



APA citation	Trueman, T. (2004). <i>Cruise control</i> . New York, NY: Harpertempest.
Number of pages	149
Genre	Fiction dealing with disability
Age range	Grades 7 – 12
Brief summary	<p>Terry Trueman explains what it's like to be part of a family with a severely handicapped child in <i>Cruise Control</i>, his complimentary novel to <i>Stuck in Neutral</i>. While <i>Stuck In Neutral</i> provided the perspective of severely handicapped, Shawn, <i>Cruise Control</i> gives the perspective of Paul, Shawn's older brother. <i>Cruise Control</i> offers a realistic glimpse at the anger, frustration, shame, guilt, and sense of responsibility that Paul encounters every day of his life. It fuels his rage and makes him a threat to himself and to those around him: he is embarrassed to love his brother, he harbors deep resentment for his father, and he feels trapped in his family and life, refusing to leave his mother and sister with the burden of caring for his younger brother. The inclusion of Paul's best friend, Tim, and his silent battle with an alcoholic stepfather is a carefully placed parallel to Paul's own rage and an effective character to compliment the protagonist. This book tactfully handles Paul's issues and addresses the struggles and emotions that he faces in a very clear way that encourages empathy in the reader. While the conclusion seems somewhat forced and all of the issues seem to be resolved in one swift streak, overall I think <i>Cruise Control</i> is well-done.</p>
Brief evaluation	<p>13.5/18</p> <p>The strength of <i>Cruise Control</i> lies in the perspective of the narrator, Paul. While it is not a brilliant piece based on literary devices, it makes a strong statement and addresses disability from a very honest point of view. Some of the language is a little controversial, some of the dialogue a bit forced, Paul's rage, and his violent outburst and the inclusion a drunk driving scene a bit problematic but when considered as a whole, these criticisms do, in fact, compliment the story effectively.</p>

Criteria for Evaluation	0 Does not meet curriculum standards	1 Acceptable but not a first choice	2 Satisfactory	3 Right on target!
Plot	The plot is not interesting.	The plot holds the reader's attention and engages the reader.	The plot is intriguing and enjoyable.	The plot is engaging and provides a story line that invites the reader to turn to the next page!
Issue/Theme	The issue/theme is not pertinent to and/or inappropriate for the intended age group.	The issue/theme is engaging but is not handled in an impressive manner and/or does not thoroughly address the issue/theme.	The book carefully and effectively addresses a critical issue/theme for the intended age group.	The book appropriately covers relevant matters and enables the reader to critically think about his/her position on the issue/theme.
Characters	The characters are undeveloped.	The reader gets a sense of the characters and is somewhat able to get inside their thoughts and motivation but character development could be stronger.	The characters are well-developed. The reader is able to understand their motivation and behavior.	The character development is strong. The reader is able to empathize with their situations, understand their actions and reactions, and critically think about how s/he would behave in the characters' situation.
Dialogue	The dialogue is not effective and does not flow.	The dialogue strengthens the story and character development but is, at times, misplaced and overused.	The use of dialogue is appropriate and effectively provides character attributes, motivation, and assists with story development.	The dialogue is strong and the author makes careful word choices, effectively telling the story while letting the story tell itself.
Writing Style	The writing style is poor, the story line unclear. It is difficult to follow the progression of events.	The writing style and fluency is acceptable. The reader may be confused on occasion as to sequence of events.	The writing style is enjoyable and the story flows in a natural, coherent progression.	The book is well-written, clearly relays critical information, and exemplifies exceptional mechanics of writing.
Reaction & Response	The book does not provide insight or provoke independent thought, opinions, or ideas.	The book causes the reader to think about the story, characters, and theme but may send conflicting messages that are too confusing for the intended age group.	The book effectively evokes a personal reaction to the text.	The book elicits some sort of a strong emotional reaction while provoking further contemplation of the theme and guiding the reader to independent thought.