

Discussion Topics

Look up the term “structural inequality” and define it. What is an example of structural inequality in the book? What are some other examples you know of?

What are some differences the author mentions between the treatment of male and female high school athletes in the 1970s? What, if anything, surprised you about the differences? In your view, are there still differences in how athletes are treated based on gender today?

How have girls’ sports teams helped girls? Do you think the existence of girls’ sports also helps boys? How?

What lifelong effects did playing on the girls’ basketball team have on the players?

Students from different class and economic backgrounds played together on the team. How did those differences impact how they saw each other and worked together?

Some schools in the story had fewer resources than others. For example, some city schools did not have the budget for busses to take players to suburban games. How else does socioeconomic status affect high schools? What are some advantages given to students from better-funded schools? What are some challenges faced by students from less well-funded schools? How does race factor into these equations?

Who are the heroes of the story? What makes them heroic?

Research Topics

Title IX states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Not everyone supported the intent of Title IX. Explain the main arguments of both supporters and detractors at the time of its passage in 1972.

Through *STATE*, you gained some familiarity with life in the 1970s. Though it was a different time, there are similarities to today. Research the serious issues of the 70s—political divisions, racial tensions, economic problems—and compare and contrast them to issues in the present day. In what ways were the challenges of the 1970s similar to and different from related challenges of the 2020s?

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for enforcing compliance with Title IX. Research a Title IX controversy in which the OCR was involved. What was the complaint? How did the OCR address it?

Research the ways in which Title IX has been used as a tool to fight against sexual harassment and assault on school campuses.

Review the Title IX Milestones list. Choose one of the milestones to research and summarize. (Example: Since 2021, the understanding of Title IX's protections has included prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Look up and summarize the 2020 Supreme Court case *Bostock v. Clayton County*.)

The story touches on the controversy over whether men or women should coach girls' teams. Read about this issue and explain the arguments on both sides. Then state your opinion, supporting it with evidence from your sources. Also discuss: how can the lessons about gender bias in STATE be applied to other disputes related to gender in society today?

Writing Topics

In STATE, the author reconstructed events and emotions from decades ago. Imagine you are writing about your own school experiences many years from now. To help your future self, write 3–4 paragraphs about what life is like for you presently.

Suggestions:

- Covid-19 caused many changes beginning in 2020. How did it make you feel? How did it change your school experience and social life?
- Social media is a big part of many students' social lives. How do you currently use social media, and what impact does it have on you?

Keep a journal for 5–7 days in which you keep a record of something you do regularly outside of class. This could be a club, team, job, hobby, etc. Write about what you do and how you feel while doing it. Capture your voice and the voices of others through actual bits of dialogue.

- Extension: Write the first mini-chapter of an autobiography based on your journal observations.

Imagine that 50 years from now, someone wants to write a book about an activity in which you were involved in school. They ask if you have any materials from 50 years ago that might be helpful in reconstructing what the activity was and why it was important to you and others. Your task is to create a document—a letter, newspaper article, yearbook inscription, etc.—that would be useful to them. Include details.

Title IX is a main theme of the book, but it wasn't something that teenagers necessarily discussed much at the time of its passage. Identify some of the major societal events (recent laws, activism, political movements, technological changes, etc.) that are shaping life today. What might their impact be on you 5, 10, or 20+ years from now?