

Title: Word Nerd

Author: Susin Nielsen

Grade Level: 6-8

Category: Novel

Synopsis: Twelve-year-old Ambrose is constantly being picked on by the school bullies. He has a peanut allergy, wears mismatched clothes, often says the wrong thing and doesn't have many friends. His one passion is Scrabble. Ambrose and his over-protective mother have moved many times but this time Ambrose is determined to stay and find someone who will like him just the way he is. But will he convince his mother?

Thematic/Curriculum Connections : Self-esteem, bullies, allergies, community, poverty, scrabble, competition, acceptance

Activities:

1. **Writing:** What's in a name?

- Find out what your name means.
- Scramble the letters of your name and see how many words you can make from it.
- If you could change your name, what name would you choose? Why?

2. **Drama:** The dialogue in this novel is perfect for drama. Have the students act out different dialogues between

- Ambrose and the bullies
- Ambrose and his mother
- Ambrose and Cosmo
- Ambrose and the members of the Scrabble Club

Interview the characters.

3. **Character Education**

- List the character traits for Ambrose, his mom, Cosmo, Mr & Mrs. Economopolous, the bullies and Amanda.
- Notice differences and similarities.
- Do you know anyone like Ambrose?
- Discuss how you could help someone like him.