

# Art Club

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR  
**RASHAD DOUCET**



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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Primary

## SYNOPSIS

Dale Donovan has heard the same lecture over and over again: Art will get you nowhere in life. A kid with a creative streak, Dale wants nothing more than to doodle, play video games and create comics forever—maybe even as a full-time job one day. But between his grandfather pushing him to focus on his studies and a school with zero interest in funding arts programs, Dale feels like his future has already been decided for him.

That is, until he comes up with the perfect plan: What if he starts an after-school art club, gathers a team of creative students like himself, and proves all the naysayers—his stubborn vice principal in particular—wrong?

This might just work, but if the club isn't financially successful by the end of the semester, the school will shut them down. This may be Dale's only chance to show the adults in his life that a career as an artist is not just a dream but a possibility!

## ABOUT THE CREATOR

Rashad Doucet is from New Orleans by way of Eunice and Ville Platte, Louisiana. He's been drawing comics since his grandma gave him a pencil and some paper to keep quiet during church. Rashad is currently a professor of sequential art at SCAD in Savannah, Georgia, where he can often be found listening to K-pop and watching way too much anime.

## STUDY NOTES

- Write a short paragraph about one of your grandparents, and things that you like to do together.
- Have you ever been part of a club? What was your experience like? If you could start a club about anything at your school—what would you choose?
- Dale loves to 'cosplay,' which means dressing like his favourite comic or manga characters. Have you ever created a costume to look like a character you love? If not—who would you choose?
- Dale and his friends like to play *Fantasy Frontier Z* online. Have a class discussion about some of the risks about playing video games online, and how you can keep yourself and your friends safe. There's some good information and activities here: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/online-safety-through-play>.
- The movie version of *FFZ* makes Dale angry because it's not like the comics! Have you ever seen a movie or TV show based on a book or game you loved? Was your experience more like Aren's or Dale's?
- Both at home and at school, Dale is asked to think about what he might like to be when he grows up—and he has no idea. Have you ever thought about your possible future jobs before? It's tough, as there's lots to consider! Have a talk

with someone you trust, like a family member or teacher, about what job you might like to do one day and why—they'll have some good advice!

- Dale is feeling sad about the loss of his grandmother, and thinks about her often—his memories of her even inspire his dream future career. What are some other ways to remember someone we love who is no longer with us?
- How are the spreads of Dale and Aren playing *FFZ* or the spreads set in Dale's memories different to the illustrations in present day? Be sure to consider elements like the colour palettes, text style and placement. Why do you think Rashad Doucet made these decisions?
- Vice Principal Ruffins and Miss Je'nae have very different approaches to helping the students think about their futures. How do their attitudes and ideas affect Dale and his friends in the novel? Do you think either way is 'right' or 'wrong'? Why or why not?
- How does Dale change as a character because of his experiences in the novel? What do you think the future looks like for him and the Art Club?
- *Art Club* is a graphic novel. How did this format affect your reading experience and enjoyment of the book? How might it have been different if *Art Club* was presented as just prose, without the illustrations?
- Rashad Doucet takes us behind the scenes of the creation of *Art Club*: did anything about his process surprise you? What new things did you learn?