

Ground Zero Reading Guide Summer, 2022

Two kids. One devastating day. Nothing will ever be the same...

I Introduction and Pre-Reading

Welcome to your summer reading of Alan Gratz's gripping novel, *Ground Zero!*

Before we begin, it is important to understand a story can have two different settings because setting affects plot. The setting tells about the culture and values of the characters. One setting in the novel is New York City and the other is Afghanistan. List three important facts about the culture and values of New York City and three important facts about the culture and values of Afghanistan.

New York City- Culture and Values <https://www.iexplore.com/articles/travel-guides/north-america/united-states/new-york/history-and-culture#:~:text=New%20York's%20incredibly%20multi%2Dethnic,in%20by%20millions%20of%20immigrants.>

- 1-
- 2-
- 3-

Afghanistan- Culture and Values <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-core-concepts>

- 1-
- 2-
- 3-

In this book, you will be spellbound by the stories of two **characters** that are similar in age to yourself that, in an instant, their lives change forever. In order to fully prepare yourself to understand and know their stories, research and become familiar with these terms **BEFORE** you read:

For Brandon's story: World Trade Center (North Tower and South Tower); September 11, 2011; New York City

For Reshmina's story: Afghanistan, Taliban, Dari (language), Afghan National Army, Islam

Now, let's get to know author Alan Gratz better through watching this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkT6kxPD-I>

Based on what you just watched, write down three things you learned about him/his writing of this book that you believe will be important to reading and understanding it better:

1.

2.

3.

The Novel

Ground Zero by Alan Gratz is a historical novel that braids the stories of two young adults who have been adversely impacted by their circumstances. Their journeys collide as they each use their values and strengths to come to terms with change. Although the two main characters are fictional, their stories represent a composite of real events that occurred to real people during this time period, September 11, 2001.

The characters in *Ground Zero*

- 1) **Brandon**- *"Dark messy hair. Brown skin and high cheekbones, like his dad. Slightly upturned nose and blue eyes, like his mom."* (pg. 8)
- 2) **Reshmina**- *"... thin, with round faces, brown skin, big brown eyes, and black hair. Reshmina's [hair] was long, carefully combed, and tucked under a black headscarf."* (pg. 10)

II Thematic Topic: Values

Alan Gratz wrote about values in this novel –

- **Brandon**- value of **family**
- **Reshmina**- value of **culture**

VALUES

What is something you and your family value about your culture?

Your response:

Does this "one thing you value" impact the choices you make?

Your response:

What makes it special?

Your response:

What does this reveal about who you are?

Your response:

Why is it important to have values?

Your response:

III Reflection Questions

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Your answer must be from 3 to 5 sentences long.

1. Write about a conflict you've overcome. (answer in 3-5 sentences)

Answer:

2. How are Brandon and Reshmina similar? You may add examples from the novel. (answer in 3-5 sentences)

Answer:

3. How are Brandon and Reshmina different? You may add examples from the novel. (answer in 3-5 sentences)