



I Am Not a Number

By Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer, Illustrated by Gillian Newland, (2017)
GRADES for USE: 4-6

Grade 6 Discussion Questions

RL 6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- Based on the text, what can we guess that Irene’s mother thought about the residential school? Give at least two pieces of evidence from the text to support your answer.

RL 6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

- What is one theme or big idea that is carried throughout the story? Give examples from the text that support this theme.

RL 6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

- What words or phrases does the author use to describe the Indian agent? How do these word choices affect the tone of the story?

SUMMARY OF BOOK:

When the Indian agent shows up to take Irene and her brothers away, their mother tells her “Never forget us. Never forget who you are!” Irene remembers her mother’s words as she suffers indignities and abuse at the hands of Sister Mary at the residential school.

Summer vacation arrives and Irene can finally see her family again. But when summer ends, must Irene return to the school, or can her family figure out a way to keep her from being taken away again?

Grade 6 Activities

W 6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

- The residential school in this story is located in Canada; however, such schools also existed in the United States. The first school of this type was the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. In groups of 2-3, have students conduct a short research project to learn about the Carlisle school and its impact on Native Americans. Then have a whole-group discussion to compare what students learned with what they read in *I am Not a Number*.