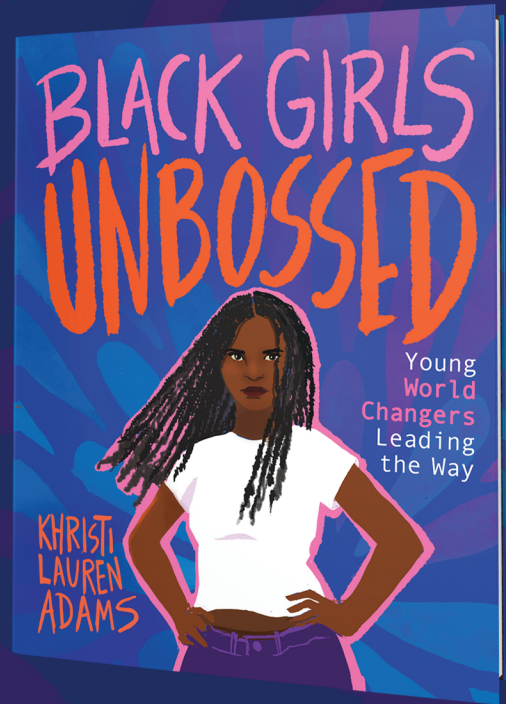


BLACK GIRLS UNBOSSSED

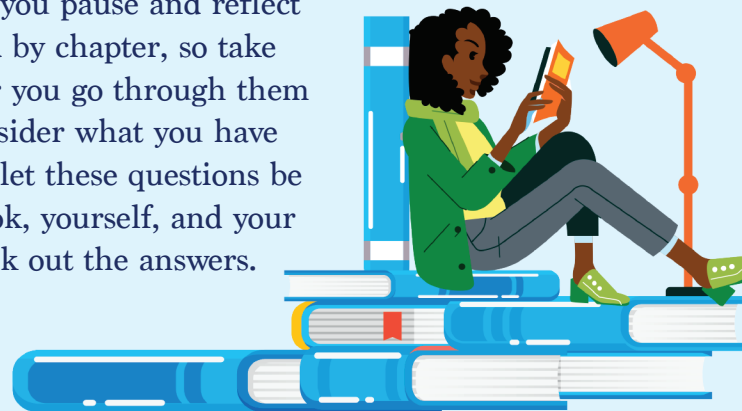
KHRISTI LAUREN ADAMS



DISCUSSION GUIDE

When you read *Black Girls Unbossed: Young World Changers Leading the Way*, you're in for a treat. Each of these eight Black girls showcases leadership in different ways. Yet they share many similarities—they all face challenges, step up to the plate, and rely on a supportive team. By reading their stories, you'll likely find some helpful advice that you can take with you through your own life. But don't forget to pay attention to the differences too. Taking the time to really consider the experiences of another person can help you cultivate empathy and understanding.

The following questions were created as a guide to help you pause and reflect on each girl's story and leadership style. They're divided by chapter, so take your time and see what each story has to offer. Whether you go through them alone or with a group, these questions can help you consider what you have to learn and how you can step up as a leader. But don't let these questions be your stopping point; ask your own questions—of this book, yourself, and your community—and see if you can challenge yourself to seek out the answers.



INTRODUCTION

1. You might often hear the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” But each of the girls in this book demonstrates how you don’t have to wait to grow up before you can have an impact. With this in mind, what can you do to become a leader where you are—right here, right now?
2. As Khristi Lauren Adams points out, many of these girls are inspirations even to the adults in their lives. How can you be a leader to those who are older than you, whether they are your siblings or people in your class, or even adults in the neighborhood and community?
3. Have you ever considered yourself a leader? What kind of leader are you? Who can you look to as a role model as you become a leader yourself?
4. What does it mean to be “unbossed”?
5. Each of these girls has a team of people around her, helping her reach her goals. Have you ever worked on a team before? What was that experience like? What does teamwork mean to you?

CHAPTER 1

1. What can you learn from Grace’s story?
2. Have you ever had someone downplay your experience or disbelieve what you told them? What did that feel like? How do you think Grace and her mother felt when the doctor treated them that way? (p. 7)
3. Have you ever had a gut instinct about a situation? Did you listen to it or not? (p. 7)
4. Grace’s mother clearly advocated for her daughter in the doctor’s office that day. Has anyone ever advocated for you before? Have you ever advocated for yourself or for others? (p. 8)
5. Grace felt joy when she gave her clothes up to the two young girls who lost their home. To her, giving something up did not mean she needed to feel sad or resentful, but rather, she could feel happy to be a part of helping someone. Have you ever given to someone? How did you feel? How do giving and serving help us work through our own challenges? (p. 9)
6. Which of Cancerve’s initiatives sound most exciting to you? What other initiatives would you propose if you were a part of Cancerve’s board? (p. 13)
7. How can you demonstrate servant leadership with those around you? (p. 15)
8. Where do you find joy, and how can you share that joy with others? (p. 15)
9. As Grace demonstrates, even leaders have room to grow. Can you think of a time when you learned from an experience you had in life? What are some ways you hope to continue growing? (p. 15)
10. Can helping others help us heal ourselves? (p. 15)



(CHAPTER 2

1. What can you learn from Amara's story?
2. What does it mean to love where you live? Does it require you only to view it positively? (p. 17)
3. Do you love where you live? What do you love about it? Are there ways it could improve? What are they? (p. 17)
4. Have you ever spoken up against something you believed was wrong? How did people respond?
5. Share a time when you loved being out in nature.
6. How do you feel when you're outside? Do you feel excited? Do you feel scared? What makes you feel that way? (p. 18)
7. What is your code of ethics? How can you be an ethical leader in your community? (p. 24)
8. When did someone make you feel like you belonged? What can you do to make someone else feel like they belong? (p. 25)
9. Have you ever tried to change yourself to fit people's expectations of what you should be? How did that make you feel? How do you think it would feel to accept yourself as you are? What steps do you need to take to get to that point? (p. 25)

(CHAPTER 3

1. What can you learn from Hannah's story?
2. Do you feel like it's "okay to not be okay"? Why or why not? Where do you think this belief comes from? (p. 26)
3. How do you cope with feelings of discomfort? Do you immediately try to fix them or ignore them, or are you comfortable with feeling uncomfortable? (p. 27)
4. Hannah and her brother Charlie made a good team, pairing vision and skill. Who are the people in your life you consider your partners? (p. 31)
5. Hannah and Charlie also had the support of their parents. In what ways do you provide support to others? In what ways do you receive support from others? (p. 31)
6. Why do you think it's hard to ask for help? What are some ways to make it easier? (p. 32)
7. Can you imagine the future you want to create? What does it look like? (p. 35)
8. What makes you unique? What do you like about being unique? (p. 35)
9. What parts of yourself do you love? What parts of yourself are you still learning to love? (p. 35)



(CHAPTER 4

1. What can you learn from Ssanyu's story?
2. Ssanyu's name means "joy" or "gladness." What does your name mean? What do you think about the meaning of your name? How does your name tell your story?
3. Ssanyu has a little brother and sister who look up to her. Who do you think are the people who look up to you and admire you? How can you be a good role model not just to those younger than you but also to those who are older? (p. 38)
4. Is there anything that worries you? Who can you talk to about it? How can you bring it up with them? (p. 38)
5. Ssanyu talks about how she finds comfort in God. What brings you comfort? How can you remember sources of comfort when you go through difficult times? (p. 39)
6. How are you a problem-solver in your everyday life? (p. 45)
7. What is your vision, and have you set up a plan to make sure it comes to life? What are you interested in learning more about? (p. 45)
8. What activities can you do for fun to rest from doing hard work?

(CHAPTER 5

1. What can you learn from Tyah's story?
2. Have you ever channeled your pain into something good, like Tyah did when she decided to go through with the speech? (p. 48)
3. Tyah transforms her community by asking questions of it. What are some of these questions, and what questions do you need to be asking of your own community? (p. 52)
4. Consider Tyah's questions on page 52:
 - What kind of a society are you creating through your philosophies and actions?
 - How are you incorporating the voices of the marginalized through your work?
5. What would be your responses to these questions?
6. How does Tyah demonstrate activism? What can you learn from her approaches? (p. 52)
7. At the end of Tyah's chapter, Adams asks her one last question: "What wakes you up in the morning and gets you doing all this work?" What would be your response to this question? (p. 53)
8. What does it mean to be your authentic self? Is there anything standing in the way? How can you move past those obstacles? (p. 54)



(CHAPTER 6

1. What can you learn from Jaychele's story?
2. When tragedy strikes, where do you find hope? (p. 57)
3. Before Jaychele could reach her goal of testifying, she took steps to grow in her public speaking skills. What is a goal that you have? What steps do you need to take first before reaching that goal? (p. 59)
4. Have you ever tried writing a poem about one of your experiences? How is writing poetry different from telling your story in other ways? How does it make you feel? (p. 60)
5. What can you do to organize and mobilize those around you for a worthy cause? (p. 64)
6. What comes to mind when you think of being the best version of yourself? Though it may require vulnerability, what steps could you take to continue growing in that direction? (p. 65)
7. Are you comfortable feeling anger? Why is anger an important emotion? What are some ways you can handle your anger in a productive way so it doesn't hurt you or others? (p. 65)
8. Where does your peace come from? Is it an internal source, or does it come from external influences? Describe a time when you felt at peace. (p. 65)

(CHAPTER 7

1. What can you learn from Kynneddy's story?
2. How would you respond if someone told you to stop talking about your accomplishments because it made them feel bad? (p. 67)
3. Have you ever dealt with perfectionism? What does it feel like? How can pressure help you grow? How can it be difficult to deal with sometimes? (p. 67)
4. What is your favorite type of music? How does music make you feel? Do you listen to different genres for different moods and situations? (p. 68)
5. Has art ever had an impact on you? Describe a time when a piece of art (in any form) touched you. (p. 68)
6. Have you ever failed at something? (p. 70) What did you learn from it?
7. Do you have people in your community who you can count on? If not, what steps could you take to begin creating that community? (p. 72)
8. How can you set goals and be a strong leader while still allowing others to lead as well? (p. 74)
9. Where do you want to be in ten years? What are some of the first steps you can take to get there? (p. 75)



(CHAPTER 8

1. What can you learn from Stephanie's story?
2. Public speaking is a common fear. What is one of your fears? What has helped you work through it? (p. 77)
3. What are the different parts of your identity? Do you think about some parts more than others? (p. 79)
4. Stephanie started a movement with Black Feminist Collective and created a website to give space to many different voices, not just her own. How can you use the space around you to make room for others? How do you know when it's time to step up, and how do you know when it's time to step back and let others lead? (p. 81)
5. How do you handle conflict? What feelings bubble up when you think about it? (p. 82)
6. What can you do to influence your own thoughts and actions more positively? (p. 84)
7. Just as words damaged Stephanie's self-esteem, they also acted as the antidote. Think of a time someone said something hurtful to you. What words can you speak to yourself now that would help undo the damage? (p. 84)
8. Are there parts of yourself you're still learning to love? Write down what they are; then write down that you love those parts of yourself. Now imagine: How would you feel if you believed those words and loved every part of yourself? (p. 84)
9. Stephanie shows us how powerful it is to advocate for others from a place of compassion. What does compassion mean to you? (p. 85)
10. What does it look like to advocate for ourselves? Is that easier or harder than standing up for others? (p. 85)

(CONCLUSION

1. Which of the girls' stories resonated most with you? Why?
2. What style of leadership resonated most with you? Why?
3. After reading these stories, can you think of yourself as a leader?
4. Who were the people around each of these girls who helped them succeed?
5. These girls have stepped up in their own communities, with or without the recognition they deserve. What can you do to pay more attention to the leaders around you? (p. 88)

