
- After the students complete the three-level thinking guide (Worksheet 1), they discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Students discuss in pairs or small groups: “A time when I had to do something I really didn’t want to do”. How did they feel afterwards?

Exploring character

- Ask your students to explore how the man changes during the story. Think about how he is feeling at the beginning of the story. How and why do his feelings change during the story? Do you see him as a better person at the end of the story? Why or why not?
- Discuss: The author writes this story as a conclusion to her previous story, *The Man*. Do you think it was important to continue developing the man’s character in this way? Why or why not?
- The other characters in this story are the same as in *The Man*. Do you think the boys – Mario, Leo, and Erik – change in *The Man Decides*? Do you feel you know them better? Why? Imagine you are Mario’s dad: do you think you have a right to know what is happening to your son?
- Discuss: How do the illustrations affect your perception of the characters?

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 to sequence correctly.
- or
- Students take a statement each from Worksheet 2 and arrange themselves into the correct story sequence. Then, taking turns based on this sequence, they retell their part of the story.
- or
- Students create a visual sequence of events from the story.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and mix them up. Hand them out to students, who then find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above activity, divide the class into two groups: one group fills

in the second column of Worksheet 4a and the other group fills in the second column of Worksheet 4b. This activity involves the students in creating definitions, which they then use to test the other group.

- Students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read *Capoeira Mundo*, the magazine in the GO for IT series that complements this book.

Writing

- Set this writing task: “Imagine you are the man. Write down your reasons for making the decisions that you do during the story.”
- Set this writing task: “You are a newspaper reporter and have been asked to write an article on **either** the ‘action’ where Mario gets badly injured **or** the growing popularity of capoeira and why it is appealing to many young people.”

Debating

- Hold a class debate on a topic related to the story, such as “A good leader thinks of others before themselves.”

Research

- Working individually, in pairs, or in groups, students find out about the martial art game of capoeira, where it originated, who developed it, and why it is becoming popular. They compare it with other games, find out where people can learn to play it, and present their findings to the class.

Art and design

- Students prepare a static image. They design **either** a poster that advertises the capoeira class **or** a book cover that sells *The Man Decides*.

WORKSHEET 1

The Man Decides – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas and information)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
Jonny seriously irritates the man by walking slowly down his street.	
Jonny became “king” of the man’s street because of his tambourine.	
Capoeira appeals to the man because of its fast, strong moves.	
The man and his boys don’t start the action.	
Mario and Erik are both hurt during the action.	
The man and his boys help Mario back to his home.	
The man says there will be no action until they’re strong again.	
Thursday is the day when Jonny and his friends play capoeira.	
Mario is seriously hurt and needs an operation.	
Mario’s father signs his name on the form.	
After the operation, the man takes Mario home with him.	
The man takes the boys to watch capoeira.	
Mario’s grandmother speaks Spanish.	
The man and his boys decide to learn capoeira.	

Sheet 1 of 2

LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
The man is too scared to show Jonny just who is “king” of his street.	
The man wants to learn capoeira more than anything.	
The man is scared his boys will like capoeira more than they like him.	
The boys like the man to make all the decisions.	
The man and his boys enjoy going to school.	
The boys really like the man because he cares about them.	
Carlos, Leo, and Erik are much stronger than Mario.	
The man and his boys believe Mario will be alright.	
The doctor is angry with the boys for fighting.	
Jonny wants the man and his mates to learn capoeira.	
The man decides he and the boys will learn capoeira because Mario will die if he fights again.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
The man is a really good leader of his boys.	
The man actually owns his boys.	
A good leader has to be the best at everything.	
The man is really insecure and lacks confidence in himself.	
The man and his boys are all bullies.	
Learning a martial art is the best way to protect yourself.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

The Man Decides – Restore the order

Cut out the statements and mix them up. Ask your students to place them in the correct order.

The man decides to say goodbye to capoeira.

The man remembers how Jonny seriously irritated him by walking down his street playing a tambourine.

The man wants to be “the man” more than he wants to play capoeira.

The man and his boys are hungry for action and go looking for it.

The man saves his energy for the punches and the kicks.

Leo and Mario are hurt in the action.

There’s nobody to look after Mario at his house, so the man takes him to his home.

The man decides there’ll be no action until they’re strong again.

The boys like it when they see some action again, but Mario gets badly hurt and has to go to hospital.

Mario needs an operation and the doctor wants his parents’ permission for it.

The man and Erik go looking for Mario’s father to get him to sign the form.

Mario has his operation and is lucky to survive.

The boys go home, but the man stays at the hospital with Mario.

The doctor doesn't want to see any of the boys at the hospital again.

Mario finally gets stronger and wants to see some more action.

The man takes his boys to watch capoeira.

Jonny invites Carlos and his boys to join in with the capoeira players.

The boys like watching capoeira and Mario joins in with the singing.

The man is worried that Mario will be better at capoeira than him.

The boys want to join the capoeira class on Saturday.

The man knows he and the boys will get plenty of action if they play capoeira.

The man decides to let his boys learn capoeira at the class on Saturday.

Sheet 2 of 2

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WORKSHEET 3

The Man Decides – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and their definitions, mix them up, and ask your students to match the pairs.

Word	Definition
action	street fight
berimbau	a musical instrument with a gourd at one end and a steel wire stretched across a long pole up to the other end
blood pressure	the force that keeps your blood flowing around your body
bored	uninterested
bruise	bleeding under the skin that discolours it
capoeira	an Afro-Brazilian game that incorporates dance, music, acrobatics, and self-defence moves
confused	unable to understand or think clearly
cruise	to move around and check things out
deadly	with the ability to kill
decision	the act of making up one's mind about something
drip	a system for carrying fluid containing medication into the body through a needle

Word	Definition
emergency	a dangerous situation that must be dealt with immediately
energy	ability to be active
fault	an action with negative consequences for which someone is responsible
foreign	different, from another country or language
gut	stomach, intestines
infection	an illness caused by a germ or virus
irritated	annoyed or made angry
jingly, jangly	ringing in an irritating way
lecture	speech telling someone how to behave or what to do
lie low	to stay away from the action
operate	to perform surgery
out of it	not functioning well, unconscious
Portuguese	the language of people from Portugal
rhythm	a regular beat

Word	Definition
risk	a possibility of harm or things getting worse
ruptured	torn apart
scribble	to write roughly
seriously	hugely, extremely
tambourine	a small, round, drum-like musical instrument with metal discs around the rim
went down	happened
x-rays	a radiation system used to take pictures of the body's bones and internal organs

Sheet 3 of 3

Note that some words above may have different meanings in other contexts.

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WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

The Man Decides – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words listed in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, the group may need to check the page of the book that is listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original word based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page of the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
action (p 6)	(p 6)	
blood pressure (p 17)	(p 17)	
bruise (p 20)	(p 20)	
confused (p 24)	(p 24)	
deadly (p 4)	(p 4)	
drip (p 17)	(p 17)	
energy (p 7)	(p 7)	
foreign (p 26)	(p 26)	
infection (p 19)	(p 19)	

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
jingly, jangly (p 3)	(p 3)	
lie low (p 10)	(p 10)	
out of it (p 13)	(p 13)	
rhythm (p 4)	(p 4)	
ruptured (p 13)	(p 13)	
seriously (p 3)	(p 3)	
went down (p 20)	(p 20)	

Sheet 2 of 2

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

The Man Decides – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, a group may need to check the page of the book listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original words, based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page of the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group A)
berimbau (p 24)	(p 24)	
bored (p 22)	(p 22)	
capoeira (p 2)	(p 2)	
cruise (p 12)	(p 12)	
decision (p 2)	(p 2)	
emergency (p 12)	(p12)	
fault (p 21)	(p 21)	
gut (p 8)	(p 8)	
irritated (p 3)	(p 3)	
lecture (p 21)	(p 21)	

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group A)
operate (p 13)	(p 13)	
Portuguese (p 27)	(p 27)	
risk (p 19)	(p 19)	
scribble (p 16)	(p 16)	
tambourine (p 3)	(p 3)	
x-rays (p 13)	(p 13)	

Sheet 2 of 2

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WORKSHEET 5

The Man Decides – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

The boys excited as we walk home. They want to on Saturday.
They to join the class. They want to learn to kick
..... and strong. want to play while the
beats out a rhythm and the sing. They want to slap
afterwards and listen the people clap.

But they look to They go if I say no. I'm
We walk and I say anything. I being the man and I don't
want that to

But I also know that the man out for his boys. I that if we have
to take Mario to the room again he not come out.

We can get of action if we play

I stop walking. I turn to boys and I say, "Okay. Let's on
Saturday."

I'm the man and I look for my boys.

TEMPLATE A

KWLH chart

<u><i>KNOW</i></u>	<u><i>WANT TO KNOW</i></u>	<u><i>LEARNED</i></u>	<u><i>HOW I LEARNED</i></u>