

## Let the Race Begin...

“I heard them trying to figure out what type of animal their number eight card is describing,” David offered. “The good thing is we already know the types of animals we have. That should save us a few extra minutes.”

“Yeah, but we still have the mystery card!” Gabe reminded us.

I looked over at Mya, and she read the card aloud again. We all shook our heads, still undecided. “Well, let’s head on over to the amphibians and birds so we can find cards eight and nine quickly”, I said. “Then we can put our heads together to talk about the mystery card again.”

Just then, we heard a loud yell and cheering, and looked behind us. Chad’s group must have figured out the type of animal for their eighth card. We quickly put away the digital camera, picked up our booksacks, and took off running towards the amphibian building.

**The Brandon Jones Series**  
**The Field Trip to the Zoo**

# Brandon Jones & The Field Trip to the Zoo



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## Vocabulary terms for this book:

vertebrate  
invertebrate  
habitat  
herbivore  
carnivore  
omnivore  
endangered species  
extinct  
mammal  
reptile  
veterinarian

# **Brandon Jones & The Field Trip to the Zoo**

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## Field Trip!

*THUNK!* That was the sound of a shoe landing on top of a remote-controlled car. *My* shoe landing on top of *my* favorite remote-controlled car. I looked over my shoulder to see if everything was okay. The car didn't look broken, so I shrugged my shoulders and started digging again.

My name is Brandon Jones. At that moment, I was in the middle of digging in my closet for my baseball glove. I wanted to bring it to school to show my best friend, Gabe.

“Brandon Jones! You have exactly one minute to get downstairs! We will be late!”

I heard my mom shaking her keys by the door. *Uh oh.* This could mean trouble. I picked up my jacket and stuffed my feet into my shoes. “I’m coming right now, Mom!” I looked around my room real quick – there it is! I grabbed the glove off my toy box and shoved it into my booksack.

“Goodness, Brandon!” my mom said. “What in the world were you doing?”

“Nothing!” I said quickly and dashed out the front door. Mom shook her head and locked the door.

“Well, we’ll have to hurry or we’ll both be in the principal’s office today!”

I tried to picture my mom sitting in the office and I laughed. It’s a silly picture. I don’t think my mom ever went to the principal’s office in her life.

I am in the second grade at McNair Elementary. My mom works at my school, too. She teaches the big kids in fourth grade.

Well, I’m growing and I can’t wait to be one of the big kids. Mom always says to take my time, that it’s fun to still be kind of little. I think the big kids get to do the really cool things and have lots of fun. I just can’t wait.

Mom buckled her seat belt and started driving down the street. “Did you bring your new baseball glove to show Gabe?” she asked. She looked at me in the mirror, raising her eyebrows.



*Man! How did she know that? She always knows what I'm doing!*

Mom just shook her head and smiled. "Just be sure to bring it back home this afternoon, okay?"

"Yes," I answered and smile. I couldn't wait to show Gabe my new glove.

Gabe Andrews and I have been friends since we were in Pre-K. He is my best friend. Well, one of them. I have two best friends, actually. The other one is named Jamar Brooks, but we all call him JB. I wanted to show JB my glove, too, but Gabe really, *really*, likes baseball. I think he knows almost everything there is to know about baseball.

The car pulled into the school parking lot and I looked at the clock. It says 7:55. Mom has to be here at eight, so we made it just in time. We both scrambled out of the car and walked inside as quickly as we can. "Have a good day, Brandon!" Mom said as she hugged me.

"You, too, Mom!" I tell her, and she dashed off. I head towards the playground to find my friends. My school allows us to play outside for a few minutes before the bell rings. At my cousin's school they aren't allowed to go outside until recess time, so I'm pretty lucky, I guess.

“Hey, Brandon! Wait up!” I turned around and saw JB trying to catch up with me but trying not to run in the hallway.

“JB! I have the coolest new thing to show you!” I said, patting my backpack.

“What is it?” asked Mya, JB’s sister.

I did not see her behind JB. Mya and JB are twins. They are the exact same height, and really look a lot alike. But they do not have the same interests. I repeat, *they do NOT have the same interests*. JB loves sports, like me. He plays just about any sport – baseball, basketball, football, soccer... and he’s pretty good at all of them. I don’t think Mya knows the difference between a touchdown and a homerun, though. She likes rainbows and animals – probably butterflies and unicorns, too, I guess. I shook my head.

“Uh, nothing you’d be interested in.” I said. Sometimes we let Mya hang out with us, but other times she can be such a *girl*. It looks like today would be one of those days.



“Oh gosh, is it some silly boy toy?” Mya asked, scrunching up her nose. “Whatever. I don’t want to know anyway”, she said and walked off with a group of giggling girls.

*See what I mean?*

JB and I continued walking. We started talking about the basketball game that was on TV the night before. JB had taken a piece of paper and balled it to make it a mini basketball. We pretended to make awesome dunks and plays while we headed to the door.

“So what did you have to show me?” JB asked, as we walked through the door leading to the playground.

I grinned, and swung my booksack around to the front. Just as I started to unzip it, the bell rang. *Aw, rats!* If we take too long we’ll get a tardy and get into lots of trouble. And I, for one, do not want to get in trouble. Getting into trouble at school also means I’ll be in trouble with my mom – and I know if I get into trouble, I probably won’t be able to use my new glove at all.

“I’ll just show you at recess after lunch!” I yelled to JB, and we both ran off to line up with our classes.

Gabe and I are in the same class, but JB's class is across the hall from ours. I got in line and peeked around my classmates, looking for Gabe. I saw his bright green booksack. He was only two kids ahead of me!

"Gabe!" I whispered. We're not allowed to talk in line, so I don't want my teacher to hear me. "Gabe!" I called again, a little louder.

My teacher, Ms. Miller, turned to look at me. "Are you talking in line again, Brandon? If you can't follow school rules you won't be able to join us on our first class field trip this year."

Field trip? We're going on a field trip? *Oh boy!* Every kid loves going on a field trip! No classwork, no homework, no desks, or being quiet all day...

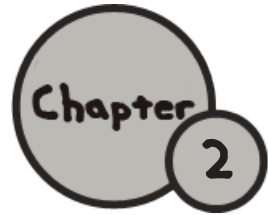
"When are we going?" asked Jenna Gibson.

Jenna is so nosey! She asks the most questions in the world! I'll bet she's going to be a reporter when she grows up.

“Shh...” said Ms. Miller, putting her finger to her lips and smiling. “We shouldn’t be talking while in the hallway. We will talk about it after lunch.”

After lunch?? I groaned. We will have to wait all morning to find out more about our field trip!

Ms. Miller must have read my mind, because she smiled. “It’s not that long, Brandon,” she said, and patted my back as I walked into the classroom.

A graphic consisting of two overlapping circles. The larger, left circle is light gray and contains the word "Chapter" in a black, sans-serif font. The smaller, right circle is white with a black border and contains the number "2" in a black, sans-serif font.

## Chapter 2

# The Announcement

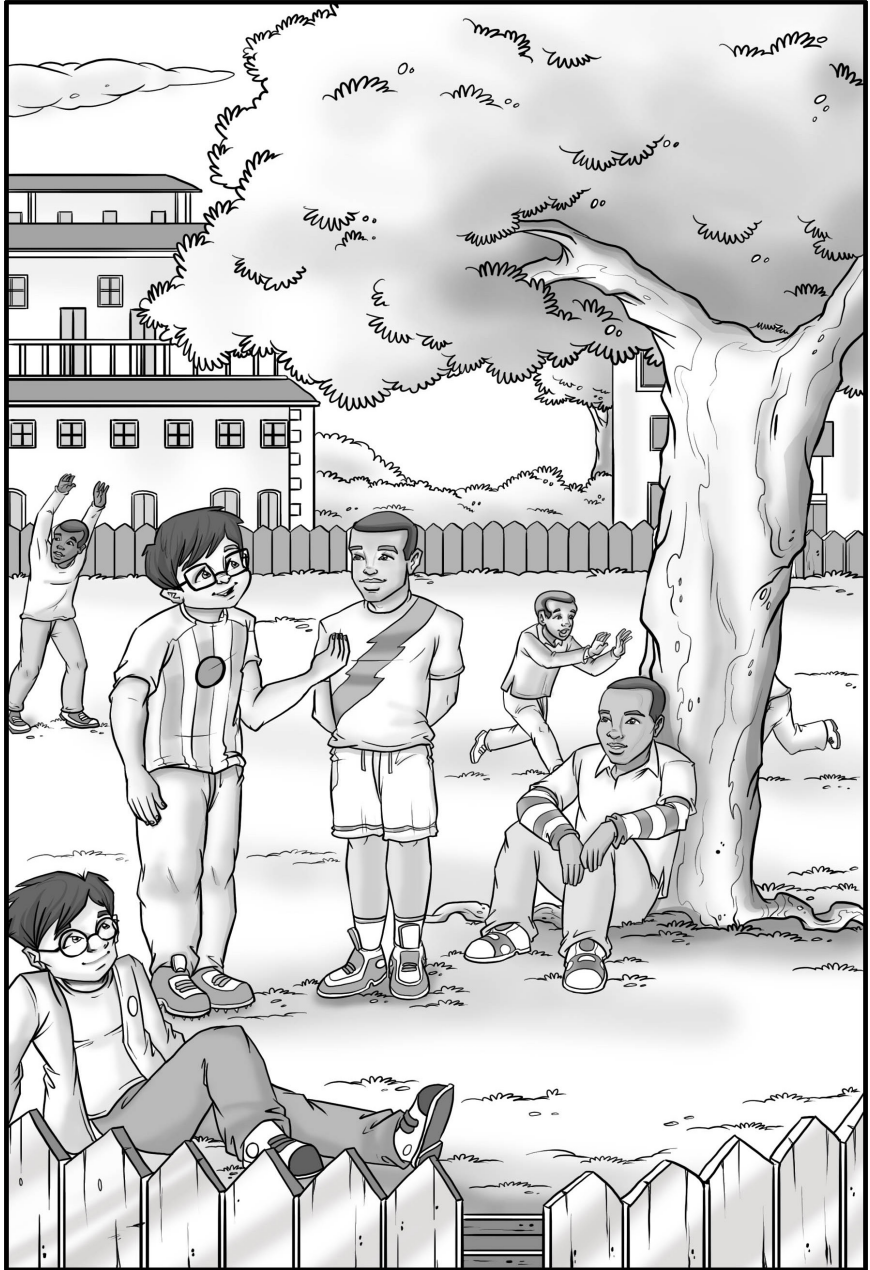
David Ngyuen, Gabe, and I were sitting under the tree at recess after lunch, trying to figure out where our class field trip would be. “Maybe to Water World”, Gabe suggested.

David shook his head. “No way. Field trips are fun, but we never get to go anywhere that cool.”

I agreed. “That would be awesome, Gabe, but I don’t think so.”

“Well, what about...” Gabe started to ask, but he was interrupted by J.B.

“Hey guys, no football today?” JB asked, running towards us. His class always comes out to recess late.





“Nope,” said David. “Our class is going on a field trip, but we have no idea where. We’re trying to guess where we will be going.”

“Yeah, our teacher said our class is going, too,” JB plopped down on the ground. “She said she’d tell us about it after lunch and recess. Hey, Brandon, didn’t you have some surprise to show me?”

*Man!* In all of the excitement about the field trip I’d forgotten about my new baseball mitt. “Aw, guys – my mom signed me up for baseball early. We went and bought a new mitt last night. I left it in the classroom.”

“That’s neat!” said Gabe. “Hey... maybe our field trip will be to the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum!”

David rolled his eyes. “Really, Gabe? That’s like all the way to New York!”

Gabe grinned. “I think it’s a good idea.”

“Well, I guess we’re about to find out,” I say, and point to Ms. Miller standing at the door. “Recess is over, guys. Let’s just hope the field trip will be somewhere good.”



Once we got settled in our desks, Ms. Miller stood in front of the class and smiled. “Oh! She must be excited about the field trip, too!” I thought. “It must be somewhere extra cool. Maybe Gabe was right about Water World or the Baseball Hall of Fame.”

Just when I started to imagine all the fun we would have, Jenna Gibson interrupted my thoughts with her million-and-one questions.

“Ms. Miller, what will we need to bring on our field trip?”

“Can we bring our little sisters with us?”

“Oh, can we pack our own lunch or do we have to have the school lunch?”

Thankfully Jenna finally took a breath and Ms. Miller jumped in. “Jenna, those are all good questions. But if you all will listen closely, I’ll tell you all about our field trip.”

The whole class got really quiet. I think this is the most quiet our room has ever been. “So, our first field trip this year will be....,” Ms. Miller paused, then smiled again. I started squirming in my seat. “No, that’s okay. You all can wait until tomorrow.”

“No!” the entire class yelled out. “Tell us now! PLEASE?”

Ms. Miller laughed. “Okay, okay. I’ll tell you. We are going to the zoo!”

Wait. What? Did I really get excited to go to the zoo? I sat back in my chair and looked over at Gabe. Gabe may like baseball a lot, but he loves going to the zoo. He really, really likes animals. He says he wants to be a vet- a veterena- ... you know, one of those animal doctors. What are they called? Oh yeah, veterinarian.

Anyway, Gabe’s giving me the thumbs up with a huge grin on his face. I smile for a second then look out of the window. This is going to be the most boring-est field trip ever! I can see it now – a long hot day walking around looking at animals who are always taking a nap. And you know if you go to the zoo without your parents you can’t buy the ice cream or really yummy snacks. How could Ms. Miller do this to us? I thought she was so cool! Cool teachers don’t drag their classes to the zoo! I groaned out loud on accident.

Ms. Miller looked at me. “Did you say something, Brandon?”

“I, uh, no....” I stuttered.

Then big mouth Jenna said, “Brandon doesn’t like the zoo, Ms. Miller. Not since that goat ate his banana during our kindergarten field trip.”

Oh yeah! I had forgotten about that! That stinking goat took a huge bite out of my banana! I had to throw the rest of it away. I couldn’t get another one because my kindergarten teacher said there was only enough for everyone to have just one. So my friends got to snack on fruit, and I could only sip water.

The class laughed with Jenna, and I slumped down in my chair.



Ms. Miller smiled again. “Well this year’s zoo trip will be the most fun you’ve ever had at the zoo. I promise.”

I looked over at Gabe, who was still grinning from ear to ear. I gave him another weak smile in return, and thought “Fun? Yeah, right!” to myself.

