



## *Celebrating the Undefeated*

### **Read Aloud Lesson based on the book**

*The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander  
Illustrated by Kadir Nelson

**The Undefeated** is an illustrated book based on a poem by Kwame Alexander. The book celebrates the creativity, perseverance, grit, and success of Black Americans and highlights the unspeakable tragedies of slavery and racism in the United States. As readers, we see the faces of some of the world's greatest heroes while learning about the endurance and spirit of those who continue to build and thrive. **The Undefeated** is a reminder that we must never give up.

After reading or listening to **The Undefeated** (check YouTube for a read-aloud), think about what it means to make it through even the toughest of challenges. Then, think about the heroes in our history and how you might be a hero someday. Please discuss and answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think the book is called **The Undefeated**? What does it mean to be undefeated?
2. The book covers a long period of history. Why do you think it is important to learn about people from the past, including their defeats and victories?
3. History can be filled with tragedies and traumas, especially for Black Americans and other minority groups who may face racism in their lives. In the middle of the book, the author repeats, "**This is for the unspeakable**," three times. Take a close look at the illustrations. Why do you think the author repeats this phrase? What is the author trying to tell the readers?

4. Listen or read again from, “**This is for the unlimited, unstoppable ones . . .**” to the end of the book. What does this final section make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?
5. The author highlights many heroes of history, including Martin Luther King Jr., Gwendolyn Brooks, and Serena Williams. Who is a hero in your life? Who do you look up to, and why?
6. American poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou once said:

“You see, we may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated. It may even be necessary to encounter the defeat, so that we can know who we are. So that we can see, oh, that happened, and I rose. I did get knocked down flat in front of the whole world, and I rose. I didn’t run away - I rose right where I’d been knocked down. And then that’s how you get to know yourself.”

Can you think about a time when you were knocked down, but you rose again? Or a time when you didn’t run away from defeat? What did you learn about yourself in that situation?