

Schedule for the Day

Below is the suggested schedule for how to read the entire book in one school day. This schedule can be provided to all staff and guest readers.

Total read aloud time for ALL OF THE ABOVE is about 3.5 hours. The schedule below is for **seven** class periods with about 25 – 40 minutes of reading time per class block. Most blocks include discussion questions or a simple activity if time allows, and students can also work on the provided tetrahedrons and geometric art pages during reading time. You can adjust the timetable and activities as needed for your school.

A brief synopsis is provided with each block in case a group doesn't finish in time and needs to know what happened. Use only if needed. The Student Reading Blocks (Periods 3 and 4) may take longer than the listed reading time, based on the readers. In the interest of time, all RECIPE pages can be skipped, but readers can hold up the book to show the recipes, as well as the illustrations, when they appear in the text.

Overview of Characters

ALL OF THE ABOVE is set in Cleveland, Ohio. The novel was inspired by an actual world record attempt by a Cleveland middle school in 2002. The story has seven different “voices” or characters who tell the story: four seventh grade students (James Harris III, Rhondell, Sharice, and Marcel) and three adults (Mr. Collins, Aunt Asia, Willy Q). Aunt Asia is Rhondell's aunt and a hairstylist at the Style R Us hair salon. She appears later in the story. Willy Q. Williams is a Vietnam vet and Marcel's father. He runs Willy Q's Barbecue. Mr. Collins is a seventh grade math teacher at the school.

Minor characters include: Sharice's foster mom #5 (Jolynn), James Harris III's brother (DJ) and DJ's friends (Markese, Anthony, Leon), other kids in the math club (Terrell, Ashley, Deandra), Rhondell's mom, and the custodian (Mr. Joe).

Easy Way to Pronounce “Tetrahedron”:

tetra he'd run

Period One: Assembly with Guest Readers

Students attend a large group assembly with **six** surprise guest readers reading the parts of: Narrator (italicized opening passage), James Harris III, Rhondell, Sharice, Marcel, and Mr. Collins. *Alternative: You can use the video of Shelley Pearsall as the opening Narrator reading the first page, then use **five** guest readers.*

Pages to Read: 1 – 39, ending with Mr. Collins.

Synopsis: During a frustrating Friday with his seventh grade math class, Mr. Collins comes up with the idea of starting an afterschool club to build the world’s largest tetrahedron pyramid (16, 384 pieces). The students join the club for a variety of reasons. James Harris III is failing math. Marcel wants to avoid working for Willy Q’s, his father’s barbecue. Sharice wants a place to feel safe and Rhondell hopes to get into college.

Reading Time: 40 minutes

Activity/Handouts: Students receive a tetrahedron worksheet (or pre-cut Ellison tetrahedron shapes) and geometric art page as they leave the assembly. These pages are available on this website.

Period Two: Classroom Teachers Read

Classroom teachers read aloud to their classes.

Pages to Read: 41 – 75, ending with Cannonball Cornbread Recipe

Synopsis: The new club runs into problems. Marcel’s dad won’t let him stay afterschool. Other kids stop showing up. James takes over as Prez and comes up with the idea of making the pyramid with a rainbow color pattern. Sharice suggests a Christmas party to bring the group together. Willy Q agrees to donate food.

Reading Time: 30 minutes

Tetrahedron Decorating: Using markers or colored pencils, students decorate their tetrahedron shape with colors, designs, words that reflect them.

Period Three: Students Read

Student volunteers can read aloud – or this block can be independent/silent reading time if all students have books. A pre-recorded audio/video of a guest reader could also be used here.

Pages to Read: 77 – 111, ending with Mr. Collins

Synopsis: The Christmas party brings the team closer together. Mr. Collins reveals the loss of his brother in Vietnam and Sharice reveals the loss of her mom and Gram – and why certain colors have good and bad memories for her. But James Harris and Sharice have to deal with worsening home lives, which soon have an impact on the tetrahedron project. When Sharice forgets to lock the math room door one night, the project is destroyed by James Harris III’s brother and his friends.

Reading Time: 40 minutes

Talk About It: Whose background story surprised you the most on these pages? Why? Who did you want to help? What would you do? What do you think will happen next? Think about a color that is good luck—or bad luck—for you. (Share a few examples if time.)

Period Four: Students Read

Student volunteers can read aloud – or this block can be independent/silent reading time if all students have books.

Pages to Read: 113 – 149, ending with Mr. Collins

Synopsis: The students are devastated by the vandalism of the tetrahedron. Sharice disappears into a snowstorm with a backpack full of the ripped-up paper. She believes it is her fault for leaving the math room door open. Marcel’s dad serves “Chocolate Truth Cake” to get Marcel to open up about his feelings. Rhondell and Aunt Asia find Sharice, alone and half-frozen, on the back porch of her foster home. They take her to Rhondell’s house.

Reading Time: 40 minutes

Talk About It: Who do you think destroyed the project? Why did they ruin it? Should it be rebuilt? What will happen next to Sharice? As a group: Come up with a creative recipe for another “truth” dessert!

Lunch Block

Lunch idea! Serve BBQ sandwiches in honor of Willy Q in the school cafeteria. Or serve chocolate cupcakes as “Chocolate Truth Cake”.

Period Five: Classroom Teachers Read

Classroom teachers read aloud to their classes.

Pages to Read: 151 – 181, ending with Mr. Collins

Synopsis: Characters face difficult choices. Under pressure, James won’t reveal that his brother and his friends destroyed the project, but he takes the lead in trying to rebuild it. Aunt Asia can’t decide about becoming a foster parent for Sharice. Marcel wants to quit, but Willy Q won’t let him. Rhondell refuses to be part of the rebuilding effort until she reads about Waclaw Sierpinski, a mathematician who studied tetrahedrons and whose research was destroyed by the Nazis, but he didn’t give up.

Reading Time: 25 minutes

Take A Side: What do you think? Are kids today “tougher” or “softer” than kids in the past, like Willy Q says on page 157? As a group, discuss and list examples/reasons for each side. Is Aunt Asia the best person to adopt Sharice—yes or no? List reasons. Is James right or wrong for refusing to reveal who destroyed the project?

Period Six: Classroom Teachers Read

Classroom teachers read aloud to their classes.

Pages to Read: 183 – 214, ending with Rhondell

Synopsis: The community gets involved in building! Willy Q and the Style R Us hairstylists start making tetrahedrons. James keeps the project safe by taking away his brother’s prized autographed jersey. (He’ll get it back if nothing is destroyed.) Summer arrives, but the team keeps working. Then, James’s life takes a sudden turn and he is forced to move and leave the project behind. What will the team do next?

Reading Time: 25 minutes

Activity: Create a book cloud. Fill a classroom whiteboard (or posters) with key words, phrases, and memorable details from the story. Write words in different colors, styles, sizes, angles. Ex: Strength, tetrahedron, Nothing is impossible, blue, Vietnam, Willy Q’s, etc. (For groups planning to build a tetrahedron, this time could also be used for cutting out and taping tetrahedrons together.)

Period Seven: Wrap-Up Assembly with Staff Readers

Six staff members read the final chapters as Mr. Collins, Sharice, Marcel, Rhondell, James Harris III, and Final Narrator (italicized passage). Recipe can be skipped.

Pages to Read: 215 – 237, ending with italicized passage read by Narrator

Synopsis: The big day arrives! Willy Q buys a special suit for Marcel to wear for the news day and closes the BBQ. Mr. Joe, the custodian, stays up all night protecting the tetrahedron. Rhondell is the speaker for the event. Marcel puts the final tetrahedron on top for the media. James is thrilled to finally see his name in the newspaper, along with pictures of the world record. The group begins planning their next tetrahedron.

Reading Time: 20 – 25 minutes

Celebrate It: Celebrate the completion of the One Day reading achievement with applause, music, group photo, letting kids collect autographs in their books (if they have their own copies), etc. You can also collect the student tetrahedrons at the end of the event, and student volunteer teams can start taping them together to build an “all-school” tetrahedron for display. **Tape works best for building – especially mailing/packing tape for the larger tetrahedrons.**

