Like many rising 9th graders, Peter left middle school thinking he had everything figured out. He is the stud pitcher on his baseball team and all he dreams about is making the high school team with his best friend AJ. As sometimes happens, life throws Peter the first of many curveballs. It is during the final game of the summer baseball season that Peter injures his elbow so severely that his doctors feel sure that he will never be able to play baseball again. With baseball out of the question, Peter struggles with his identity until he throws himself into his other interest: photography.

Peter has learned everything he knows about photography from his grandfather: the town’s go-to wedding photographer. He is hoping to learn more when his grandfather suddenly quits the photography business with no explanation. He even goes so far as to give Peter all of his photography equipment. Soon afterward, Peter begins to notice that his grandfather is exhibiting some very strange behaviors but he can’t accept that something could be wrong with his grandfather until he meets a girl in his photography class named Angelika.

Because both Angelika and Peter know a great deal about photography, they are both thrown into the same advanced photography class. Being the only freshmen in a class of seniors, they hit it off immediately and start working on their projects together. Once Peter starts confiding in Angelika, though, he grows wary about what is happening with his grandfather. She is convinced that his grandfather has what her grandmother had: Alzheimer’s Disease. As Angelika starts pressing him to
accept the truth about his grandfather and his future in baseball, Peter is in for the ultimate battle against all the curveballs life is throwing at him.

**Discussion Question:**
One of the prominent themes in *Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip* is the importance of a moment in time. Specifically, how these moments guide and shape how we live our lives and who we eventually become. Arguably, the defining moment in Peter’s young life was his baseball injury. Discuss how Peter’s life might have changed had the injury not occurred.

Was Peter justified in keeping his injury/future plans secret from his best friend? Compare how you would have handled the situation compared to how AJ reacted.

The book opens with Peter and his grandfather attempting to photograph eagles in flight. Obviously, the picture is one that is difficult to capture. Discuss the significance of this particular photographic subject.

**Link to the Official Book Trailer:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsxo5g2LQp4

**Non-Fiction Book Tie-In:**