

*As Fast As Words Could Fly*  
by Pamela M. Tuck, illustrated by Eric Velasquez



### Discussion Questions

1. The book begins with the sentence “Trouble was brewing in Greenville, North Carolina.” To what kind of trouble is the sentence referring?
2. What do you know about the group to which Mason’s father belonged? What kind of work do you think they did? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. How do you think Mason and his brothers felt when their father told them that they would be attending Belvoir High, a formerly all-white school? How would you feel, and why?
4. What did the driver of the school bus do when he first saw Mason and his brothers waiting at the bus stop? Why do you think he did this?
5. Why do you think Patrick and Daniel ignored Mason and his brothers on the bus? Have you ever experienced something similar to what Mason experienced? What happened? How did you react?
6. How did the students, teachers, and administrators treat Mason when he arrived at Belvoir High? Did this surprise you? Why?
7. Mason surprised Mrs. Turner, the librarian, by typing more than one hundred cards in a short period of time. Why was Mrs. Roberts, the typing instructor, grateful toward Mason? How did she reward him?
8. Who was Golden Frinks, and how did he help Mason get back his job at the library?
9. When Mason hesitated about representing Belvoir High at the typing tournament, he thought about what Pa had told him: “*Somebody’s got to*

*make a change.*” What does this phrase mean to you, and why do you think it inspired Mason?

10. What advantages did an electric typewriter have over a manual typewriter? Why did Mason end up choosing a manual typewriter to use for the competition? Do you think it was a smart decision at the time? Why or why not?

11. How many words per minute could Mason type when he started to work at the library? How many words per minute did he type at the competition? What do you think accounted for the difference?

12. When Mason was announced as the winner of the typing contest, no one cheered. Why did the audience respond that way? Would you have cheered? Why or why not?

13. The typewriter is a that has not been commonly used for many years. Have you ever seen a typewriter? What do we use now instead of typewriters? Now imagine that you are an adult. Do you think your children will still use computers and cell phones twenty or thirty years from now? If yes, how do you think they will be different? If no, what do you think they might be using instead?

14. Do you think Mrs. Roberts and Mr. Bullock’s treatment of Mason changed after he won the tournament? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

15. After the competition, Mason did not speak much but knows that “his words typed on paper had already spoken for him—loud and clear.” What message do you think his words sent?

16. Mason faced several situations in which he was treated unkindly by a large group of people and made to feel unwelcome. Can you think of any situations in which someone might experience something similar today? What do you think you would have done if you had been in Mason’s situation? What about if you had been part of the large group?

17. What words would you use to describe Mason? What words would you use to describe his father?

18. In the Author’s Note, author Pamela M. Tuck explained that Mason’s story is based on the experiences of her own father, Moses Teel Jr. Did it surprise you to find out that many of the events in the book really happened? Why or why not? If you could say something to Moses Teel Jr. or ask him a question today, what would you tell him or ask him?