

# *The Punch* by John Feinstein (Published by Back Bay Books)

Approved for use in Communication Arts I and Honors Communication Arts I

**Summary** In 1977, Rudy Tomjanovich and Kermit Washington became entwined in a single punch that would change not only their lives, but how professional basketball is played today. Because the punch dislodged Tomjanovich's skull and nearly destroyed both men's careers, the scuffle never settled as a dusty bit of NBA trivia. Instead, it nearly superseded both men's notable achievements. The history of that punch (it could not, by any standards, be considered a fight) and the fate of the two men are the subjects of John Feinstein's *The Punch*. - Excerpted from Amazon.com editorial review

**Connection to the Curriculum** This non-fiction piece gives the teacher a model for showing students literary skills such as point-of-view, flashback and voice. Feinstein's use of a single incident, the brutal punch, as a touch stone and thread that runs through both men's lives allows students the opportunity to track the cyclical nature of his unique style. Taught in combination with the extended memoir, students will be given a model to emulate in their own writing. Different narration styles and dialogue allow for the analysis of diction, tone and syntax. Students can examine cause and effect in relation to decision making.

**Standards Course Objectives (Benchmarks) Reading:** 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts. **Literature:** 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. **Writing:** 3.2- The students use a writing process to produce a written text. 3.4-The students use organization that enhances the reader's understanding. **Possible Skills Taught (Indicators): Reading:** 1.3.2- The student determines meaning of words or phrases using context clues from sentences or paragraphs. 1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts. 1.4.9- The student uses prior knowledge, content, and text type features to make, revise, and confirm predictions. 1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text. 1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions. 1.4.12- The student analyzes and evaluates how authors use text structures to help achieve their purposes. 1.4.13- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects in one or more appropriate-level texts. 1.4.14- The student explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts. 1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author's style and use of literary devices work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text. 1.4.20- The student identifies the author's position in a persuasive text, describes techniques the author uses to support that position, and evaluates the effectiveness of these techniques and the credibility of the information provided. 1.4.21- The student distinguishes between fact and opinion and recognizes propaganda, bias, and stereotypes in various types of appropriate-level texts. **Literature:** 2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters and analyzes their development. 2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story. 2.1.3- The student analyzes and evaluates how the author uses various plot elements to advance the plot and make connections between events. 2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text. **Writing:** 3.4.12- The student uses sequence that is logical and effective within each paragraph as well as within the entire piece.

**A Note on the Text** (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.) *The novel demonstrates how one's actions can dramatically change the life of all persons involved. After both men experienced remarkable journeys to the National Basketball Association, this encounter*

**AP Connections** Discussion of *The Punch* will give students an opportunity to practice analysis skills of persuasive assertion and rhetorical influence.

*changed the course of their lives forever. The book describes in detail the ferociousness of the punch. There is some violence around the description of the punch as well as some mild profanity.*

**Additional Unit Design Connections** Coming soon: To be completed during future curriculum development activities