

Karate Kevin

by Michelle Vasiliu

Synopsis

Kevin is being bullied by a boy named Jonny, and his friends. Kevin's mother has tried to solve the problem by speaking to the school head teacher, but this has made things worse.

Kevin tells Sammy Shu, who owns a sushi bar, about his problem. Sammy offers to help him. By showing him the film *The Karate Kid* and instructing him in both the physical and psychological aspects of karate, Sammy teaches Kevin how to look after himself without actually having to get into a fight.

Before reading

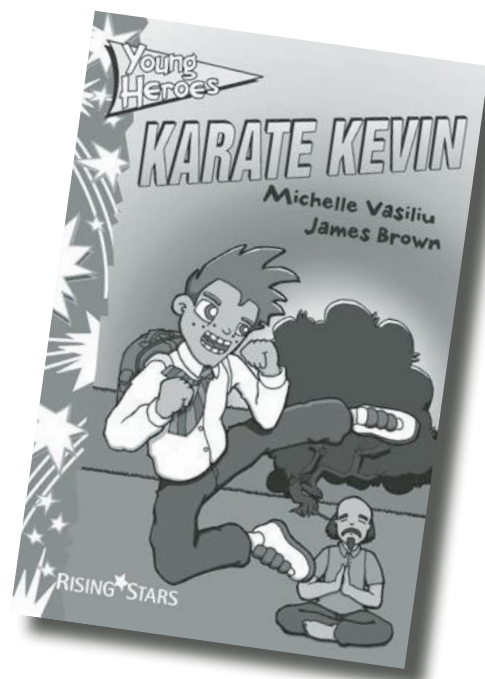
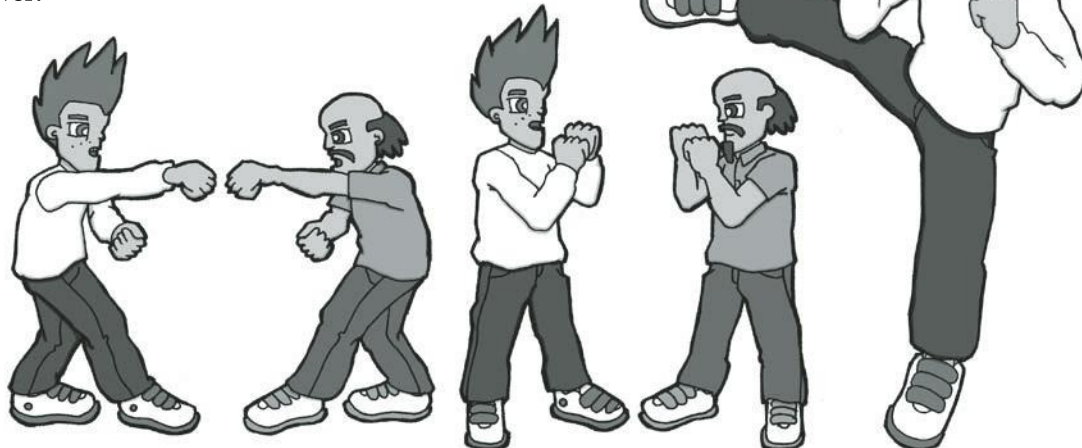
Discuss bullying and ask the pupils to contribute ideas about types of bullying and ways of dealing with it. Guide the discussion towards the concept of how feeling confident and being able to look after oneself might help. A discussion of the martial arts would be useful, with emphasis on the non-aggressive aspects of such activities. If possible, show the film *The Karate Kid* before reading Chapter 2.

During reading

Chapter 1

'You need to stand up and confront your opponent,' Sammy said.

- Why did Kevin run away from Jonny and his gang?
- Do you think it was the colour of Kevin's hair that was the problem? Why/why not?
- How had Kevin's mother made things worse?
- What is an *opponent*? A *sidekick*?
- Did the head teacher help Kevin? Explain your answer.



Chapter 2

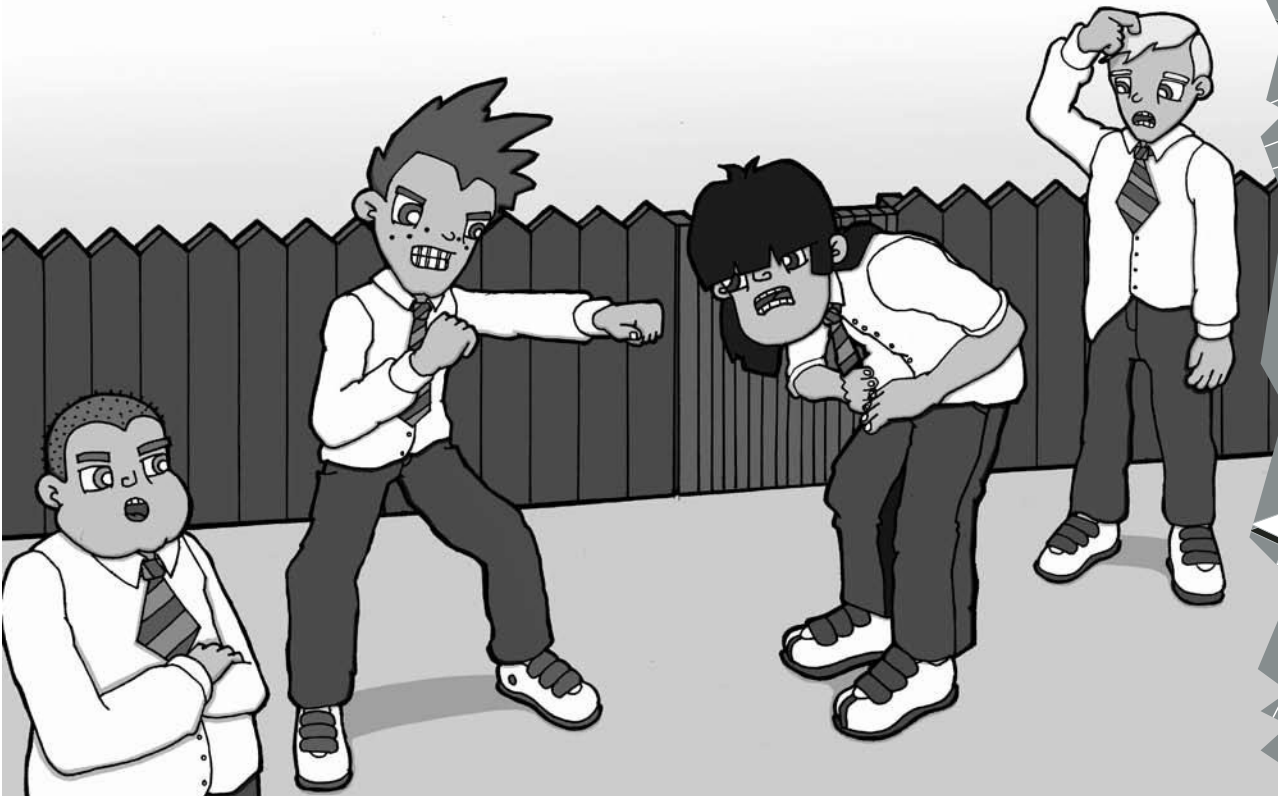
Sammy Shu had a plan. He told me he was going to turn me into the Karate Kid of the century.

- Who was the Karate Kid? What are *lame* clothes?
- Why did Sammy say it was important to be strong and fit?

Chapter 3

'Don't worry,' Sammy said. 'I will show you how to fight so you don't need to fight.'

- What do you think Sammy meant by this?
- What are the meanings of *confront* and *routine*?
- Kevin felt the preparations were too slow. Do you agree? Explain your answer.
- How did Kevin feel on the day Sammy said he was ready to confront Jonny?



Chapter 4

'Do you really think you can take me down?' 'Do you really think I can't?'

- What is mimicking?
- What things did Jonny do that are typical of a bully?
- What did Kevin do that made Jonny run away?
- Did he actually hit him?

After reading

Personal response

- Write about a bullying situation you have seen or been involved in.
- Make a list of people who could help you if you were worried about bullying.
- Have you ever tried a martial art (karate, tae kwon do, aikido, etc.)? If so, write about it.
- Write a list of words to describe how you would feel if you were being bullied.

Creative response

- Write the next chapter for the story—what more did Kevin have to learn?
- Draw a diagram showing some karate moves.
- Design an anti-bullying poster.
- In groups of four, plan and act out a short scene where someone who is being bullied defends themselves without hurting anyone.

Critical response

- Look at the illustration on pages 26 and 27. Why is this an important part of the story?
- Discuss Sammy's approach to Kevin's problem. Was this a good way of dealing with the bullying?

- Discuss Kevin's mother's visit to the school head teacher. Was this a good idea? What more could the school have done to help Kevin?

Extension ideas

- Ask pupils to imagine they are Kevin and write an article for the school magazine about his experiences of bullying and how he overcame the problem.
- Pupils can also write a list of 'advice for parents' for when their children are being bullied.
- Give pupils copies of Photocopy Masters 9 and 10 for follow-up activities.



Name _____ Date _____



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Questions

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions.

Why did Sammy feel it was important to feed Kevin before they started physical training?

How did learning karate change the way Kevin felt about himself?

How do you think Kevin felt at the end of the story?

What more do you think Kevin had to learn?

Colloquialisms

Colloquialisms are informal expressions that are used in everyday speech. They do not mean exactly what they say—their meaning comes from the way we use them.

Explain the meaning of the colloquialisms below.

smashed to a pulp _____

hot on my heels _____

the words got stuck _____

take a new tack _____

crack of dawn _____

headed out _____

take me down _____

I get it _____

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Story sequence

Put these events from the story in the correct order by numbering them 1 to 6.

- _____ Kevin runs to Sammy's shop.
- _____ Kevin runs away from Jonny.
- _____ Kevin's mother visits the head teacher.
- _____ Kevin watches *The Karate Kid* DVD.
- _____ Kevin confronts Jonny, who runs away.
- _____ Kevin spends two months working with Sammy.

Describing the characters

Adjectives are describing words. Write a list of the adjectives used to describe Kevin, Sammy and Jonny.

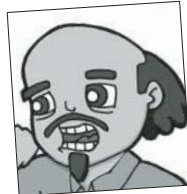
Kevin

Description:



Sammy

Description:



Jonny

Description:

