

ANTI-RACISM & ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

# Compiled Educator Guides

Supporting every learner  
to thrive in a diverse and just world



Practical resources, reflections, and strategies  
for creating inclusive learning communities



Compiled by Simmy Pahl & Kim Marks

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# ANTI-RACISM & ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

Supporting every learner to thrive in a diverse and just world

Racism is a barrier to student success. As educators, we have a responsibility to ensure every child feels seen, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

This work supports School District 71's commitment to equity and inclusion and aligns with the BC Core Competencies: Personal & Social Awareness · Positive Personal & Cultural Identity · Social Responsibility

EVERY CHILD. EVERY DAY. BELONGS.



## 1. START WITH OURSELVES

- Check your own biases and assumptions—this is ongoing work.
- Be willing to feel uncomfortable, listen deeply, and grow.
- “Not noticing” race does not eliminate bias. We must “clean our lenses” to see children and families clearly.



## 2. BE A VOCAL ALLY

- Teachers have a responsibility to speak up and act on behalf of all students.
- Silence can unintentionally support inequality.
- Model how to challenge unfairness in respectful, age-appropriate ways.



## 3. MOVE BEYOND “COLOUR BLINDNESS”

- Saying “I don’t see colour” can diminish children’s identities and lived experiences.
- Instead, foster appreciative awareness: notice, name, and celebrate differences.



## 4. CHILDREN NOTICE AND SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

- Children naturally observe racial differences and have a strong sense of fairness.
- They learn from what adults say—and what we avoid saying.
- Turn their questions into teachable moments. Respond simply, honestly, and respectfully.



## 5. WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN



Understand that appearance does not determine value. Every person is worthy and belongs.



Recognize that unfair treatment because of race is wrong.



Build early skills to interrupt bias and stand up for others.



Develop confidence in their own identity and respect for others.



## 6. CREATING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

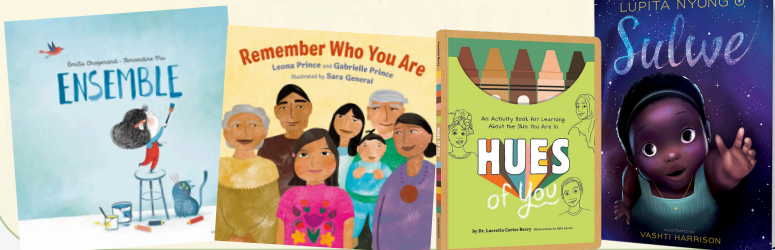
Make diversity visible, normal, and valued.

### IN YOUR MATERIALS

Include books with diverse protagonists and authentic stories. Offer crayons, paints, and materials in a range of skin tones. Use images that reflect real families, including multicultural identities.

### IN YOUR CLASSROOM CULTURE

Invite and respect how families describe their identities. Provide language for children to talk about themselves and others. Integrate equity messages into everyday routines—not just special lessons.



## 7. TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Use children’s comments and questions as entry points.
- Respond with curiosity and clarity, not avoidance.
- Revisit conversations if needed—learning is ongoing.
- If you are unsure of how to respond, reflect, talk with someone you trust, and return to the children with a thoughtful response.
- Collaborate with colleagues and families.

## THE BIG PICTURE

By breaking the silence and engaging openly, we build empathy, understanding, and connection. We help children make sense of complex social messages and lay the foundation for lifelong inclusion and social responsibility.

WHEN WE TEACH FOR EQUITY, WE BUILD A BETTER WORLD—TOGETHER.

# Bored? Worried? Sad? Angry? Anxious? Proud? Peaceful? Loving?

## A guide to using books about feelings and emotions in your classroom



Bored? Worried? Sad? Angry? Anxious? Proud? Peaceful? Loving? These are common feelings and emotions children encounter as they grow and mature, and picture books can help children learn to recognize and navigate them. These books offer young readers a unique opportunity to better understand their feelings and emotions and figure out how to deal with them. The illustrations allow children to see and name their emotions, while the words allow them to understand the situations characters go through. Together, words and pictures open up important topics for social and emotional growth.

The activities in this guide can help younger readers to understand and to address their feelings and emotions through enjoyable reading, writing, drawing, and speaking about appealing picture books.

## Reading and Responding

1. As you read the story, stop several times along the way to discuss what the characters are feeling. Predict what you think will happen next. What clues did you use to make those predictions? Then continue reading to find out.
2. What is the main idea? Why do you think the story is important?
3. How was the main character feeling at the beginning and the end of the book? What helped the character to change? How did you see this reflected in the images and text?
4. Have you ever felt the same way as one of the characters in the story? What did you do? Tell your story.
5. Imagine that you are one of the characters. Retell the story from their point of view, telling how you feel.
6. With one or more friends, act out the story. Then talk about what each character is feeling.
7. Find an illustration in the book that uses colors to show how a character feels. Explain how the color works with the words to show feelings.

## Drawing and Writing

1. Draw a split picture. On one side, draw the main character at the beginning of the book; on the other side, draw the character at the end of the book. Use speech bubbles to write what the character would say about his or her feelings. How did these feelings change? Share your split pictures.
2. Has someone like a parent, sibling, teacher, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or friend helped you deal with your feelings? Tell how that person helped you. Here are some ideas to write about:
  - ❖ How I learned not to worry so much.
  - ❖ I used to be nervous when...
  - ❖ I am not bored anymore because...
  - ❖ How I show that I love \_\_\_\_\_ (put a person or pet's name).
3. What advice could you give to one of the characters in the story? Write a note to that character.
4. In many books, colors and big print help show how the character feels. Find some examples that show this. For example, when a character is sad, the picture might use gray and black colors. Or when a character is angry, the picture might use red. The words may be very large to show a strong feeling. After looking at some examples of how color shows feelings, draw a picture showing how you feel today. Give your picture a title, and think about what font to use.

5. Imagine that you could have a conversation about feelings with one of the characters in the book you've read. What would you say to them? How would the character answer you? Write your imaginary conversation about feelings.
6. Write a wordless picture book about feelings. Maybe a character changes from sad to happy, from angry to calm, from worried to carefree, from bored to amused, or from nervous to relaxed. Make three or more pictures. Put your pictures in order. With a partner, take turns telling your story. Use these questions to guide you.

- ❖ How does the character feel when the story begins?
- ❖ What happens to cause the character's feelings to change?
- ❖ How does the character feel at the end of the story?



# An Educator's Guide to

PICTURE BOOK

OUR SKIN

A FIRST CONVERSATION™ ABOUT RACE

MEGAN MADISON, JESSICA RALLI, & ISABEL ROXAS

BOARD BOOK

OUR SKIN

A FIRST CONVERSATION™ ABOUT RACE

MEGAN MADISON, JESSICA RALLI, & ISABEL ROXAS



## Dear Educator or Caregiver,

The **First Conversations** series is developed by experts in the fields of early childhood and activism against injustice. This topic-driven board book series offers clear, concrete language and beautiful imagery that young children can grasp and adults can leverage for further discussion. While young children are avid observers and questioners of their world, adults often shut down or postpone conversations on complicated topics because it's hard to know where to begin. Research shows that talking about issues like race and gender from the age of two not only helps children understand what they see, but also increases self-awareness and self-esteem and allows them to recognize and confront things that are unfair, like discrimination and prejudice.

With this in mind, this guide for ***OUR SKIN: A FIRST CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE*** is designed to equip educators with some additional tools to introduce this topic responsibly. The book is a valuable resource, but it is up to the skilled educator to apply their expertise in **anti-bias curriculum and pedagogy** so that this first conversation with young readers will be beneficial for all. In this guide, you'll find:

- **Testimonials and practice for *OUR SKIN***
- **Tips and resources for family engagement**
- **Resources for educators**
- **Conversation starters and sample activities for the classroom**
- **Tips and resources for handling pushback**

Thank you so much for sharing ***OUR SKIN: A FIRST CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE*** with your young readers and for doing the work to help make these important conversations happen. You are helping to build a more equitable future for all.

Sincerely,

**PENGUIN YOUNG READERS SCHOOL & LIBRARY TEAM**



This guide was written in collaboration with **Vera Ahigya** (née Corbett). Vera was born in Germany and raised in El Paso, Texas, with her wonderful mother and amazing grandparents. Originally a pre-med student, Vera realized her calling as an educator at Austin College in Sherman, Texas, where she majored in history and psychology and earned her MA in education. Vera has taught kindergarten and first grade for the last sixteen years in Austin, Boston, and Brooklyn. Vera's online presence is dedicated to influencing other educators by spreading her vast knowledge and love of diverse children's books. Vera's unwavering commitment to social justice and diversity is also the focal point of her professional development presentations for other educators. Vera lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband, Lonell, and her dog, Mozi.

# PRAISE FOR OUR SKIN

## FROM EDUCATORS:

“Babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-aged children can use this book to begin or continue conversations about race . . . It provides developmental insight by using direct language to explain the ‘why and how’ of having conversations about race, race-related observations, family diversity, identity terms, stereotypes, as well as prejudice, race, racism, empowerment, and activism.”

–MAKAI KELLOGG, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR  
AND EQUITY AND DIVERSITY COORDINATOR AT SCHOOL FOR  
FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

“Reading *Our Skin* to my grade 2s has **transformed my reading aloud sessions** into a phenomenal race conversation. The easy examples of stereotypes and prejudice gave my students ideas to learn and speak up against unfair practices in a form of activism. I had such an **empowering** discussion with them!”

–SHAMEER @SHAMEER\_READS, 2ND-GRADE TEACHER

“One question I’ve encountered this school year is ‘Why is there racism?’, which this book has a clear and concise answer to. The book dives deep into a variety of topics, from skin color to combatting racism, while encouraging readers to embrace their skin and race and actively participate in antiracist efforts. This book is **clear and easy to understand**. It will answer many questions you or your readers have about race, but you should be prepared to answer new questions that may arise from the book, as well!”

–GABRIELLE BRUNK @MRS.BRUNKSREADALOUDS, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

## REVIEWS:

★ “This accessibly written, adroit primer prompts the youngest readers to consider how skin tone relates to race and ethnicity, societal treatment, and justice. **An ideal conversation starter for any child.**”

–PUBLISHERS WEEKLY  
(STARRED REVIEW)

★ “An accessible, **important** addition to any anti-racist bookshelf.”

–KIRKUS  
(STARRED REVIEW)

★ “This timely book is **essential** for all collections.”

–SCHOOL LIBRARY  
CONNECTION  
(STARRED REVIEW)

★ “Children and adults can come together over this book, which takes apart the meanings of race and skin color at the foundational level. It’s **a stepping stone on the path to understanding what it means to be human**, with cheerful art and easy language.”

–SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL  
(STARRED REVIEW)

# Family engagement tips:



Proactive, ongoing communication with families is essential to equitable anti-bias educational practice.

1

**Don't assume any prior knowledge.** In every community, there is a wide range of experience with anti-racist theory and practice. And it can be helpful to remember that most adults in the United States have not had access to full and accurate information about race and racism in their homes or schools, even in communities with high levels of socioeconomic and educational privilege. It is your responsibility as the educator to get to know your community and provide families with the information they need to understand your anti-bias teaching practices. To best support children and families in deepening their understanding, start by reflecting on your own learning. How did you learn about anti-racism? What has that process felt like? Where do you go to support your ongoing learning?

2

**Communicate.** In an ideal world, we are proactive and consistent in our integration of anti-racism into our practice as educators—from curriculum to pedagogy, classroom management, and family engagement. We don't wait for Black History Month or a high-profile news story to begin talking about race. That's why it's important to start engaging families in these conversations early and often. This will help to build trust and shared understanding and prepare you for more challenging conversations later in the year.

3

**Empower families as collaborators.** Families can be fantastic advocates for and contributors to high-quality anti-bias education. Get to know the families in your community. Who has experience, expertise, and/or passion around social justice? How can you work together?

4

**Take good care of yourself.** Talking about race and racism can be joyful and healing; it can also be stressful and challenging. We know from history and our own experience that when doing anti-racist work, we can expect a degree of conflict, emotion, and resistance. And we know that growth and change takes time; one brave conversation is just one touchstone in an ongoing developmental journey. As a leader in your classroom and school, you have a responsibility to know and communicate your own boundaries with clarity and kindness. You can only be an excellent educator for the children in your classroom when your own needs are met. Build a supportive community around you. Treat yourself with love and care when things are easy and also when they are hard. Remember that the work is ongoing and that you are never alone.

5

**Ground and reflect.** Leadership is challenging. It entails taking strategic risks in our personal and professional lives, and that can feel scary. For example, if you are experiencing pushback from families, it can be helpful to breathe deeply and put the feedback in perspective. How many families in your classroom feel that way? How many families in your classroom support your approach? How does race play into it? Which families is your school responsive to? Why? What are the real stakes for you personally and professionally? What are the stakes for the children in your classroom? What are you afraid of? Why? How can you gather the support around you that you need so that you can feel confident about doing the right thing, even if it's still very scary?

Establishing a two-way conversation with parents and caregivers on the goals of your classroom is a great way to build community. Below is an example of what that kind of communication might look and sound like. Please feel free to edit this letter as needed. You know your community best.

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR AN EDITABLE VERSION.

## DEAR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS,

This school year is off to a fantastic start. I am very grateful for the opportunity to get to know your child this year. I have already learned that CHILD'S NAME loves SOMETHING THAT CHILD IS INTERESTED IN. That's so cool!

I believe that children thrive when there is a strong relationship between home and school. That means that I am committed to working together. I will be honest with you about what's happening in the classroom and I will answer any questions you have about what we teach, how we teach it, and why. I care about your family's values and will always make time to listen. I promise that I will apply my professional expertise in child development to being the best teacher I can be for your child.

Our school mission statement says . . . INSERT TEXT RELEVANT TO DEI COMMITMENTS

That means I have a responsibility to help my students grapple with topics like race and racism in developmentally appropriate ways. Research shows that most young children in the United States begin internalizing our society's pervasive pro-white/anti-Black biases before they even enter kindergarten. As a NAME YOUR RACIAL IDENTITY teacher, I've been reflecting on the messages I got about race when I was a child. My earliest race-related memory happened when I was X years old. I remember feeling NAME 1-3 FEELINGS.

*What do you remember learning about race as a child? How old were you?*

Here are some resources that I've been using to learn more:

- This infographic created by The Children's Community School summarizes that long research article and indicates the developmental readiness of young children to have conversations about race.
- This PBS Kids website has tons of helpful videos and articles to support us grown-ups in learning how to have those conversations. I also really love the resources provided by the National Museum of African American History and Culture.
- Because these conversations will sound different in each of your families, this NPR article focuses specifically on how white parents can talk to their kids about race, and this one talks about why all of us should be talking to children about social identities.

Throughout the year, we will engage in these important conversations through the use of art, lessons, and books. One important book that we will use to anchor our conversation is Our Skin by Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli. We have chosen this book because it aligns with our school's approach to anti-bias education and the position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. There are copies available at our library, and I am available to talk about any questions that come up as we read it together as a community. I know that big feelings may arise during these conversations, too, and that is okay.

Please join us for a community read-aloud and discussion on: INSERT DETAILS

With love always,

**YOUR NAME**



# Why is it important to talk about race and racism with young children?

**Racial “colorblindness”** is a dominant approach to parenting and education in the United States. This framework perpetuates the status quo of white dominance by enlisting whole communities to participate in the act of refusing to “see” or recognize someone’s race. In a school community, it can sound like “Oh, I don’t see you as a Black person, I don’t see your color at all.”

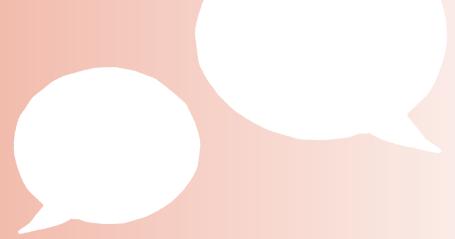
The problem is that communities can’t address what they can’t acknowledge. We cannot end racism when we are unwilling or unable to see the brilliance of people of color, the legacies of resistance and resilience that we are a part of, and the real harm that racism has caused—both structurally and intimately—in the lives of the people we love and in our own. It is simply unethical to pretend as if the issues that happen to people of color are nonexistent or not important.

Furthermore, when we don’t talk about race and racism from an early age, children come to their own conclusions, which often include bias and stereotypes because of the world we live in. Many families, particularly Black, brown, or Indigenous families or families of color, do not have the privilege of not talking about race. They cannot go a day in America oblivious to the ways that race is affecting them. In order to have students better understand the world they live in, it is a necessity that we talk about race. As a trusted grown-up in their life, your role in this conversation is so important! Here are some reasons why:

- **Children are noticing skin color, race, and racism.** Babies notice differences in skin color just like they notice all kinds of human differences. Research also shows that most children begin to experience the impact of systemic racism well before they enter kindergarten.
- **We can help prevent them from developing racial bias.** Without thoughtful intervention, it’s likely that children will internalize the pro-white/anti-Black bias that characterizes the dominant culture in the United States.
- **Children deserve support to navigate their feelings about race and racism.** These conversations can bring up a range of feelings—from joy and pride to confusion and anger. We can help children process these emotions in healthy ways.
- **We need their great ideas on how to change the world!** Our movements for racial, social, and economic justice need the clarity, curiosity, courage, and imagination that young children have to offer.



# WHERE DO WE START AS EDUCATORS?

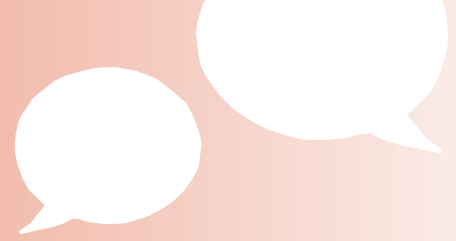


To talk about race and racism with young children, it's important to start or continue the work of understanding it yourself so you are comfortable breaking it down. Here are some tips and resources to get started.

- Learn about systemic racism and practice explaining it in your own words. This will help you find the right words to explain it to young children and follow their lead when they have questions.
- To learn more about what systemic racism is and how it manifests historically and today, here are a few recommended resources for grown-ups to get you started:
  - [What Is Systemic Racism?](#) (videos) by Race Forward
  - [Racism 101](#) by Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
  - [Allegories on Race and Racism](#) by Dr. Camara Jones
  - [Equal Justice Initiative](#) (museum and website)
  - [Racial Equity Tools](#) (glossary)
- Notice and address racism as it manifests in your classroom, in your own life, in the lives of your students, and in your community. Create a school culture where you continue to discuss this openly with your children and families. This will help them do the same as they grow.
- To get more info and resources on anti-racist professional development, check out these organizations:
  - [Bank Street's Center on Culture, Race & Equity](#)
  - [National SEED Project](#)
  - [Center for Racial Justice in Education](#)
  - [First Conversations](#)



# HOW DO WE START WITH STUDENTS?



Like every other subject, teaching about race and racism in developmentally appropriate ways means that you need to understand where your children are at, and then build from there. Remember, you have permission to talk to young children not just about diversity and differences, but also about injustice and activism.

- Listen and inquire first so you can build on your students' prior knowledge. You may be surprised by how much young children are already thinking about race, and how much they already know!
- Ask families about how they talk about race, racism, and anti-racism at home. Using the appropriate terminology when describing someone's identity is important. You may find that different people prefer different terms to describe themselves. That's OK! If you're ever unsure, just politely ask.
- We can introduce and explore identity terms during play, while reading books, and in classroom discussions and activities. Equipping children with accurate racial vocabulary enables them to be able to talk with us about their ideas. And we want children to feel comfortable talking with us about their ideas regarding race so that we can build off of their existing knowledge and curiosities and address any misconceptions they may already be developing. When facilitating classroom conversations, it is important to remember that each person is not a representative of that racial or ethnic group. That's why we encourage you to seek out anti-racist, abolitionist, anti-bias, and culturally relevant/responsive curriculum guidance over multicultural or "tourist curriculum" approaches to embracing diversity in the classroom.
- Create classroom spaces that reflect the diversity of your community and our world. For example, ensuring your classroom or home space is full of various skin color art materials allows your students to feel confident in their ability to represent themselves in their work. One shade of brown or beige isn't enough for each child to accurately showcase their skin color. Encourage students to match shades to their hands.
- When race comes up, don't shut down the conversation. This sends the message that there is something wrong with talking about race or having a darker skin color. Instead, you can model positive conversations around race so children know they can share observations, ask questions, and feel supported.



## Conversation Starter:

# WHERE DO WE GET OUR SKIN COLOR?\*

Our skin color is made up of melanin. Melanin protects our skin from the sun! People have different amounts of melanin. People who have a lot of melanin have various shades of brown skin. People who have less melanin have various shades of peach or beige skin. People who have very little or no melanin at all have albinism.

**Find a mirror and take a look at your skin.**

- What do you notice?
- Do you have freckles? Moles? Scars?
- What color is your skin? If you had to give your skin color a name, what would you name your skin color?
- What skin colors do you see in our classroom? In the neighborhood? In the books in our classroom?
- How much melanin do you think you have? Everybody has just the right amount for them!



## Activity: Exploring Skin Colors

In this activity, children explore differences in skin color by mixing paints to make a shade that matches their own. This is a great opportunity for getting to know children's comfort with conversations about skin color, human differences, and race. It will also give you a sense of what racial vocabulary they have for talking about race and racism. We encourage you to use this activity as a way to get to know each child's racial identity development and surface the questions they have about skin color and race.

In too many early childhood classrooms, this activity is where the conversation ends. Instead, we hope that you use this activity as a springboard for ongoing and deeper conversations about race, racism, and anti-racism with your students and families.

### Materials needed:

- Tempera paint in red, black, white, and yellow
- Mixing cups or bowls
- Paintbrushes
- Water

**Process:** Using a bowl or small mixing cup, mix small amounts of different colors in order to find the paint combination that most matches your own skin color. Be patient and take your time. Some skin colors have more yellow. Some skin colors have more red. Some skin colors need very little white. Some skin colors need more black. When you have mixed and mixed and found your skin color, use the paint to paint a self-portrait. Be sure you showcase all of your beautiful features.

**Note to educators:** *Be sure to prepare yourself for any comment/question students might say or ask. Keep in mind that by the time children are entering kindergarten, it's likely that they've begun to internalize some of the pro-white/anti-Black bias in our society, and that may come out in the choices they make about their portraits and in the conversations that happen throughout the activity.*

*For example, children sometimes say things that are developmentally appropriate responses to new experiences and may seem offensive to our adult ears. We can redirect these comments with a curious question such as, "I'm wondering why you think that brown is a gross color. Can you tell me more about that?" Don't forget to follow up on the questions and conversations that emerge during the activity in the coming day, weeks, and months. These can be the beginnings of deeper explorations of the nature and scope of anti-Black bias with young children.*

*They also might express discomfort, confusion, or shame. Try to remember that we can support their creativity while also encouraging them to represent themselves accurately. Slow down and try talking about what we love about who they are, as they are in real life. This might sound like an affirmation ("I think your dark brown skin is beautiful. What do you love about your skin?") or a boundary ("That's a beautiful color of brown, but it doesn't match your peachy-colored skin. It's not okay for white people to pretend that they are Black or brown when they're not. Let's work together to find the right shade for you").*

**Alternate activity:** If you have skin tone shades of construction paper, you can make a skin tone collage. Or, if you have skin tone crayons or markers, you can use those to create a self-portrait, or to draw a classmate.

## Conversation Starter:

# WHAT GROUPS DO YOU BELONG TO?\*

Now that you know more about your skin color, think about what racial and ethnic groups you belong to. Some people belong to only one group. Some people belong to many groups. Some people have a strong sense of what it means to be a member of that group and have clear ways of talking about their group membership. Some of us are unsure, or even unaware, of our group membership and will need additional support to develop a positive racial identity and learn appropriate ways to talk about racial groups. There are many more. Talk with your family/caregivers. What is your racial or ethnic group?

- Black
- African American
- Asian
- White
- Latinx/e/a/o
- Indigenous
- Arab
- Pacific Islander
- Biracial

Do you belong to any of these groups? How do you know? What are some other groups that you belong to?

## Activity: Exploring Our World

Find or make a map of your children's world. For younger children, that may look like a map of the school or of the neighborhood around your school. For older children, you might use a map of the city, state, or country. Try naming as many places as you can. Engage with families to locate where they live on the map. Here are some questions you can ask about the groups of people who may live where you live.

- What are the largest groups of people where we live? Why?
- What are the smallest groups of people where we live? Why?
- What are the languages spoken where we live? Why?
- How can we honor and learn more about the Indigenous/Native peoples who call this place home?
- What are the places that make up your community? Compare the places in your community to a friend. Are your lists the same or different?
- Who are the important people in your community? Why are these people important to you?
- With a trusted adult, take a walk through your neighborhood. What do you notice? Who are the people you see? Do you see people who look like you in your neighborhood? Do you hear your language spoken in your neighborhood? How does that make you feel? What questions do you have?

**Note to educators:** *Racial identity is a social identity, meaning that it is about an individual's membership in a racial group inasmuch as it is about how that person feels about their group status internally. These group-based identities are influenced by the impact of a racial hierarchy in the United States which erases the status of Indigenous people, places the status of Black people at the bottom, and positions white people (as a group) above all people of color. This is so unfair and illogical, it can be confusing and upsetting for kids to learn about. There is also so much joy, community, and pride that children can access when they have developed a positive racial identity. Each and every child needs and deserves support from trusted adults to develop a deep sense of their own identity, worth, and belonging. This process necessitates that children understand how race functions in the United States and have accurate and appropriate language for talking about race.*

*Please also keep in mind that the categories of race are always changing. The number of categories, the names of the categories, and who is considered a member of these categories have all changed over time. And it is likely that they will continue to change. These categories are also highly context-dependent, so pay attention to the racial and ethnic groups in your community and the language they use to describe themselves today.*

## Conversation Starter:

# WHAT IS RACE?\*

Did you know that race is a made-up idea? A long time ago, Europeans invented a way of sorting people into groups based on our skin color. They put the groups in order and said that white people were the best. That was not true or fair at all, but a lot of people believed it, and still believe it. Even though race is made up, it's important to talk about because people of color are still treated unfairly. What have you noticed? What questions do you have?

### Activity: Racism can be \_\_\_\_\_

"Racism can be a rule, like when someone says only friends with white skin can play. Racism can be an idea, like thinking princesses only have blonde hair."

What are some other examples of rules or ideas that you can think of that are racist? Racism can be when \_\_\_\_\_?

Try to place your examples in the chart below. You can use chart paper or a whiteboard if you're doing the exercise with the whole group, or print it out as a graphic organizer if you are working in smaller groups or as individuals.

<b>Institutional Racism (Rules &amp; Patterns)</b> "only friends with white skin can play" "how there aren't as many books written about people of color"	<b>Interpersonal Racism (Friends)</b> "calling a person of color a mean name" "if the same friend always has to play the bad guy"
<b>Internalized Racism (Feelings)</b> "thinking princesses only have blonde hair"	<b>Ideological Racism (Ideas)</b> "when people believe this untrue story"
<b>Not Sure</b>	



**Note to educators:** *It's okay if you find overlaps or if there are examples that are hard to place. The goal is to open a conversation about examples of racism that your students know about or have experienced. Over time, you can revisit the chart and deepen your collective understanding by adding in your new knowledge. Try to make sure there's a balance between examples of racism that are far away in place or time and examples that are closer to home. Be brave; the chart is most useful as an organizing tool when the examples of racism are examples that are within your locus of control: yourselves, your classroom, and your school community.*

## Conversation Starter:

# WHAT IS RACISM?\*

Have you ever heard the word “racism”? What do you think it means? Remember when we talked about how race is a made-up idea? When people believe untrue stories about race, that is called racism. For example, when people believe that people of color should not have the same rights and privileges as white people, that’s racism. We learned in *Our Skin* that racism is also the things people do, and the unfair rules they make so that white people get more power and are treated better than everybody else. There are a lot of different ways that racism shows up in our world. Racism has affected our school systems, how we earn and spend money, what laws are passed (or not passed), and how our communities are protected (or not). It can show up in the things people say, the way we behave, and the ways our cities and towns are built.

Racism can even show up in our school library! For a long time, there have not been as many books written about or by people of color. That means that many of the people telling the stories, or the people in the stories, don’t represent all of the many different kinds of people in our country. Let’s take a look at our classroom/school library and see what we find out.

### Activity: Diversity Audit for Educators

Historically, the children’s book publishing industry has privileged white authors and narratives, which can impact the diversity of your own classroom or school library. Take a look at the [infographic](#) of diversity in children’s books from Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen from 2018. Now review the [Cooperative Children’s Book Center School of Education report](#) that analyzes children’s books by and/or about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from 2018 to 2021. What do you notice about the types of books that were published in 2018 and up to 2021? If you were to look at the books in your home/school/classroom library, what would your diversity collection look like? Whose stories are missing? How can you work to have more representation in your library?

### Activity: Library Audit for Students

You can create your own library quest using the following prompts. Allow your students to search your classroom library as an activity, or just keep a clipboard with this checklist near your library or where you read aloud to the group, so students can check them off as they read daily. Use the completed checklist in a class discussion and ask students to talk about what they noticed and whether there was diverse representation in their classroom library. Add their ideas to the checklist!

\*For younger children, try searching for one prompt a day, or lay out 5–10 books at circle time and ask children what they notice and if they can find any of these characters or stories.

[CLICK HERE FOR PRINTABLE VERSION OF THIS ACTIVITY.](#)

Let’s look at our library! See if you can find...

#### Authors:

- A book written by a Black, Indigenous, or person of color
- A book with a neurodivergent author
- A book by an author with a disability
- A book written by an LGBTQ+ author
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Book Covers:

- A book with Black, Indigenous, or person of color on the cover
- A book with a person with a disability on the cover
- A book with people with different kinds of bodies on the cover, including fat bodies
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Stories:

- A story with a Black, Indigenous, or person of color as the main character
- A story about a group of kids who are mostly non-white
- A story about a child with LGBTQ+ parents or caregivers
- A story with a trans or nonbinary character
- A story about Black joy!
- A story with Black, Indigenous, or people of color that is not a history book
- A story with LGBTQ+ characters that is not only about their coming-out experience
- A story with Latinx/e/a/o characters that is not about immigration
- A story with BIPOC characters that is not in an urban environment
- A story featuring a multiracial family
- A story with a person or family experiencing homelessness
- A story with a family member who is incarcerated
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Characters:

- A character who is Black, Indigenous, or a person of color
- A character wearing a hijab
- A character with a physical disability
- A neurodivergent character
- An LGBTQ+ character
- A character who is a refugee
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Languages, Cultures, and Traditions:

- A book in a different language than English
- A book that includes a religious tradition or holiday you didn't know about
- A character that wears religious dress or adornments that you haven't seen before
- A story set outside the USA
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflection Questions:

- Did you see characters that look like you in our library?
- Did you see books written or illustrated by people who look like you in our library?
- Did you see stories that felt familiar to you and your experience?
- What other stories would you like to see in our library?
- What other kinds of characters would you like to see in our library?
- What do you think we can do to make our library better?



**Note to educators:** Intersectionality is a big word, and this activity is a great opportunity to point out that we all have lots of identities that combine to make up who we are and inform the kinds of experiences we have in the world. Keep in mind that stories about other identities, like having a disability or being LGBTQ+, have also traditionally excluded people of color for a long time. As you are looking together for stories about diverse groups of people, actively notice together whether those identities include or exclude Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

As you engage in this activity, big feelings might come to the surface, especially if some of your students are naming for the first time something that they've likely already noticed—that their identities and stories are not being told in most of the children's books they have read or seen. You can support them by acknowledging that it's unfair and that it doesn't feel good. This activity is also an opportunity to begin to explore the feelings associated with privilege for students who do see themselves reflected in your classroom library.

Seeing yourself represented in stories is really important, and that is why there are lots of people working really hard, all the time, to bring more diversity to children's publishing and other media. You can do it, too! Follow up this activity with a group letter-writing project to children's editors and publishers, your local public library book selection committee, and/or whoever decides which books to purchase for your classroom and school library. In the meantime, engage families by creating a Diverse Books Wishlist together with your class, and asking families to donate books from the list to your library if they can.

## Conversation Starter:

# WHAT CAN WE DO?\*

We've been learning a lot about some things that are really unfair about race and racism. Did you know that for a very long time, and even right now, people are working to make things more fair? They are working for racial justice. One of the biggest movements for racial justice right now is the Black Lives Matter movement. Have you heard that before? Where? What questions do you have?

The Black Lives Matter movement was founded by three Black women—Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors. Together with other activists, it has grown as a movement for liberation guided by principles that celebrate the power and diversity of Black people and center women as well as queer and trans people. Black Lives Matter is important for so many reasons, and there are lots of things people believe when they say “Black Lives Matter.” (Learn more about the 13 Guiding Principles in the book *What We Believe: A Black Lives Matter Activity Book* by Laleña Garcia, illustrated by Caryn Davidson).

Do you remember something we talked about that was unfair? How do you feel when something is unfair? What do you think we can do or say when something is unfair?

### Activity: That's Not Right!

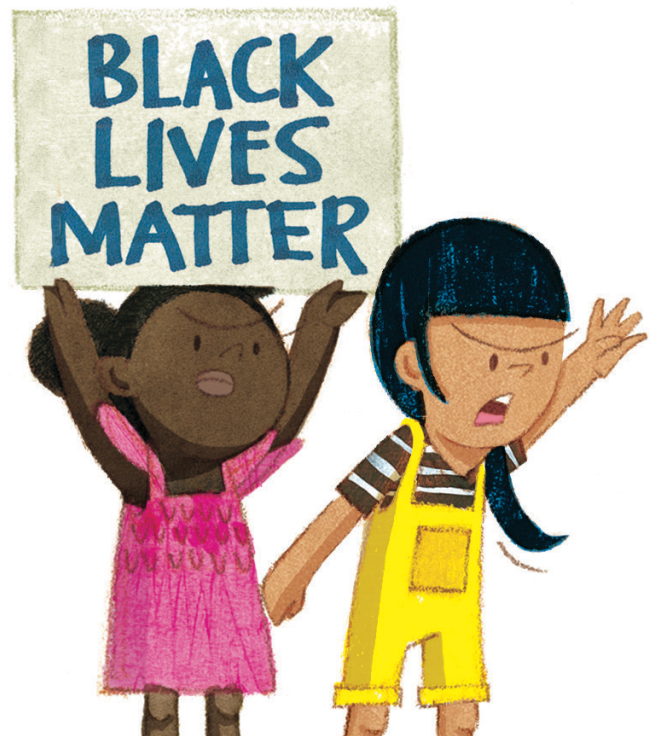
Start by doing some research! Look at pictures of other protest signs, images, and marches. What do they say? Who is at those marches? Do you see people who look like you? Do you see children? Grown-ups? What else do you notice?

Then, you can make your own art. Find different materials that you can use to make a sign, mural, or poster. Use bright colors and big print so everyone can read your words or see your drawing. Think about what you believe, the things that need to change, and what your dreams are for what our world could be.

You can start from a blank page, or use the following prompts:

**FREEDOM IS** \_\_\_\_\_  
**JUSTICE IS** \_\_\_\_\_  
**PEACE IS** \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOGETHER WE CAN** \_\_\_\_\_  
**CHANGE LOOKS LIKE** \_\_\_\_\_  
**I BELIEVE** \_\_\_\_\_  
**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Create space to share your protest signs in a way that makes sense for your space and community. For younger children, you can use stuffed animals paired with signs to create a play space where children can explore and role-play marching together for racial justice.



**Note to Educators:** *Get engaged! Young children learn more by watching what you do than from what you say about your beliefs. Wherever you live, there is probably a group of people already working together to advance racial justice and advocate for anti-racist policy changes. Find them and get involved! You can start by inviting a local community organizer to your classroom to talk about what they do.*

*If you're not sure where to start, consider getting involved in Black Lives Matter (BLM) organizing and activism or join a local chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). If you're an educator, it's the perfect time to start planning for next year's Black Lives Matter Week of Action in Schools. One great way to get started is to make some time to learn together about the thirteen principles that ground our current movement for racial justice and then take action to advance the BREATHE Act with your family or community.*

*You can learn more about the principles of Black Lives Matter and ways to get engaged here:*

- [What We Believe: A Black Lives Matter Activity Book](#) by Laleña Garcia, illustrated by Caryn Davidson
- [Black Lives Matter at School](#)
- [The Movement for Black Lives](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#)
- [Black Lives Matter Week of Action in Schools](#)
- [The BREATHE Act](#)



## What to do if you are worried about pushback from parents, caregivers, or school administrators:

Every community is different, and you know your community best. But no matter where you are, we think it's reasonable to expect some questions or pushback. And it's also pretty reasonable to expect some support and encouragement. There is both a great hunger for resources like this from people who are ready and willing to engage in these conversations with young children and also a great deal of misinformation in our society.

One strategy we recommend is talking to your colleagues and communities about these topics early and often. That way, by the time you're sharing these books, it shouldn't be a surprise to your community that these books are aligned with your educational approach, and the reactions and perspectives of your community shouldn't be a surprise to you. Educator and activist Laleña Garcia recommends looking to your school or organization's mission statement. If it talks about equity, building community, or social justice, then sharing these books and ideas are directly tied to that mission.

As an educator of young children, it can be helpful to remember that it's part of your job to give children the resources they need to learn about and affirm their own identities, to discover and celebrate the diversity of their communities, to recognize and talk about unfairness and injustice, and, finally, to learn how to collectively act against injustice. Take some time to read the [2019 Position Statement on Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education](#) released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### Some general tips include:

- Before the conversations, get clear about what you believe and why so that you can communicate that clearly, calmly, and concisely.
- Start the conversation by getting curious. Genuinely inquire about caregivers' concerns and questions. Listen. Then listen more. Try to understand the underlying fears, beliefs, and values that are being communicated.
- Be flexible, creative, and collaborative about finding solutions while also holding firm to your boundaries and professional obligations.
- Make space and get support. Try to remember that these are ongoing conversations. Change does not happen in one conversation or with one read-aloud. If you can, try to make some more space for the conversation and reach out to get support. You cannot do this work alone. We all need and deserve support.
- Let go of perfectionism. Try something. Debrief. Then try again, incorporating what you learned.

## Other Resources

We also recommend the organizations and resources below that can provide guidance and support:

[NCTE Intellectual Freedom Center](#)

[NCAC Book Censorship Toolkit: Kids' Right to Read Action Kit](#)

[NCAC and NCTE Responding to Book Challenges Handbook for Educators](#)

[Penguin Young Reader Censorship Resources](#)

# MEET THE CREATORS:



**Jessica Ralli** (coauthor) is the Coordinator of Early Literacy Programs at Brooklyn Public Library, where she develops programming for BPL's award-winning First Five Years initiative. She received her MA in early childhood special education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and previously taught in schools and childcare centers. She won the 2020 Library Journal Movers and Shakers Award for her advocacy work in libraries.



**Megan Pamela Ruth Madison** (coauthor) holds an MS in early childhood education from Dominican University and is currently pursuing her PhD at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy. She works as a trainer for the Center for Racial Justice in Education, Bank Street's Center Culture, Race & Equity, and the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, facilitating workshops for teachers on race, gender, and sexuality.



**Isabel Roxas** is a storyteller and graphic artist. She loves to draw and write stories about curious misfits, young characters who defy the odds, and funny animals. Isabel is a member of The Society of Illustrators, SCBWI, and Ang INK (The Philippine Illustrators Guild).





# LESSON PLAN



## Identity, Representation & Belonging: "More Than Peach"



**Date:** May 26, 2025



**Grade:** Primary (K-3)



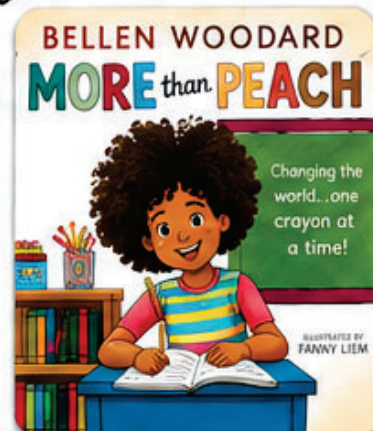
**Subject:** Social Studies / Arts



**Topic:**  
Identity, Representation  
& Belonging



**Lesson:**  
More Than Peach



### BIG IDEA

People's identities are shaped by many factors, including culture, family, experiences, and physical characteristics such as skin tone. Representation matters because it helps people feel seen, valued, and included.



### CORE COMPETENCY FOCUS

- Understand that identity is multi-dimensional (e.g., culture, family, interests, appearance).
- Recognize and value diversity in skin tone and identity.
- Reflect on how representation influences belonging and self-worth.
- Express aspects of their own identity in respectful, age-appropriate ways.



### CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

- Explain why stories, symbols, and representations matter in communities.
- Share ideas about personal identity in ways that are respectful and appropriate.
- Use creative processes to represent ideas and experiences.
- Recognize diverse perspectives and experiences.



### LEARNING INTENTIONS (Student-Friendly)

- ♥ I can describe parts of my identity.
- ♥ I can explain why it is important that people see themselves in books and classrooms.
- ♥ I can use art to show who I am in my own way.



### SUCCESS CRITERIA

Students can:

- ✓ Identify at least one aspect of identity (e.g., skin tone, culture, interests, family, strengths)
- ✓ Participate in discussion about representation and belonging.
- ✓ Create a visual representation of identity using provided materials.
- ✓ Respect differences in others' work and ideas.



### INCLUSION & DIFFERENTIATION

- Choice in how identity is represented.
- Multiple materials (drawing, collage, writing)
- No required verbal sharing.

- Supports for fine motor needs.
- Respect for diverse cultural and family contexts.



CREATED BY THE CLASSROOM TEAM: Sarah Coull • Ran Dickman • Stacey Jacobson • Simmy Pahl

## MATERIALS

- More Than Peach (book)
- Paper "identity figure" templates
- Skin tone crayons/markers
- Coloured pencils
- Optional: yarn, fabric scraps, stickers, magazines for collage
- Glue, scissors
- Air dry clay or playdough (optional)



## LESSON SEQUENCE (30–35 MINUTES)

### 1 Introduction & Purpose (2–3 min)

Teacher script: "Today we are reading a story about skin tone, identity, and why it matters that everyone can see themselves in books and classrooms."

Introduce concept: "We are all more than one thing. Identity includes many parts of who we are."

### 2 Read-Aloud (10–12 min)

Read: More Than Peach

Pause for key moments:

- Skin tone crayons
- Feelings of exclusion or inclusion
- Recognition of difference

### 3 Guided Discussion (5–8 min)

- What did the character notice about skin colour and crayons?
- Why is it important that people can find colours that match their skin tone?
- How do you feel when you see someone in a book who looks like you?
- What happens when people are not represented?

Key message: "Representation helps people feel seen, valued, and included."

## 4 IDENTITY ART ACTIVITY: "THIS IS ME FIGURE" (12–15 MIN)

Instruction: "Create a figure that shows who you are. You can include your skin tone, cultural interests, family, personality, or anything important to you."

### Option 1: Paper Figure Template



### Option 2: Personal Replica (using air dry clay or playdough)



★ Identity can be shown in many ways!

Students may include: skin tone • cultural symbols/clothing • interests & hobbies • strengths/values words that describe them • colours/patterns that represent identity

## OUR CLASSROOM CELEBRATES IDENTITY & BELONGING



CRAYONS AND COLORED PENCILS



STORY TIME & DISCUSSION



CLASS COMMUNITY MURAL

### 5 Sharing & Reflection (5–8 min)

Optional participation only.

Choose: gallery walk, partner share, or whole group sharing.

Prompts:

- "One part of my identity I showed is..."
- "Something I want others to know about me is..."



### 6 Closing Reflection (2–3 min)

Teacher prompt:

"Today we learned that skin tone and identity are important parts of who we are, and everyone deserves to be represented and included."

Question: What can we do to help everyone feel like they belong in our classroom?



### ASSESSMENT (Formative)

- Participation in discussion
- Understanding of representation and identity
- Ability to express identity through art
- Respect for others' work and perspectives



## TEACHER NOTES

- Avoid colourblind framing ("we are all the same").
- Ensure students are not pressured to disclose personal or sensitive identity information.
- Emphasize choice, agency, and safety in expression.

- Affirm difference as valuable.
- Ensure materials and examples reflect diverse identities.



# Where Are You From? by Yamile Saied Méndez, illustrated by Jaime Kim

## Identities & Themes

- Latinx/e/o/a (Argentinian and Puerto Rican)
- Bi/Multiracial identity or relationships
- Immigration/Migration
- Multigenerational relationships
- Feelings
- Identity safety
- Identity affirmation

## Teacher Reflection Questions

1. Which of your identities might be subjected to microaggressions and why?
2. Which students in your classroom/school might experience daily microaggressions?
3. How can you interrupt and reframe microaggressions directed at you, your colleagues, and your students when you hear them?

## Background Information for Teacher

The girl in the story, born in the United States, gets asked about where she's from, where she's really from. This is so common for second generation American immigrants, biracial/multiracial children, and transracial adoptees.

Many are asked "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" in regards to their race/ethnicity. These types of questions are microaggressions. This is not only an invasion of privacy but can make children, adolescents and even adults feel that they must justify their existence and, in some instances, choose which race/identity/culture they

identify with the most. Being bi/multiracial and bi/multicultural can cause students to feel uncomfortable with their complex identities. It is important to recognize and support students in all of who they are. See also the **Racial Identity/Racial Bias Primer** in the back of this guide.

**Microaggressions:** "The everyday slights, indignities, put-downs, and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations, or those who are marginalized, experience in their day to day interactions with people. Microaggressions often appear to be a compliment but contain a metacommunication or a hidden insult to the target groups in which it is delivered. People who engage in microaggressions are ordinary folks who experience themselves as good, moral, decent individuals. Microaggressions occur because they are outside the level of conscious awareness of the perpetrator." (Derald Wing Sue, What Is a Microaggression? <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/what-is-a-microaggression>)

The author's first name, Yamile is pronounced sha-MEE-lay. It's important to review and practice pronouncing names before reading them aloud to students. Learning to pronounce names from another culture is a form of respect and can teach children to honor the languages and cultures of those who are different from them. For an audio pronunciation of her name and some background about her name, you can listen to this: <https://www.teachingbooks.net/pronounce.cgi?aid=33448>

## Vocabulary

These words and names appear in the story. Discuss their meanings with students before and during your reading, as they help tell the girl's story.

- **Pampas:** a tall, perennial grass native to Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Mature plants can reach up to ten feet tall
- **Abuelo:** Spanish for grandfather
- **Gaicho:** skilled, nomadic horsemen or cowhands of Argentina and Brazil
- **Señor Cielo:** Mr. Sky
- **Copper warriors:** refers to copper coins that have Aztec warriors on them

## Anti-Bias Education Tenets

- Empathy & Understanding
- Healthy Complex Identities
- Respect Across Differences
- Notice, Name, & Reject Bias
- Responsiveness & Action

## Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making
- Relationship Skills

## Vocabulary (continued)

- **Southern Cross:** a constellation of four stars in a bright portion of the Milky Way, seen in the Southern Hemisphere and used in navigation like the North Star.
- **25 Mayo 1810:** refers to the revolution (also referred to as the May Revolution) in Buenos Aires against their colonizers, the Spanish. The revolution was the first successful one in the South American Independence process and the Argentine War of Independence followed.

## Read this to the students before reading the book:

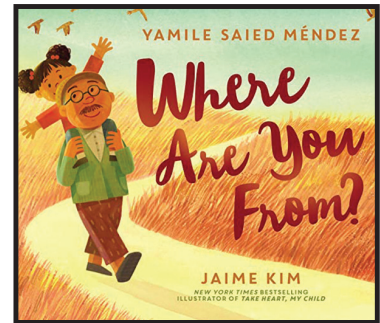
*A young girl is asked where she is from—where she’s really from. These questions make her unsure of her identity (who she is and where she came from). She goes to her abuelo (grandfather) for advice and answers about where she’s from. His responses are different from the answer she expected, and he helps her realize that where we are from is so much more than a physical place.*

## Discussion Questions (essential questions bolded)

1. **Why do others think that the girl can’t be from here and insist on asking, “No where are you really from?”**
2. Why does this upset her so much?
3. Why does the girl ask her abuelo for help in answering where she’s from?
4. How is the girl in the story different from her peers that ask her where she’s from?
5. **What are some of the answers Abuelo gives her about where she’s from? What do these responses mean or represent?**
6. Why do you think Abuelo doesn’t give his granddaughter a more specific answer to her question?
7. When have you asked a question to an adult and didn’t get a specific answer? Why do you think they weren’t more direct in giving you an answer? What did you figure out from their response?
8. **If we have questions about each other’s differences, how can we talk about them without hurting each other’s feelings?**

## Journal Prompts & Extension Activities

1. Draw or write about where you are from that includes more than just a place. Include the things that make you who you are.
2. **Geography Connection:** Look up where Argentina (where the author is from) and Puerto Rico (where the author’s husband is from) are on a map. Discuss how the author’s own experiences may have influenced the story.
3. **“I Am From” Poem:** Guide students in writing their own “I Am From” poems, using words and pictures to describe more than just a place. Provide and discuss example poems to help inspire your students.



## Literacy Connections

- Realistic fiction
- Personal narrative
- Identify details in the text
- Compare and contrast settings
- Identify theme or main message
- Describe setting
- Describe characters/  
Character development
- Character point of view
- Use illustrations/pictures/  
photos to gain information
- Make inferences
- Make text connections (to  
self, text, the world)
- Vocabulary in context



## TEACHING THROUGH BOOKS

# ANTI-RACISM

BY LILA ARMSTRONG, ANDREA LAPOINTE, AND REBECA RUBIO

### LEARNING FOCUS

Anti-racism is the practice of actively identifying and opposing racism by challenging the systems, structures, policies, and practices that uphold the power of some and systematically deny it from others.

**Identity:** Which racial/ethnic group(s) do I belong to that shape who I am? How can I find and share my voice, lived experiences, and beliefs?

**Skills:** How do I respectfully engage in learning about all races and ethnicities? How can I challenge my thinking of what I now believe about people different from myself?

**Intellectualism:** How can reading stories from people of other races/ethnicities about their lived experiences help me develop my understanding of others and myself? How can I better understand why some voices are silenced and others are elevated?

**Criticality:** In what ways can I be part of making change happen to existing racist structures and systems?

**Joy:** How will taking pride in who I am contribute to anti-racism in my community? In what ways can I show my appreciation for others and their uniqueness?

**THEME:** Diversity  
**SUB-THEME:** Anti-Racism  
**GRADE LEVELS:**  
Elementary (K-3)  
Middle School (4-8)  
High School (9-12)



# ANTI-RACISM | ELEMENTARY LEVEL

BY LILA ARMSTRONG

## FEATURED BOOK



*French Toast* by Kari-Lynn Winters, illustrated by François Thisdale (Pajama Press, 2016)  
Also available in FR: *Pain-Doré* par Kari-Lynn Winters, illustré par François Thisdale (Éditions de l'Isatis, 2018)

## LEARNING EXPERIENCE

### MINDS ON PROVOCATION

To introduce the featured book, you are going to talk about food. Make a chart on the board with several sections (e.g. warm and cozy, celebration, sick days, hot weather, etc.). Ask students to share the foods that they have for special events, or when they want to feel cozy, etc. Add more sections if students have items that do not fit into the categories on the board.

Wrap up the activity by asking if anyone connects those foods to the person/people who make it for them. Share a special food of your own that makes you think of the person who makes it for you and add it in. Take a moment to appreciate aloud all of the different foods that make up the group share.

## READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

Show students the cover of *French Toast*. Ask them to predict what the book is about. Start reading, but stop as soon as the class learns that others are making fun of the main character, Phoebe. Model your thinking aloud. Why would they be using food names to make fun of her? Is this ok? Ask students to name this behavior and define it. Take a few minutes to let many voices be heard.

Before reading the rest of the book, preface it with a conversation that might include these cues:





- “Now, we have discovered that this book is going to include parts about making fun of someone due to the colour of their skin. The author is trying to teach us about racism. Let’s take a moment to talk about racism. What does that word mean?” Tailor your discussion to the age and experience of your students.
- “When we read books about important issues like this, it’s also crucial to ask questions that get us thinking. Here’s one to start: How can reading stories about the lives of those who experience racism help us understand the world around us?” Allow some time for reflection and a few shares.

Reread the entire book without stopping. Once you have finished, ask students why they think that Phoebe used food to describe skin colours? Why did she choose french toast at the end when she had been mocked with that food name? What did her grandmother help her to understand?

### MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

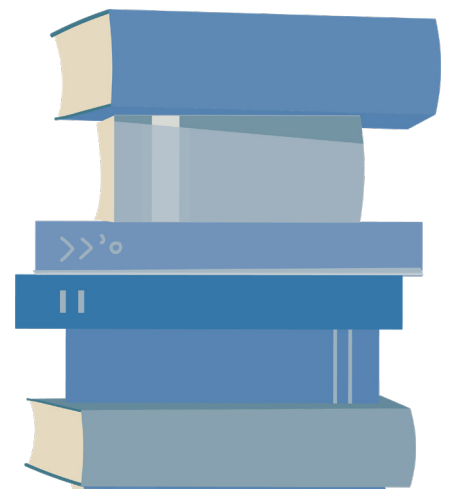
In this activity, students will be creating their own exact skin colour using paint. Students will need to mix paints and test the resulting colour against their skin (or beside). Students do not need to mix a lot of each colour, just enough to paint a piece of paper. They will be making their own paint chips. Depending on the paper you have available, a 5” x 7” or postcard size would be ideal. Once students have matched their skin tone as closely as possible, they will paint the paper.

Ask students to name the colour they’ve created after a special food they eat, or suggest that they come up with a unique name for it (i.e. does not have to relate to a food). Write the name of the colour on the paint chip, but choose a location (i.e. bottom right) that’s standard for all. Display the paint chips on a wall of the classroom to reflect the diverse colours of your students.

### REFLECT AND CONNECT

Using the Learning Focus goal for joy as the anchor/centrepiece for your display, ask students: “How will taking pride in who I am contribute to anti-racism in my community? In what ways can I show my appreciation for others and their uniqueness?” Depending on your students, the goal could be simplified. For example: “How can I celebrate the uniqueness of those around me?”

Ask students to think of words that describe the wall of colours. Write these words on slips of paper, or have students do it themselves. Post these words up on the wall alongside the colours (or mixed in, depending on your aesthetic). Celebrate the diversity of your class and ask students to take a few minutes to appreciate that every colour is special and has a different story.



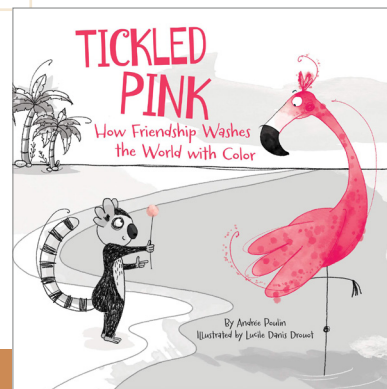


As an optional extension activity, ask students to consider this question: “How can I use my voice to be part of making change happen?” Students can then add an extra circle around the colour display with anti-racist statements or words that they can refer back to as an ongoing learning goal.

## ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS TO SUPPORT THIS SUB-THEME



*The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali, illustrated by Hatem Aly (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019)



*Tickled Pink: How Friendship Washes the World with Color* by Andrée Poulin, illustrated by Lucile Danis Drouot (Pajama Press, 2020)  
Also available in FR: *Ils ne veulent pas jouer avec moi !!!* par Andrée Poulin, illustré par Lucile Danis Drouot (Dominique et compagnie, 2019)

# AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO



**A COMMUNITY STORY ABOUT REDLINING**  
from educators and bestselling authors  
**BRITT HAWTHORNE** and **TIFFANY JEWELL!**

# 62ND ANNUAL MAIN ST BLOCK PARTY

“  
INTRODUCE(S)  
THE CONCEPT OF  
REDLINING IN THIS  
DIGESTIBLE FIRST-  
PERSON STORY OF  
COMMUNITY CARE.  
”

—Publishers Weekly

“  
PROVIDES  
ACCURATE AND  
VALUABLE  
HISTORICAL  
CONTEXT.  
”

—Kirkus Reviews

★  
“  
THIS WILL BE  
ESPECIALLY  
USEFUL FOR  
THOSE WANTING  
TO LAUNCH  
DISCUSSIONS  
ABOUT WHAT IT  
MEANS TO BE IN  
COMMUNITY.  
”

—The Bulletin of the  
Center for Children's  
Books, starred review

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Olivia can't wait to invite her friends to the 62nd annual Main Street Block Party. But when she does, Alison says that Main Street isn't safe. Olivia's eyes fill with tears, and she begins to wish that she didn't live on Main Street at all.

Then, Olivia learns what happened when her neighbor Ms. Effie was about her age: Ms. Effie's family was also told that Main Street wasn't good enough. The bank wouldn't give them a loan to buy their house based on where it fell on a color-coded map: Mostly Black people lived near Main Street, so the neighborhood was colored red on the map. To fight back against this practice called redlining, Ms. Effie's family became friends with their neighbors and got organized.

With vibrant illustrations by David Wilkerson and engaging text by Britt Hawthorne and Tiffany Jewell, *Main Street* celebrates what might happen when neighbors come together for a common goal and everybody pitches in.

Features back matter with an author's note about the full history of redlining and ideas for further engagement with your community!

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR

### Britt Hawthorne:

Britt Hawthorne is an award-winning author and teacher. She grew up in Rockford, Illinois, where she gobbled up thin-crust pizza and Swedish pancakes. She now lives with her family in Houston, Texas, delighting in coffee, sweet treats, and naps. Learn more about her on Instagram @britthawthorne, or you can visit her at [britthawthorne.com](http://britthawthorne.com).



© Ryan Colford

### Tiffany Jewell:

Tiffany Jewell is a mama, an educator, and the bestselling author of *This Book Is Anti-racist*, *The Antiracist Kid*, and *Everything I Learned About Racism I Learned In School*. She grew up in Syracuse, New York, and currently lives in Western Massachusetts with her family, which includes a little dog with a big bark and a turtle she's had since she was nine! Tiffany spends her days baking bread, searching for the most delicious chai lattes, and dreaming of a world that is truly fair and just. Find out more at [tiffanymjewell.com](http://tiffanymjewell.com).

### David Wilkerson:

David Wilkerson is an American illustrator who was born in Denver, Colorado, and is currently based in Maryland. David developed a love for illustration during his time at the Savannah College of Art and Design. He believes that creation itself is what we live in, and he's spent the last twenty-plus years creating the most authentic version of himself as possible. Find out more at [theartofdlw.com/](http://theartofdlw.com/).

## ● PREREADING

### How This Book Came to Be, Why We Wrote It, and What It Is About:

Tiffany was reading the last book in the Tristan Strong series, *Tristan Strong Keeps Punching*, by Kwame Mbalia, with her children. Some of the villain's henchmen are called "the redliners." Her youngest asked, "What's a redliner?" which led to a conversation about what redlining is, the history of home ownership in cities, and the labeling of some neighborhoods as "dangerous" and others as "the best." Tiffany wanted to share more about redlining with her children but couldn't find any kid-friendly resources. She reached out to her friend Britt Hawthorne, who always has excellent book recommendations and wrote *Raising Antiracist Children*. Britt searched for some books to share but realized that there were no children's books about redlining. She said to Tiffany, "We can write it!" And so, the friends did!

## ● THINGS TO KNOW FOR THE ADULTS

### Things to Know About Redlining

Redlining was a system from the 1930s where the government marked some neighborhoods in red and called them "unsafe" for banks.

Families in these redlined areas were denied loans, even if they worked hard and had good credit.

These unfair rules affected schools, parks, and businesses, and their impact can still be seen in many communities today.

Redlining is now illegal, but learning about it helps us understand why some neighborhoods have more resources than others.

Educational Resources about Redlining:

- [Zinn Education Project](#)
- [Social Justice Books](#)
- [rethinking schools](#)
- [Segregated by Design](#)
- [Mapping Inequality Redlining Map](#)
- [KQED resources for understanding redlining maps](#)
- [NewAmericanHistory.org Redlining Map](#)

### Things to Know About the Book

The book introduces the idea of fairness and community, helping students understand why some places have more resources and opportunities than others.

The characters give students a way to connect emotionally, making a big topic like redlining easier to understand.

The story shows how people's lives are shaped by where they live, which is an important part of learning about redlining.



### Things to Know About Teaching Tough Topics to Kids

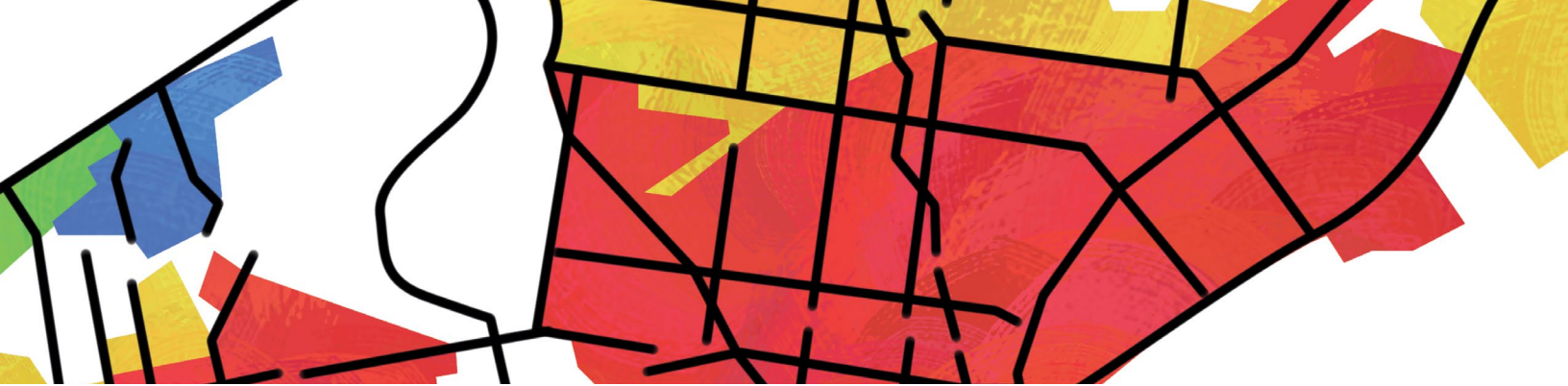
Start with what students already know (fairness, rules, and how communities work) before explaining bigger ideas, like redlining.

Use simple, clear language so students can learn without feeling overwhelmed.

Let students ask questions, and remind them that curiosity is welcome and important.

Keep [anti-bias goals](#) in mind by helping students notice unfairness, and think about how to make things better.

Share honest facts but also offer hope, showing that people and communities are working to create fairer systems today.



## ● PREREADING ACTIVITIES

Explore your school's neighborhood—this doesn't need to happen all in one day and, in fact, would be nice to do throughout the school year so learners may note how things change over time. Help learners place themselves in the story of the school, the community, and the neighborhood.

### GO ON A WALK.

- Take a walk around the block—notice if there are other businesses nearby or if the school is in a residential area.
- Do many students walk to school?
- Walk around the school's property and then walk around the neighborhood. Can you visit other nearby neighborhoods? For example:
  - Before you take a walk, see if there are any folks in your community who can lead neighborhood tours to share some history with learners.

### GO ON A SKETCH WALK.

- Pause and sketch the neighborhood from different angles.
- Invite the art teacher or an artist in your community to sketch with you.

### GO ON A PHOTO WALK WITH A LITTLE FUNSAVER CAMERA, A DIGITAL CAMERA, AN OLD IPHONE, OR WHATEVER YOU CAN FIND TO USE.

- Give learners a prompt (e.g. photograph something new; photograph a doorway; etc.).

### GO ON A SOUND HUNT.

- Ask learners to quiet when they get to specific spots on the walk. (They may hear a dog barking or vehicles drive by, or they might hear each other and nothing else!)

### MAP OUT THE COMMUNITY.

- This goes nicely with the other walking activities. Children will have an easier time mapping the neighborhood if they've walked it before.

### INVITE THE COMMUNITY IN.

- Bring in local municipal workers (city councilors, planners), store owners, historians, librarians, etc. to talk to the learners about how the city was mapped out, how communities support each other, etc.

### ARCHIVE THE COMMUNITY.

- Have students bring in an archive from their home, neighborhood, city, etc. Create a gallery with these archives and invite other classrooms to do the same!

### Ask Learners:

- What are words you use to describe the neighborhood you live in (home, southside, valley, close, safe, friendly, etc.)?
- Do you ever get a chance to visit a different neighborhood (to visit a family member, etc.)?
- What are words you use when describing some of the other neighborhoods you've visited? What are words we can use to describe the neighborhood our school is in?
- What do you want people to know about your neighborhood (the neighborhood you live in and the neighborhood our school is in)?
- What is history? This book shares a part of our history that is not often told. Spend a little time with learners exploring history and learn what they know about what history is, why we learn about it, and who tells and writes the stories of history.

## ● PREREADING ACTIVITIES

### “Our Neighborhood Then & Now”

**Time: About 15–20 minutes**

**What You Need:** Photos or screenshots of your neighborhood from different years (today, ten years ago, twenty years ago), or Google Street View if you can use it; paper; pencil; sticky notes if you have them. *Tip: Your local library’s website and newspaper will have plenty of old photos.*

### What to Do

#### 1. Look at the Photos

Study the pictures of your neighborhood from different time periods. Pay attention to what looks different and what looks the same.

#### 2. Write Your Observations

On your paper, write the chart below. If you are using sticky notes, please place the different headings on paper or the board and have students write their observations on the sticky notes and place them under the proper heading.

Three Things I Notice	Two Things That Surprise Me/Stand Out	One Thing I Wonder
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	
3.		

#### 3. Sort Your Ideas

Make two lists on your paper (or, create a Venn Diagram. Label one circle “Then” and the other “Now.” The middle of the diagram where the circles are joined may be labeled “Stayed the Same.”):

**What Changed**

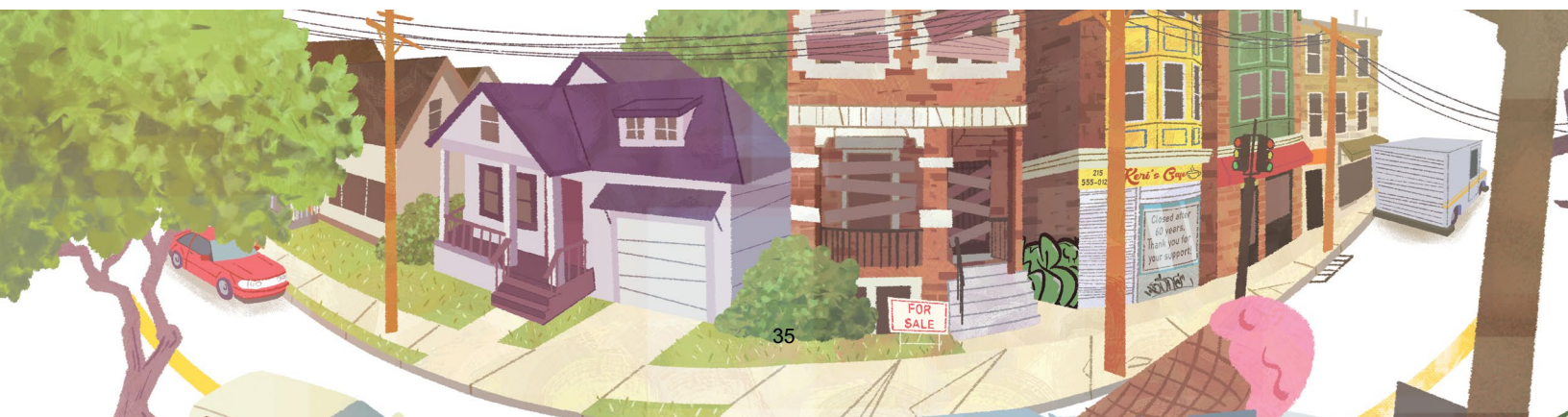
**What Stayed the Same**

Place your observations in the correct list.

#### 4. Final Reflection

Write two to three sentences answering this question:

“What do these changes tell you about how neighborhoods grow and change over time?”





**● PREREADING  
ACTIVITIES CONTINUED**

**Key Terms and Vocabulary/  
Words to Know:**

**COMMUNITY**

Resources

Government

Immigrants

Equality

Collective Action/Activism

B&L (Building and Loans)

Laws and Rules

**REDLINING SPECIFIC**

Fair Housing

Discrimination

Grade (on a map)

Key (on a map)

Segregation

Desegregation

**ECONOMIC TERMS**

Loan

Redlining

Map

Bank

Manager

Wealth



Throughout the book, we use terms for neighborhoods that were found on redlining maps. Words like *desirable*, *safe*, *hazardous*, *declining*, *best*, and others. Some of these words may be new to young readers and they may want and need some help in understanding what the words mean.

What is redlining? (Include a simple little timeline that matches up with what Ms. Effie shares.)

Address basic human needs (shelter, safety, community, etc.) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Remind learners that everyone has a right to shelter and safety.



## ● READING ENGAGEMENT

Anti-bias learning: Review goals for learners and use them to guide the discussions and activities as you read and think critically!

### ABE goals for kids:

#### GOAL 1:

---

We want the young folks in our lives to love themselves and to take pride in who they are and where they come from.

We want the young readers of this book to love themselves, to take pride in where they're from and where they live, to have positive feelings and expressions for their neighborhoods.

---

Once they know who they are and are confident in their multifaceted identities, they gain a deeper understanding that the world is diverse and expansive. They'll be able to celebrate and honor differences and develop connections in their communities.

#### GOAL 2:

---

We want the young readers of this book to understand that people live in different neighborhoods, come from different places, and to celebrate the differences and similarities in their communities.

---

#### GOAL 3:

---

Students are able to recognize unfairness and start to identify prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. They know that injustice hurts because they are developing the skills and language to understand their own identities and those of others who are similar and different from them.

We want the young readers of this book to recognize that all neighborhoods/towns/cities/etc. aren't given the same resources, stories, and money as others. We want them to recognize that it's not fair that neighborhoods aren't treated fairly and that the stereotypes they may see on the news or hear aren't always accurate and true.

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#### GOAL 4:

---

Students and the young folks in your life will be empowered to advocate for justice and embrace their role as activists!

We want the young readers of this book to hold dreams for their communities and begin to make a plan to celebrate where they are! We also want them to be able to explore the history of their communities (like Olivia and Ms. Effie do).



## ● READING ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

### Three-Finger Retell to Practice Story Sequencing:

Beginning: First, Olivia

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Middle: Then, Olivia

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---

End: Last, Olivia

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### For Example:

First, Olivia invites her friends to Main Street, but they said no.

Then, Olivia tells Ms. Effie about why she's sad.

Last, Olivia has fun at the block party because Main Street is awesome.

\*It's okay if learners tell more of the details they relate to than the overall main idea of the story. It's important they start to gain a sense of time and practice learning and retelling with chronological order.

Now, let's look at the craft of the story!

### Setting (Explore the Setting):

- Identify where the beginning of the book takes place.
- Explain what you notice about Alison's house.
- Describe what you notice in the illustrations as Olivia leaves Alison's neighborhood and drives to her own. ("As the houses and buildings around us change, I know we're getting closer to home, to Main Street.") What differences do you notice?
- A lot of the book takes place on the porch of Ms. Effie's home. Why do you think the authors wanted this conversation to happen there, on the porch?
- During the flashback to when Ms. Effie's parents are in the bank manager's office, he says (about Main Street), "It just isn't a good neighborhood." Looking at the illustration of Main Street at the time, do you think his statement is accurate? Why do you think this?
- Compare and contrast the illustrations of the different neighborhoods to help readers to see that "not all places are treated equally."
- What do we learn about Main Street from the illustrations (from our first view of Main Street to the final illustration of the 62nd Annual Main St. Block Party)?
- As we go through the book, what do we ... See? Hear? Smell? Taste? Feel?

### What do you ...

See?	
Hear?	
Smell?	
Taste?	
Feel?	

## ● READING ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

### Characterization (Thoughts, Feelings, Statements, Actions):

What do we learn about Olivia in the beginning of the story?

	at Alison's house?	on the way home in the car?	when she arrives at Main Street?
How does Olivia feel ...			
What does Olivia think ...			
What does Olivia do ...			

How does Olivia feel?

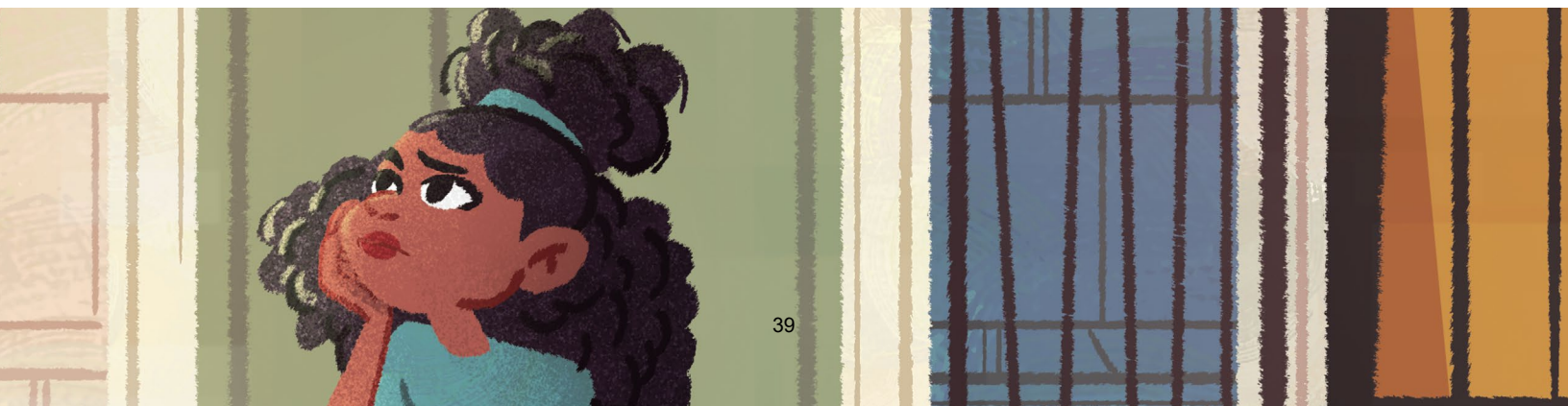
What brings Olivia sadness?	What brings her comfort?	What brings Olivia joy?
-----------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------

What we can infer about Olivia's thinking:

What does Olivia think about Main Street at the beginning of the book?	What does she think about her neighborhood in the middle of the book?	What does Olivia think about Main Street at the end of the book?
--	---	--

What does Olivia do throughout the book?

What does Olivia do at the beginning of the book?	What does Olivia do during the middle of the book when she is with Ms. Effie?	What does Olivia do at the end of the book?
---	---	---



## ● READING ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

### Characterization (Thoughts, Feelings, Statements, Actions):

#### Let's get to know Olivia!

What does Olivia look like?

How does she wear her hair?  
What color is her skin? What  
color eyes does she have?  
What does Olivia wear?

---

What does she say?  
How do you know? Share  
your evidence!

When does she say this?  
Who does she say this to?

---

What does she think?  
How do you know? Share  
your evidence!

---

How does she feel?  
How do you know? Share  
your evidence!

Why does she feel this way?

---

What does she do?  
How do you know? Share  
your evidence!

When does she do this?  
Why does she do this?  
What happened before?  
What happens next?

---

What more would you like to  
know about Olivia?

## ● READING ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

### Reflection Charts:

Consider the characters in the text: for example, their personality, physical traits, language, food, and interests. What do you notice about the characters? What about you? Pause and reflect on similarities.

Characters	Me	Similarities

Consider the setting in the text: for example, the neighborhood, community, home, climate, and era. What do you see in the book? What do you see in your own world? Pause and reflect on similarities.

Characters	Me	Similarities

To dive deeper check out TeachingBooks' for School and their [Diverse Books Toolkit](#)



## ● POSTREADING:

### Other Books to Share/Read (In No Particular Order):

- *My Two Border Towns* by David Bowles, illustrated by Erika Meza
- *A New Kind of Wild* by Zara González Hoang
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *Harlem Grown: How One Big Idea Transformed A Neighborhood* by Tony Hillery, illustrated by Jessie Hartland
- *Watercress* by Andrea Wang, illustrated by Jason Chin
- *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña

### Prompts and Critical Thinking:

Even though the practice of redlining is no longer legal, it's impact is still felt today. Can you think of some ways that redlining impacts us today?

Some examples: Lack of sidewalks, stop signs, street lights, and safe and well-marked crosswalks; lack of full-service grocery stores; increase in environmental pollution (including noise pollution); lack of neighborhood amenities that can be easily found in more well-resourced areas (green spaces, community pools, well-funded schools, etc.); what else?

### How to read the [Mapping Inequality Redlining Map](#):

What do you notice about the neighborhoods that are labeled as “hazardous” and “declining,” and the neighborhoods that are labeled as “desirable” and “safe”? Where are they located? Which neighborhoods are nearby yours? What were their labels?

- **Redlining Map Activity:** Look at this [map](#) of Philadelphia that inspired the map in the book. Ask students what they notice.

### Let's do some dreaming together!

What could make all neighborhoods safer and healthier for everyone? What might need to be built, created, and shared? What might need to be changed?

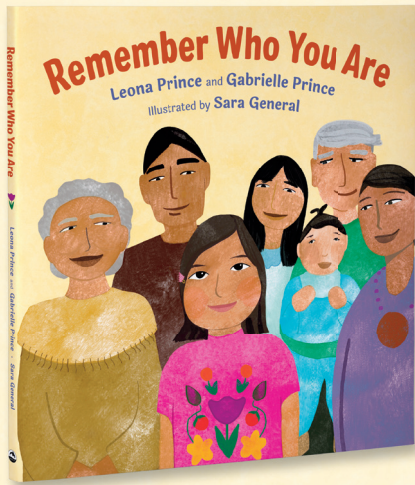
Why are some neighborhoods well resourced and why do others have no well-resourced options? What could it look like if every neighborhood was well resourced and had everything they needed to be more fair and just? What would make all communities more fair and just?

### We all deserve to live in safe and healthy communities. Here are five ways to care for your neighborhood:

1. Notice what's in your neighborhood. Is there a safe crosswalk? Is there a library close by? Does the basketball hoop on the playground have a net? What other things can you notice?
2. Notice who is in your neighborhood. Who are the people you see every day? Who helps you feel strong and safe? How do you and your family help others in your community?
3. Get to know the people in your neighborhood! Use community services like your public library, multi-service center, playground (park), or pool to get to know your neighbors.
4. Create, use, and contribute to community fridges, community gardens, little free pantries, and little free libraries. Share and give to food banks. Help put together and deliver meals to folks in your neighborhood who cannot easily access food.
5. Notice the art in your neighborhood. Who are the artists? What is the story behind the art? Can you also make art to highlight your community's beauty? Have fun with your community!



9781459840317



# Remember Who You Are

## Teacher Guide—Complete Package



This package was created by Leona Prince. Leona is an award-winning educator and the Director of Instruction for Indigenous Education for School District 91 Nechako Lakes. This guide combines the foundational teacher guide with the BC Core Competency-linked activities, providing a comprehensive resource for educators.

### About the authors:



**Leona Prince** is from Nak’azdli Whut’en, is a proud member of the Lake Babine Nation and belongs to the Lhts’umusyoo (Beaver Clan). Leona is an award-winning educator and is currently the Director of Instruction for Indigenous Education for School District 91 Nechako Lakes. She is the author of *A Dance Through the Seasons*, published by WaveMaker Press, and the bestselling co-author of *Be a Good Ancestor*, published by Orca Book Publishers. Leona lives in Burns Lake, British Columbia.



**Gabrielle Prince** is Dakelh from Lake Babine Nation and Nak’azdli Whut’en. She is an Intensive Youth Social Worker based in Prince George, British Columbia, where she is dedicated to supporting young people through culturally grounded, strength-based approaches. Gabrielle is also the bestselling co-author of *Be a Good Ancestor*, published by Orca Book Publishers. Beyond her professional role, Gabrielle finds joy in cultural traditions, time on the land and spending time with her family, friends and fur babies.

### About the illustrator:



**Sara General** belongs to the Turtle Clan and the Mohawk Nation. She lives in the community of Six Nations of the Grand River with her husband, three children and pet turtle. Sara holds a Doctor of Education from Western University, and she is a writer, an artist, a language learner and a researcher. In addition to her work for Spirit & Intent, an Indigenous publishing company she co-founded to make language books for her community, Sara’s writing has been published by Rubicon Books, Theytus Books, *Exile Quarterly*, *Hamilton Arts & Letters* and *Kayak Magazine*. Her illustrations have appeared in *Kayak Magazine* and in publications by the Smithsonian Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.



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# Teacher Guide for *Remember Who You Are*—Foundations

## Introduction

This teacher’s guide provides foundational support for using Leona and Gabrielle Prince’s *Remember Who You Are* in the classroom. It introduces teachers to the book’s key themes, discussion strategies and creative classroom activities. It is intended to help students connect with the book’s message while engaging with literacy, social-emotional learning and cultural identity.

## Key Themes in the Book

- **Identity & Belonging**—understanding who you are and where you come from.
- **Resilience & Strength**—facing challenges and remembering your inner strength.
- **Ancestry & Connection**—the importance of family, culture and intergenerational wisdom.
- **Respect & Kindness**—values that guide how we treat ourselves and others.

## Before Reading

### Discussion Prompts:

- What do you think the title *Remember Who You Are* means?
- Why do you think knowing your identity is important?
- How do you feel when someone reminds you of your strengths?

### Vocabulary Preview:

Select words or phrases from the book that may need unpacking for younger readers.

## During Reading

### Encourage students to notice:

- Repeated phrases or patterns
- Illustrations that reinforce the message
- Emotional reactions—how does the story make them feel?

### Think-Aloud Strategy:

Teachers can model reflective questions like: “I wonder why the author chose this image?” or “This reminds me of...”

## After Reading

### Reflection Questions:

- What message did the story leave you with?
- How does this book connect to your own life?
- What might your ancestors want you to remember about who you are?

### Creative Extensions:

- Write a letter to your future self starting with “Remember who you are...”
- Draw or paint a picture of what makes you feel most “you”.
- Create a class “identity wall” with student contributions (poems, drawings, photos, words).





## Cross-Curricular Connections

- Literacy: Narrative writing, personal storytelling
- Social Studies: Exploring family heritage, oral traditions, Indigenous teachings
- Art: Visual representations of identity (self-portraits, symbols)
- Social Emotional Learning: Self-awareness, empathy and resilience

## Extensions for Older Grades

- Journaling on questions like: “What parts of myself do I sometimes forget?” or “Who in my life reminds me of my strengths?”
- Research project on family or community histories. Please use caution when discussing family, as this may be triggering for CYIC (Children and Youth in Care). As an educator, I have reviewed my students’ files before diving into identity work.
- Linking the book’s themes to Truth and Reconciliation discussions (age appropriate).

## Teacher Tips

- Create a safe space for sharing (identity can be deeply personal).
- Respect diverse ways of knowing—students may express themselves through art, music or storytelling rather than just writing.
- Encourage connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of understanding self and community.

## Resources

If you would like to share your ideas about using *Remember Who You Are* in the classroom, feel free to **scan this QR code** and upload them here.





# Remember Who You Are and the Core Competencies

## Introduction

This teacher’s guide is designed to support educators in using *Remember Who You Are* as a springboard for meaningful classroom conversations. The book encourages students to reflect on identity, culture, belonging and resilience. We want to encourage educators to use our children’s books to meaningfully embed the BC Core Competencies while also helping children explore Truth and Reconciliation. This is an invitation for educators and students to explore their own truths and the truths of others through a lens of cultural safety.

## BC Core Competencies

According to BC’s redesigned K-12 curriculum, students are expected to develop three Core Competencies essential for lifelong learning:

- Communication—sharing ideas and collaborating.
- Thinking —creative, critical and reflective thinking.
- Personal & Social—personal awareness, cultural identity and social responsibility.

## Classroom Activities Linked to Core Competencies

### Identity Collage & Sharing Circle

**Competencies:** Personal & Social—Positive Personal & Cultural Identity, Personal Awareness & Responsibility; Communication—Communicating

Students create a visual collage representing aspects of their identity—heritage, strengths, family, values—and reflect on “who they are”. In a sharing circle, students explain their collages, practicing communication skills and building self-awareness.

### Reflective Journaling: Letters to Self

**Competencies:** Thinking—Reflective & Critical Thinking; Personal & Social—Personal Awareness & Responsibility

Students write a journal entry or letter beginning with “Remember who you are....” Encourage reflection on personal strengths, cultural stories or family lessons. Students may revisit and revise entries to deepen understanding.

### Story Circle & Inquiry Discussion

**Competencies:** Communication—Collaborating & Communicating; Thinking—Critical & Reflective Thinking

In small groups, students discuss questions such as “Why is remembering who you are important?” or “How does the story show resilience?” Each group shares insights with the class, fostering collaborative thinking and respectful listening.

### Symbol Creation: Identity Artifacts

**Competencies:** Thinking—Creative Thinking; Personal & Social—Positive Personal & Cultural Identity, Social Awareness & Responsibility

Students design or share a personal artifact that represents their identity, drawing from culture, family or nature. Pairs exchange and explain artifacts, building empathy and cultural awareness.

### Class Identity Quilt or Mural

**Competencies:** Communication, Thinking and Personal & Social—integrated

Each student creates a square representing their identity or a message from the book. The pieces are assembled into a class quilt or mural displayed in the school, symbolizing collective identity and values.





## Self-Assessment & Goal-Setting with “I Can” Statements

**Competencies:** All three Core Competencies

Co-create “I Can” statements such as:

“I can share how my background shapes who I am,”

“I can think about what identity means to me,” or

“I can listen respectfully to others’ identities.”

Students reflect on which areas they feel confident in and which they want to grow in.

## Mapping at a Glance

Activity	Communication	Thinking	Personal & Social
Identity Collage and Sharing	Explaining, Listening	Reflecting on personal identity	Awareness of identity and culture
Reflective Journaling	Writing	Reflecting and revising	Self-awareness and growth
Story Circle Discussion	Group sharing	Analyzing story themes	Understanding belonging
Symbol Creation	Paired explanation	Creating meaningful symbols	Celebrating identity differences
Identity Quilt/Mural	Collaborative art	Designing shared imagery	Community and cultural respect
Self-Assessment	Expressing goals	Reflecting on self-progress	Self-regulation and identity

## Implementation Tips for Teachers

- **Embed the Competencies:** Begin each lesson by naming which Core Competency is being developed.
- **Use Reflection Prompts:** Ask questions like “How did today’s activity help you learn about yourself or others?”
- **Align with Curricular Competencies:** Tie activities to literacy, social studies and art outcomes.
- **Foster Safe Spaces:** Identity is personal—ensure students feel safe and supported. Sharing should be voluntary.
- **Encourage Self-Assessment:** Students can track growth through journals, peer feedback or portfolios.



# LOVE

Book Inspired Activities  
that Teach Children About  
Self-Acceptance and Diversity



## LOVELY BY JESS HONG CURRICULUM GUIDE

### OBJECTIVES:

- Connect with literature.
- Teaching children about diversity.
- Empathy: Help children understand what it means to consider other people's feelings.
- Tolerance: Encouraging children to show kindness and acceptance towards themselves and others.
- Inclusion: Learning ways in which we can be inclusive, no matter our differences.

◦ MADE A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR LOVELY BY JESS HONG THAT IS PACKED WITH ACTIVITIES THAT CELEBRATE SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND DIVERSITY.

We started with some discussion questions:

- Have you ever had a friend who is different?
- Have you ever felt different? Was that a positive or negative experience? Why?
- How can you show a friend that you love/like them just the way they are?
- How can you help a friend be included?
- How does it feel when you are included in a group?
- Have you ever seen anyone being treated unfairly because they are different?



CELEBRATE WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL! LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES ABOUT SELF-ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSION!

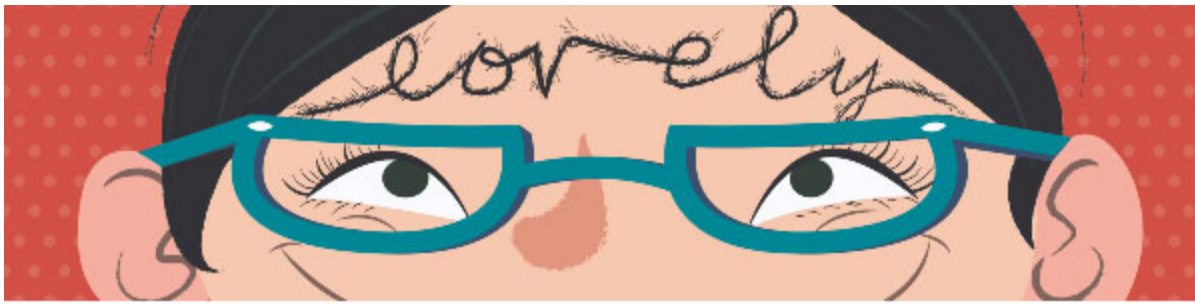


#### ACTIVITIES THAT TEACH ABOUT DIVERSITY

- **Play I love My Neighbor:** Seat the children in a circle. Have them take turns saying, "I love my neighbor because..." About the person to their left.
- **Play If You Really Knew Me:** Again, Seat the children in a circle. Have them take turns saying, "If you really knew me..." and have them share something about themselves. Discuss with the children about what they learned about each other. Were there any surprises?
- **Do the Crack an Egg Demonstration:** Bring eggs with different colored shells. Have the children observe how they look different. Then crack the

eggs. Do they look different on the inside? Explain how this relates to people, too.

- **Step Forward to the Finish Line:** Have some students line up on one side and choose another child to be the volunteer on the other side. Put a line or marker between them. Instruct the children to give the volunteer compliments about traits that are special about that person. For every compliment, the student takes one step closer to the line until s/he has crossed it. Repeat with as many students as are in the class.
- **Share What We Have in Common:** Have the students bring three of their favorite items in a bag. Then have them share what they brought to share. Talk about why those items are important to each child. Compare and discuss how some of the items the children brought to share are different and how some are the same.



CELEBRATE WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL! LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES ABOUT SELF-ACCEPTANCE & INCLUSION!



**Show Young Children that Diversity is a Strength.**



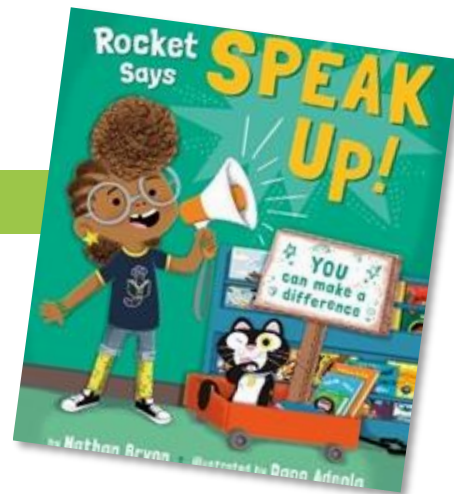
# Rocket Says Speak Up!

## READ ALOUD GUIDE

**Themes:** Change, Activism

**Book Brief:** When Rocket finds out that her town's library is closing, she knows something must be done. Inspired by the activism of Rosa Parks, Rocket rallies support from her peers, and together they lead a peaceful protest that spreads awareness and raises enough money to save their beloved library.

**Author:**  
Nathan Byron  
**Illustrator:**  
Dapo Adeola



## BEFORE READING

**The Cover:** Read the title and the message on the small sign on the cover.

**The Pictures:** Take a brief picture walk and ask students what they see, think, or wonder about the story.

**Vocabulary:** [Vocabulary Guide](#)

**Prior Knowledge:** Ask your students to think about people who changed the world. Write them on a board and then ask students do they think a kid could change the world they live in. Then explain that they will learn about a girl who does just that.

**Purpose for Reading:** "As we read, think about Rocket made a change in her community!"

## DURING READING

Check for understanding & make connections:

- What do you notice in the library with Rocket?
- Have you ever experienced something you felt was unfair?
- How do you think the closing of the library made Rocket feel?
- Do you think that the protest will make a difference?
- Who came to visit Rocket after the protest goes on TV?
- What happened to the library and the librarian at the end?

## AFTER READING

**Our Purpose:** How does Rocket react to something she felt was unfair? How did this help her and her community? Talk to one partner, and then after two minutes, switch to a second partner and discuss.

**Extending Our Thinking:** What can we do to make a difference like Rocket has? Ask students to think about small ways they can make their school better!

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.

WITH Q&A FROM  
NEWBERY MEDALIST  
JERRY CRAFT



# TEACHING NEW KID

BY  
JERRY CRAFT

"Funny, sharp, and totally real!  
Jordan Banks is the kid  
everyone will be talking about!"

—Jeff Kinney

Author of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Grades 3-7

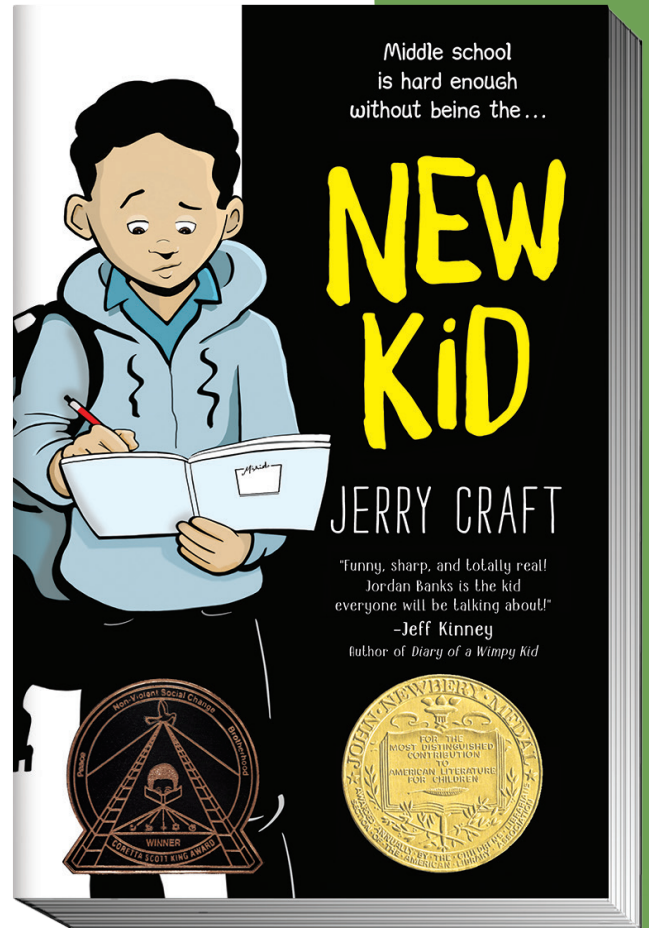
Themes: Fitting  
In. Friendship.  
Race. Class. Family  
Dynamics. Bullying



## ABOUT THE BOOK

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade.

As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jerry Craft is a *New York Times* bestselling author-illustrator who has worked on numerous picture books, graphic novels, and middle grade novels, including the Newbery award-winning graphic novel, *New Kid*. Jerry is the creator of *Mama's Boyz*, an award-winning syndicated comic strip. He has won five African American Literary Awards and is a cofounder of the Schomburg Center's Annual Black Comic Book Festival. He received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts and now lives in Connecticut. Visit him online at [www.jerrycraft.com](http://www.jerrycraft.com).



Photo by Hollis King

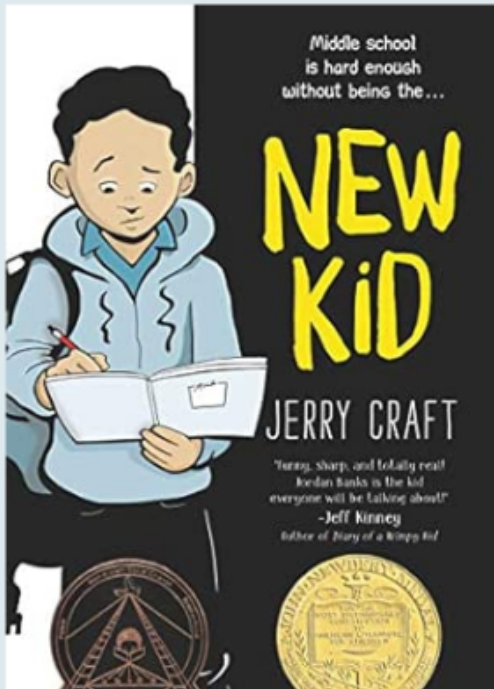


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jordan's mom puts pressure on him not only to attend Riverdale Academy Day, but also to enjoy being there. Drawing helps Jordan cope with the pressure from home and the feelings of loneliness at school. What activities do you do to make yourself feel better when you're stressed or not feeling like yourself?
2. When Jordan returns home on the first day of school, his friend Kirk is waiting for him, but things between the two of them get uncomfortable when Kirk sees Liam: why do you think that happens? Later, Jordan tells his dad it was "kinda weird" (p. 50). What do you think Jordan is really feeling?
3. "Jordan's Tips for Taking the Bus" (pp. 56-57) show Jordan changing his appearance over the course of his ride to school. Discuss the concept of code switching. What do you notice in each frame? What is different about his clothing, body language, and the people around him? What do you think Jordan gains by code switching in this way? Can you think of a time where you felt you needed to code switch?
4. Jordan is nervous when he decides to try out for the soccer team because he hasn't played the sport or been on a team before. Have you ever had to try something you didn't want to? How did you manage to start? By the end of the season, Jordan finds that he actually likes soccer. Have you ever changed your mind about something after trying a new experience?
5. Why do you think it takes so long for Drew and Jordan to start talking? Discuss the friendship dynamic when Jordan, Drew, and Liam are together.
6. Liam asks Jordan not to judge him before coming over to his house during holiday break. What do you think Liam is worried about?
7. Do you think Andy is a bully? In your opinion, why does Andy act the way he does?
8. It takes a lot of courage for Jordan to stand up and say what really happened during the altercation between Drew and Andy in the cafeteria (Chapter 12). Why do you think Jordan saying something made others step up to report the truth, too?
9. When Ms. Rawle reads Jordan's sketchbook she fails to understand how she is making her African American students feel unseen (Chapter 13). Why do you think she gets defensive?
10. On Jordan's last day of school, his parents comment on how different he looks, and try to figure out exactly what's different. "Whatever it is, you look like a *new kid*" (p. 245). Jordan doesn't see it at first, but in what ways do you think Jordan has grown and changed through the school year? In what ways does he stay the same?



## "NEW KID" TRADUCTION DISPONIBLE AU LRC !



Roman graphique explorant les thèmes de l'identité, de l'appartenance et de l'amitié. Idéal pour les classes de niveau intermédiaire et l'apprentissage interdisciplinaire.

- 10 exemplaires de l'édition française disponibles au LRC.
- Idéal pour les cercles de lecture.

Comment faire une demande :

Cherchez " Le nouveau " dans le système de gestion des bibliothèques Destiny pour demander des exemplaires.



# ENSEMBLE DANS NOTRE CLASSE

## *Objectifs de la séance :*

Rédiger un message individuel pour former un tout « ensemble ».



### Album

#### **Ensemble**

Émilie Chazerand  
Amandine Piu

La Martinière jeunesse

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## MATÉRIEL FOURNI

Trame « Ensemble, nous aimons ... », fiches lexique.

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## 🗨️ PHASE ORALE

Collectivement, lister des actions qu'on aime faire ensemble dans la classe. noter les idées des enfants. Proposer d'autres mots grâce aux fiches lexiques.

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## ✍️ ÉCRIT INDIVIDUEL

Inviter chaque élève à produire son propre message, sur la forme « Ensemble, nous aimons... » & verbe à l'infinitif. Chaque message sera rédigé sur un petit format rectangulaire, type « post-it », comme si c'était la brique d'un mur. Les réalisations seront assemblées les unes à côté des autres... Les briques individuelles assemblées forment un mur ensemble ! Il est possible de peindre, colorier le fond.

Pour les PS : découper et coller l'illustration sous l'amorce de phrase. Pour les MS et GS : écriture du verbe choisi.

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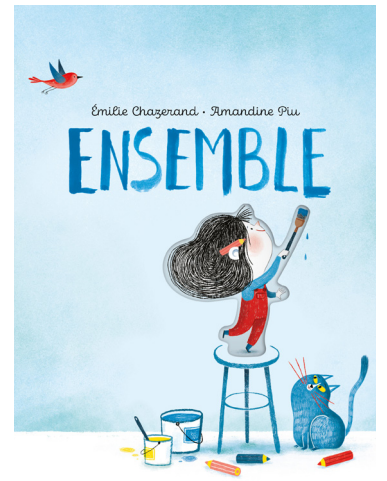
# ENSEMBLE

**ENSEMBLE, NOUS AIMONS ...**

**ENSEMBLE, NOUS AIMONS ...**

**ENSEMBLE, NOUS AIMONS ...**

**ENSEMBLE, NOUS AIMONS ...**



JOUER AU  
BALLON



PEINDRE



COURIR



CONSTRUIRE



LIRE



CHANTER



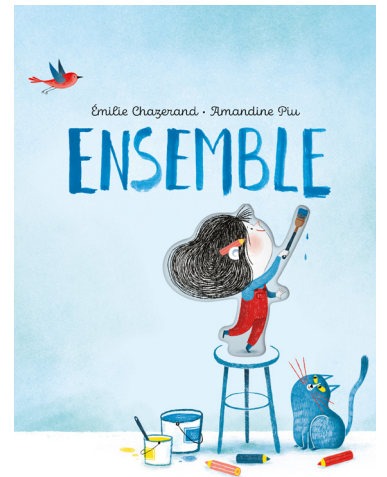
DANSER



DESSINER



APPRENDRE



COMPTER



FAIRE DES  
PUZZLES



FAIRE DES  
RONDES



JOUER À DES  
JEUX



JOUER AUX  
VOITURES



JARDINER



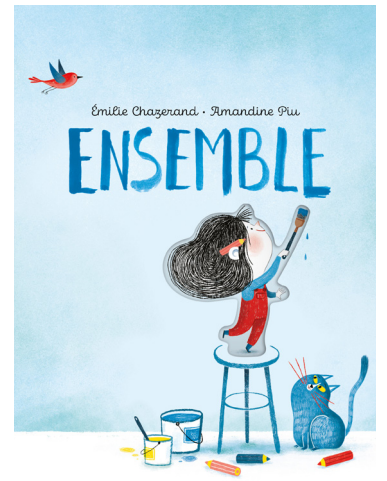
ÉCOUTER



MANGER



CUISINER



CRÉER

FAIRE DE LA  
MUSIQUE

FAIRE ÉCOLE  
DEHORS

JOUER  
DEHORS

PARTAGER

ÊTRE GENTIL

COOPÉRER

PARLER

IMAGINER

## Exploring Empathy and Anti-Racism with *Quelqu'un comme toi*



### Overview

- Grade: 3
- Subject: Anti-racism
- Duration: 45 minutes

### Objectives

- Students will use oral, written, visual, and digital texts to explore empathy and anti-racism, referencing *Quelqu'un comme toi* and connecting to core competencies.
  - Communication: Students share ideas, listen actively, and express understanding through discussion and art.
  - Thinking: Students reflect on identity, recognize fairness/unfairness, and generate inclusive ideas.
  - Personal & Social: Students develop empathy, respect diversity, and consider actions that support inclusion.
- Students will identify and reflect on similarities and differences among people, discussing how these foster respect for diversity.
- Students will express their thoughts on anti-racism and empathy through creative activities and structured discussions.
- Students will learn practical ways to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion in their school and community.
- Students will understand the importance of valuing all individuals, regardless of background or appearance.

### Materials

- *Quelqu'un comme toi* by Helen Docherty (physical or digital illustrated book).
- Chart paper, markers, and sticky notes for brainstorming and visual mapping.
- Drawing supplies such as colored pencils, crayons, and blank paper for creative projects.
- Access to tablets or computers for digital activities and research, if available.
- Projector or smartboard for displaying pages from the book and supporting resources.

### Lesson Outline:

## 1. Exploring Empathy and Anti-Racism Through Story (15 minutes)

- Introduce *Quelqu'un comme toi*, highlighting its focus on empathy and how it shows we are more alike than different.
- Read the book aloud, pausing to show illustrations and ask students about moments of kindness or challenging stereotypes.
- Discuss how the story demonstrates empathy and anti-racism, asking students to identify actions that promote inclusion.
- Invite students to share examples from their own lives or community where empathy and anti-racism were shown.
- Connect the story to core competencies by discussing fairness, justice, and challenging stereotypes.
- *Was anyone treated unfairly? How can we tell? How would that feel?*

### Core Competencies:

- Communication – expressing ideas and listening to others during discussion
- Personal & Social – recognizing emotions and perspectives (empathy)

## 2. Identifying and Valuing Differences (10 minutes)

- Guide students to brainstorm similarities and differences among people, using chart paper and sticky notes.
- Have students create a Venn diagram comparing themselves to a book character, focusing on traits and experiences.
- Discuss how differences make us unique and similarities help us connect, emphasizing respect for both.
- Use digital tools or interactive whiteboards to share students' diagrams and ideas.
- Encourage students to think of ways to appreciate differences and challenge stereotypes in everyday interactions.
- *What could we say if someone is left out because of how they look or where they come from?*
  - That's not fair.
  - Everyone can play.
  - Please stop.

### Core Competencies:

- *Thinking (Critical)* – identifying similarities/differences and challenging stereotypes
- *Personal & Social* – valuing diversity and building positive identity

## 3. Creative Expression: Anti-Racism Art Project (10 minutes)

- Invite students to draw a moment from the book showing empathy or anti-racism, using colored pencils and blank paper.
- Encourage students to add speech bubbles or captions expressing messages of inclusion, respect and allyship.
- Allow students to share their artwork with the class, explaining how their piece promotes anti-racism.
- Display finished pieces in the classroom or create a digital slideshow to celebrate diversity and inclusion.
- Ask students to reflect on how their artwork can inspire others to be more empathetic and inclusive.

### Core Competencies:

- *Thinking (Critical)* – identifying similarities/differences and challenging stereotypes
- *Personal & Social* – valuing diversity and building positive identity

## 4. Reflection and Sharing (10 minutes)

- Lead a closing circle where each student shares one thing they learned about empathy or anti-racism.
- Facilitate a written reflection where students write about how they can show empathy and challenge racism.

- Encourage students to discuss how they can apply the lesson’s ideas in their school, home, or community.
- Collect reflections and display them as part of an ongoing classroom commitment to kindness and inclusion.
- Invite students to revisit these reflections throughout the year as reminders of their responsibility to stand up against racism.

**Core Competencies:**

- *Communication* – sharing ideas clearly and respectfully
- *Personal & Social Responsibility* – reflecting on actions that support fairness and inclusion

## Anti-Racism Kit Supplementary Materials



### 1. Grapat “Happy Place” and “Together” Sets

A 40-piece loose parts set of wooden shapes used for building imaginative worlds and environments. Twelve wooden figures (“nins”) in varied shapes and skin tones represent diversity and support storytelling.

#### Play-Based Provocations:

- Invite children to build a community (classroom, neighbourhood, etc.)
- Ask: *Who lives here? Who belongs here?*
- Sort/group figures and discuss the thinking behind choices.
- Use with dramatic play (families, friendships, communities).

#### Anti-Racism Focus:

- Foster appreciative awareness: notice, name and celebrate differences observed among the nins.

## 2. Lakeshore Mix & Match Magnetic Families

### What it is:

Magnetic pieces that allow children to build diverse family structures by mixing faces, bodies, and clothing.

### Play-Based Provocations:

- Create different families and discuss similarities/differences.
- Ask: *What makes a family?*
- Encourage children to represent their own family.

### Anti-Racism Focus:

- Diverse family structures
- Interrupting “normative” assumptions about families and identity



### 3. Tru-Colour “Diversity in Healing” Bandages, Crayola Colors of the World Skin Tone Crayons and Roylco Card Characters, dēna Diversity Set

#### What it is:

Materials in multiple skin-tone shades designed to better reflect human diversity.

#### Provocations:

- Create a display along with the World of Skin Tone Crayons, dēna stackers and card characters
- Ask: *What do you notice? What do you wonder?*
- Use in conjunction with “More than Peach”

#### Optional Follow-Up Questions After Reading

- What did the girl in the story want people to understand?
- Why did the word “peach” not feel right to her?
- What could we change in our classroom to help everyone feel included?
- What colours would you choose to make a self-portrait that really looks like you?

#### Anti-Racism Focus:

- Examining assumptions about “default” skin colour
- Affirming identity and visibility

Note: the dēna figures were inspired by Angelica Dass’s photos for the Humanae project, in which over 4000 individuals were matched with Pantone paint hues based on the colours of pixels taken from the nose of each subject. See the project at [angelicadass.com/photography/humanae](http://angelicadass.com/photography/humanae)

