

Ryan Holiday - The Boy Who Would Be King

In 138 AD, Hadrian, the emperor of Rome, chooses Marcus Aurelius to succeed him. He knew no one was born ready for the job, so he arranged for the young boy's education. The greatest philosophers of the day were assigned to teach him, and all threw themselves into crafting him into a great leader. An intriguing book by Ryan Holiday exploring themes including self-discovery.

Genre: history, biography, philosophy

Themes: stoicism, leadership, self-discovery, friendship

Age: 13+ years old

Activities:

1. Create a character chart: As the young protagonist, Marcus, encounters various characters throughout the book learns important lessons. Ask students to keep a chart of each new thing Marcus learns and how it develops his character.
2. Class discussion: Pose the question 'What makes a good leader?' You can divide the class into small groups to discuss their ideas (using examples from the text) and present to the rest of the class.
3. Compare and contrast: Have the students compare and contrast Marcus Aurelius with another historical figure or leader they are familiar with or that you've already looked at in school. How do their leadership styles compare?
4. Teach it: Get students to imagine they get to add a 'lesson' to the book. What lesson would they want to teach Marcus that the author didn't include in the original. Challenge them to write in the same style. They can even teach their lessons to each other.
5. Put it in a letter: Encourage the reader to write a letter to Marcus Aurelius, expressing their thoughts and questions about Stoicism and how it can be applied in modern times.

Enjoyed this book? You might also enjoy...

- **Terry Pratchett** - The Science of Discworld
- **Marcus Sedgwick** - Blood Red Snow White
- **Markus Zusak** - The Book Thief