



# STUDY GUIDE

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## Character Descriptions



**ZACK** - a new student at P.S. 32. He is shy but eager to make new friends.

**SAMANTHA** - a very unique girl who wears black clothes. She is a bit of an outcast.

### *"Da Gangstaz"*



**'DRE** - the class bully. He is loud and intimidating.

**BRICK** - The huge but silent sidekick of 'Dre.

**SHAWN** - a smaller kid who agrees with everything 'Dre says.

### *"The Mod Squad"*



**KELLY** - The most popular girl in school. She is very pretty and flaunts it.

**MEGAN** - a feisty girl who sticks up for whatever Kelly says. She can be a bit mean.

**CHRISTY** - a very pretty, but dim-witted girl.

**TIFFANY** – a popular but quiet girl.

### *"The Geek Squad"*



**LOUIS** – The king of geeks and proud of it. He likes science fiction and frogs.

**JOEY** - The tiny, skittish sidekick of Louis who is not afraid of anything.

### *"The Brainiacs"*



**ELEANOR** - A very quiet and serious girl who is always reading or studying.

**MADDIE** - The naturally smart, very talkative best friend of Eleanor.

**RACHEL** – A very brainy, but shy girl.

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## Synopsis

SCENE 1: The students get ready for their first day of school. *Song:* "P.S. 32."

SCENE 2: Recess. Zack arrives and all the kids point him out as "the new kid." Zack talks to the audience about his fear that kids won't like him and his desire to be popular. *Song:* "The New Kid." Samantha introduces herself to Zack and explains the different "squads." She tells him that she isn't on any squad, since she wanted to be friends with kids on different squads. As a result, Kelly called her a "double agent" and wouldn't let her be in any group.

SCENE 3: The Gangsta's introduce themselves to Zack. *Song:* "Gangsta Rap." Dre tells Zack that he has to take three "tests" if he wants to be a part of the Gangsta squad. His first task is to copy homework from a Brainiac. His second task is to kiss a girl. The Mods enter and Zack is told he must kiss Christy.

SCENE 4: Zack meets Eleanore, Maddie and Rachel. Eleanore volunteers to help Zack with his homework. Maddie and Rachel exit; Zack and Eleanore sit together, completing the homework. Zack leaves and Maddie re-enters. She is convinced that Zack has a crush on Eleanore but, although Eleanore really likes Zack, she can't understand why he would like her. *Song:* "Girl Like Me." The Mods enter and tell Eleanore that Zack only spent time with her so that he could copy her homework - in order to be initiated into the Gangstas. *Song:* "Popular." During the song, the Mods make fun of the Brainiacs. Finally, they leave. Eleanore and Maddie decide to ignore the Mods and that Eleanore will continue to help Zack with the homework.

SCENE 5: The kids change classes. Zack is studying with all the other kids, but he can't concentrate because of his new feelings for Eleanore. *Song:* "I Just Met A Girl."

SCENE 6: Class lets out. Zack is left alone in the hallway. He imagines what he will say to his mom when he gets home from school. Suddenly, he notices a frog on the ground. He picks it up and Louis enters, looking for his frog. Zack gives him back his frog. The two get to talking and discover that they have a lot in common. Most especially, they enjoy wrestling, and act out some of their favorite moves.

SCENE 7: All the kids enter. *Song:* "Nothing We Can Do." The kids sing about their social difficulties at the school. Samantha tells Zack that Eleanore wants to do homework with him again. Zack, concerned that he is supposed to kiss Christy, asks Samantha to say something to Eleanore so that she doesn't try to find him and see him with Christy. Samantha leaves and Christy enters, chewing her gum and ready for her kiss. Before Zack knows what is happening, Christy is kissing him. Eleanore enters, sees Zack and Christy kissing, drops her book and runs offstage. The Gangstaz enter. *Song:* "Gangsta Rap-Reprise." The Gangstaz are impressed that Zack has passed his first test. They remind him that now he has to beat up a Geek.

SCENE 8: Eleanore enters, disappointed in what she just saw. *Song:* "Out of My Mind." Zack enters, and joins in the song, though the two don't see each other. Zack admits to Eleanore that he was supposed to copy her homework in order to pass a test, and that he feels bad about the kiss with Christy. Eleanore leaves, saying that she doesn't know who she can trust anymore.

SCENE 9: Louis and Joey talk with Zack about how they can avoid fighting with him. They come up with a plan so that Zack can stay in the good graces of both the Gangstaz and the Geeks. *Song:* "Our Friend Zack." The three boys decide that they will fake the fight, using the wrestling moves they have been practicing.

SCENE 10: Samantha finds Zack between classes. He admits that he hasn't liked himself much lately. He feels like he's been acting like a different person in order to fit in. Samantha gives him some advice. *Song:* "Just Be Yourself."

SCENE 11: Recess. All the kids are onstage. *Song:* "The Fight." Zack tells



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Louis that he is nervous about going through with their plan. They go ahead with it anyway, and Zack pretends to beat up Louis. Dre announces Zack the champion, and proclaims that he is now part of the Gangsta squad. Dre begins to torment Louis, beating him up as he lies on the ground. Finally, he grabs Louis' frog and throws him onto the air. Louis crawls to his frog, begging that he not be dead. Dre makes fun of him and starts to beat up on him again. Zack yells "stop!" and everyone

is silent for a moment, shocked that Zack has stood up to the bully. Zack tells Dre that he doesn't want to be part of his squad. He apologizes to Louis and the rest of his classmates. *Song: "Finale."* Zack announces that he is starting a new squad – "the everyone squad" – and that anyone can join it. One by one, the kids join him, standing together and singing. Louis notices that his frog is still moving and that he is alive! Everyone cheers and the kids finish the song together.



### **Discussion Questions**

1. In this production, the main character of Zack felt many pressures. Among other things, he was pressured to cheat, kiss a girl he didn't like, beat up one of his friends and join a group of kids that were mean to others. What other kinds of pressures do you think kids feel at school?
2. In this production, many students at PS 32 are being bullied by the Gangstaz. How could you stand up to a bully, or to someone you see being bullied?
3. In this production, the Gangstaz asked Zack to do a lot of things that made him feel uncomfortable. If someone was asking you to do things that made you uncomfortable at school, what are some things that you could do?
4. In this production, Zack has to take "tests" in order to fit into the Gangsta squad. What are other things that kids have to do to "fit in"?
5. What is a stereotype? How did you see stereotypes represented in *The New Kid*? What stereotypes do you see at your school?
6. What is a bully? Are there other ways you can bully someone, besides using physical violence? What kinds of bullying have you witnessed that didn't involve physical violence?

### **RELATING TO THE STORY**

1. Which character in *The New Kid* did you relate to the most and why?
2. In *The New Kid*, there were four "squads" or cliques: The Gangstaz, The Brainiacs, The Mods and The Geeks. What groups do you see at your school? How do you recognize them?

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3. What did you learn from seeing *The New Kid* performance?

4. What messages do you think were conveyed in *The New Kid*?

5. Zach was the new kid at P.S. 32. How could you make a new kid at your school feel welcome?

6. Which characters in *The New Kid* did you think were bullies and why?

7. In the show, Zack is asked to copy someone's homework. Do you think copying homework is cheating?

8. Many of the characters in *The New Kid* felt pressures.

Choose several characters and discuss what pressures they were feeling and why.

9. What does loyalty mean? Which characters in *The New Kid* showed loyalty to one another?

### **REFLECTIVE WRITING**

1. How have you experienced bullying? This may have been a situation in which you bullied someone else, were the victim of bullying, or witnessed someone else being bullied. Explain what it felt like, how you think others in the situation may have felt, and what you would do differently if something like this happened again.



2. What is popularity? What are its positive and negative effects? How important is popularity at your school? How could popularity mean different things to different people?

3. Have you ever done or said something you regretted, in order to fit in? Explain what happened, how it made you feel and how you think it might have affected others.

4. If you experienced bullying, or if someone was pressuring you to do something that made you uncomfortable, who do you feel you could tell? What do you think would happen if you told this person?

5. Do you think it is possible to be friends with kids in different groups? Describe a situation when you have or have not seen this happen.

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### Reacting (lines and song lyrics from the show)

Below are song lyrics you heard during the show. Choose one and try to identify which character(s) sings it. Describe what you think it means, how it makes you feel and how you can relate to it.

#### PS 32

*I remember in my other school, new kids came, we'd act so cruel. We never let them feel like they belong.*

[Character: Zack]



#### Gangsta Rap

*Yo, yo yo, ya better watch out for who ya hang around with. Gotta get dope ta who ya get down with. I'm giving you a warning, because you're new here. But who ya hang with is how ya get through here.*

[Character: Dre]

*If you're not with us, then you're on your own. And no one gets by when they're all alone.*

[Character: Dre/Shawn]

#### Nothing We Can Do

*Well it's really pretty sad what goes on here every day. Gotta watch the things you do, gotta watch what you say. If you wanna fit in, that's the price you gotta pay. We know it stinks, but there's no other way.*

[Character: Full Cast]

*Gotta wear the right clothes, gotta wear 'em with style. Gotta know when to smirk, gotta know when to smile. 'Cause you're either at the bottom or the top of the pile. Prepare to be judged – it's like you're on trial!*

[Character: Full Cast]

*If you wanna survive, then you gotta get strong. So you put people down, even though it feels wrong.*

[Character: Full Cast]

*Well, it's really quite pathetic how these antics seem to kill the very fundamental need that education should fulfill. 'Cause it's not about our learning, it's about our social skills.*

[Character: Maddie]

#### Out of My Mind

*Way to go, kid. Yeah, they'll love you in this school. Just keep acting really cruel and dumb. That was pretty low, kid, but it's like it wasn't me – like a force I just can't see made me numb.*

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[Character: Zack]

### Just Be Yourself

*Just be yourself. No one else can decide who you are.*

[Character: Samantha]

*Everyone's trying so hard to fit in. They do things that aren't very smart. But all that's important is liking yourself. And the best way to do that is follow your own heart.*

[Character: Samantha]

### The Fight

*It won't be pretty, it won't be clean. 'Cause playground fighting can get a little mean. But it's just violence, like on a TV screen. And with TV these days, it won't be the worst we've seen!*

[Character: Full Cast]

### Finale

*Sometimes it's so hard to do what you know is right, and to not be afraid of what others might think of you.*

[Character: Zack]

*Being liked by everyone might feel real good, but it's better still to be understood. Maybe you won't like me – it's a chance I'll take. But I won't be a fake and try to be someone else. And I won't be afraid to be myself.*

[Character: Zack and Full Cast]



### *The New Kid*

Book, Music and Lyrics by Paul Armento  
[www.thenewkid.com](http://www.thenewkid.com)

Produced for your school by The Random Farms Kids Theater, Inc.

Direction by Marc Tumminelli

Choreography by Kristin Madden

Musical Direction by Justin Fischer

Study Guide and photography by Anya Wallach

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The Random Farms Kids Theater is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing musical theater training and performance opportunities. For more information on how you can get involved, go to [www.randomfarms.com](http://www.randomfarms.com).