

# The Field Guide to the North American Teenager

Taylor Nelson

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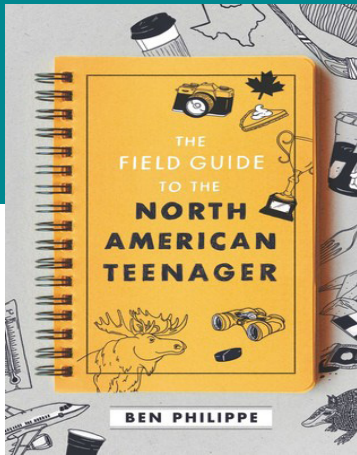
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## Book Review

# The Field Guide to the North American Teenager



### Author

Ben Philippe

### Illustrator

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### Reviewer

Taylor Nelson

### Rating

Dependable

### Level

Young Adult

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### Pages

372

### Year

2019

### Publisher

Balzer + Bray

### ISBN

9780062824110

Norris Kaplan is a sarcastic and cynical Haitian-French Canadian teenager whose snarky witticisms often land him in hot water. After his mother gets a job in Austin, Texas, Norris finds himself in an American high school, cataloging his snap judgments of everyone he meets—the Cheerleaders, the Jocks, the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. But as time goes on, Norris begins to see that not everyone fits into the boxes he puts them in. It's not until he screws everything up on prom night that Norris realizes it may be time to stop hiding behind his snarky opinions and start letting people into his heart.

Ben Philippe's debut novel is a strong start, challenging all sorts of racial, sexual, and high school stereotypes head-on. At times the humor feels stretched too thin and as if it's trying too hard, but Norris's voice feels authentic to a teenager, and his personality is wonderfully and frustratingly flawed. Though at times he is unlikable, readers will sympathize and empathize with Norris as they begin to glimpse his true character underneath the cynicism. The cast of supporting characters are beautifully developed, full of complexity and detail. Overall, this is a humorous look at American high school life from the viewpoint of an outsider, complete with plenty of snark, angst, and banter.

\*Contains moderate language and mild sexual content.