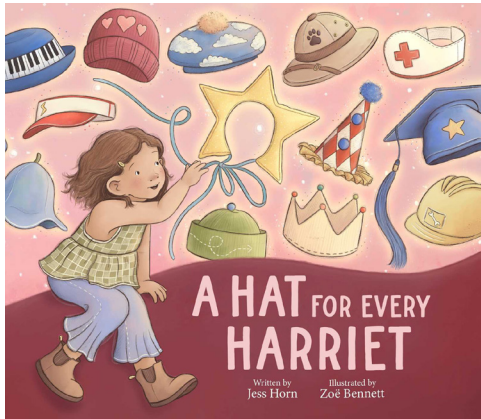


Teacher Notes

A Hat for Every Harriet

Written by Jess Horn and Illustrated by Zoe Bennett

Teacher notes prepared by Emma Egan



Publication details

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Reader ages: 4-8 years

About the Book

Harriet wears many hats. She has a hat for listening, for following the rules and even for being silly. Harriet wears a different hat for every job, because every job needs a different Harriet.

But one day, Harriet has too many hats to wear. Can she find a way to just be herself?

From the creators of *Bernie Thinks in Boxes* comes a beautiful story about thinking differently and accepting yourself in a neurotypical world.

About the Author

Jess Horn is a Sydney-based, neurodivergent children's author and former speech pathologist whose books celebrate imagination, inclusivity and diversity. Her CBCA Notable debut picture book, *Bernie Thinks in Boxes*, was selected for the 2025 Victorian Government Prep Bags. With humour and heart, her stories explore the world from unique perspectives, bringing warmth and authenticity to every page. Aside from writing, Jess enjoys coffee (who doesn't?) and spoonerisms (doo husn't?).

About the Illustrator

Zoë Bennett is an illustrator based in Sydney, Australia. Her work aims to capture the playfulness, curiosity and candidness of childhood, family and ordinary moments. She especially loves to capture quintessentially Australian scenes, colour palettes and characters. Picture books she has illustrated have been recognised by the Australian Children's Book Council Awards and government initiatives. With a background in biological sciences Zoë enjoys the unique experience of having a biologist brain and following her creative aspirations.

Curriculum Connections

Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 & Australian Curriculum V9.0

EYLF V2.0

- Outcome 1
- Outcome 3
- Outcome 5

Foundation

- AC9EFLE01
- AC9EFLE02
- AC9EFLE05
- AC9EFLY02
- AC9EFLY05

Year 1

- AC9E1LE01
- AC9E1LE02
- AC9E1LE05
- AC9E1LY02
- AC9E1LY05

Year 2

- AC9E2LE01
- AC9E2LE02
- AC9E2LE05
- AC9E2LY02
- AC9E2LY05

Why Teach This Book?

Children quickly learn that different situations often come with different expectations. They might be a careful listener in the classroom, a playful friend in the playground or a helpful sibling at home. A Hat for Every Harriet explores these everyday experiences through Harriet's many hats, inviting children to think about the different roles they play and how these can shape the way they see themselves.

As Harriet struggles to decide which 'hat' she needs, the story opens the door to meaningful conversations about identity, belonging and self-confidence. It gently reminds children that while it is helpful to adapt to different situations, they don't have to lose sight of who they really are. Harriet's journey encourages children to think about their own strengths, talk about their feelings and recognise that they do not need to change who they are to belong.

Through Harriet's experiences, children can develop oral language, explore social and emotional ideas and engage in thoughtful classroom conversations. It supports learning across literacy, personal and social capability, and wellbeing while celebrating the confidence that comes from feeling comfortable as your authentic self.

Themes

- Identity – Exploring the different roles we take on in everyday life while discovering that our true selves are enough.
- Belonging – Understanding the desire to fit in and recognising that we don't have to change who we are to feel accepted.
- Self-confidence – Learning to trust yourself, value your own strengths and feel comfortable being authentic.
- Emotional Regulation – Recognising big feelings and exploring healthy ways to manage emotions in different situations.
- Friendship – Appreciating the importance of supportive friends who encourage us to be ourselves and remind us that we are enough.

Concepts

- Choices – Recognising that our decisions influence how we respond to challenges, friendships and everyday situations.
- Emotions – Identifying, understanding and managing a range of feelings in positive and healthy ways.
- Belonging – Considering what it means to feel accepted while remaining true to yourself.
- Perspective – Understanding that we sometimes see ourselves differently from the way others see us.
- Confidence – Developing the courage to trust yourself and participate without worrying about being perfect.
- Relationships – Exploring how friends and trusted people can support us, encourage us and help us grow.
- Authenticity – Learning that we don't need to pretend to be someone else to be accepted and valued.

Rich Vocabulary

Word / Child-friendly meaning / Talk About It

Bursting

- Feeling so full of excitement or energy that it feels hard to stay still.
- Can you remember a time when you felt bursting with excitement? What happened?

Sensible

- Making safe and thoughtful choices.
- What is something sensible you do every day? Why is it important?

Follower

- Someone who lets another person lead or make the decisions.
- Is it always good to be a follower? When might it be better to make your own choices?

Wobbly

- Shaking or not steady.

What things have you seen that are wobbly? What can make something wobble?

Scattered

- Spread out in lots of different places.
- Have you ever dropped something and watched it scatter? What happened?

Glared

- Looked at someone or something with an angry or frustrated expression.
- How can you tell how someone is feeling just by looking at their face?

Enormous

- Very, very big.
- What is the most enormous thing you have ever seen?

Collection

- A group of things that have been gathered and kept together.
- Do you collect anything? Why is it special to you?

Story Stops

Story Stops are carefully chosen moments to pause during reading. They encourage students to predict, observe, discuss and wonder. This helps them become active, thoughtful readers.

Story Stop 1 – Look Closely

When: Before reading the book.

Ask:

- Spend a minute exploring the cover and endpapers.
- What do you notice?
- Why do you think Harriet is wearing so many hats?
- What do you think this story might be about?

Teacher Tip

Resist the urge to rush into reading. Giving children time to simply look, notice and wonder often leads to the richest discussions later in the story.

Story Stop 2 – Talk Together

When: After Harriet has introduced her different hats.

Ask:

- Which hat do you think Harriet wears the most?
- Is there a hat you think everyone might need sometimes?
- Do you ever act differently at home, at school or with your friends?

Teacher Tip

Children won't all see Harriet's hats in the same way, and that's okay. Invite them to explain their thinking and listen to different ideas rather than looking for one 'right' answer.

Story Stop 3 – Pause & Predict

When: After Harriet worries she'll need all of her hats for decorating the school hall.

Ask:

- What do you think will happen if Harriet wears all of her hats?
- How do you think Harriet is feeling?
- What clues helped you make your prediction?

Teacher Tip

Predictions don't have to be correct to be valuable. Encourage children to explain which words or illustrations helped them make their prediction.

Story Stop 4 – Think Like the Author

When: After Bernie says, "*Just be yourself.*"

Ask:

- Why do you think the author included those words?
- Why is Harriet finding it hard to be 'just Harriet'?
- Why do you think the author chose hats to tell this story?

Teacher Tip

This is a wonderful opportunity to explore how authors use ordinary objects to help tell a story. Let children share their own ideas before offering any interpretation.

Story Stop 5 – Connect

When: At the end of the story.

Ask:

- Has there ever been a time when you worried about fitting in?
- Is there a time when you feel most like yourself?
- Does Harriet remind you of anyone you know? How are they alike?

Teacher Tip

Some children will make personal connections, while others will connect the story to a friend, family member or another book. Every connection helps deepen their understanding.

Story Stop 6 – Wonder

When: At the end of the story.

Ask:

- I wonder what Harriet will do the next time she feels she needs a hat.
- I wonder if everyone has invisible 'hats' they wear sometimes.
- I wonder what Harriet has discovered about herself.

Teacher Tip

There doesn't need to be a final answer. Sometimes the best conversations happen when children are free to wonder, imagine and build on each other's ideas.

Dialogic Questions – Before Reading

Picture Walk

- What do you notice about Harriet on the cover?
- What clues can you find about what this story might be about?
- What do you notice about Harriet's facial expressions?
- What questions do you have before we begin reading?

Wonderings

- I wonder why Harriet has so many different hats.

- I wonder which hat Harriet wears the most.
- I wonder what problem Harriet might have to solve.

Prediction

- Why do you think Harriet has so many hats?
- What do you think Harriet might do with all of them?
- What do you think will happen in this story?

Vocabulary

- What does the word collection mean?
- What do you think it means to make a sensible choice?
- Have you ever heard someone say they were bursting with excitement? What do you think they meant?

Prior Experiences

- Do you own a favourite hat? When do you wear it?
- Have you ever worn a special hat for a particular activity or celebration?
- Do you have a collection of something? Tell us about it.

Dialogic Questions – During Reading

Inference

- How do you think Harriet is feeling right now? What makes you think that?
- What do you think Harriet is thinking?
- Have Harriet's feelings changed since the beginning of the story? What clues helped you notice?

Illustrations

- What do you notice in the illustrations that the words don't tell us?
- What do Harriet's facial expressions tell you?
- Is there a page that made you stop and look a little longer? What did you notice?

Connections

- Does anything in this part of the story remind you of something you've seen, done or felt?
- Have you ever seen someone wearing a special hat? What was it for?

Prediction

- What do you think Harriet will do next?
- Do you think Harriet's problem will be easy or difficult to solve? Why?
- What clues helped you make your prediction?

Wonderings

- What are you wondering about Harriet?
- Is there anything you're still curious about?
- What question would you like to ask Harriet right now?

Dialogic Questions – After Reading

Reflection

- How did Harriet change from the beginning of the story to the end?
- What do you think Harriet discovered about herself?
- Was there a moment in the story that surprised you? Why?

Evaluation

- What did you enjoy most about this story?
- Was there a part that made you stop and think? What was it?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Author's Purpose

- Why do you think Jess Horn and Zoe Bennett wrote this story?
- Why do you think the author chose hats to tell Harriet's story?
- What do you think the author wanted readers to think

about after finishing the book?

Favourite Moment

- Which page would you like to visit if you could step inside the story?
- Which part of Harriet's journey will you remember the most?
- Which moment do you think Harriet will remember for a long time?

Extension Thinking

- If you could give Harriet one piece of advice, what would you say?
- If you could invent your own special hat, what would it help you do?
- What do you think happened after the story ended?

Learning Experiences

These learning experiences invite students to extend the ideas from the story through creativity, investigation and personal reflection.

My Many Me's (Create)

We all have different parts of our personality.

Draw a picture of yourself in the middle of the page. Around your picture, draw or write different things that make you who you are. These could be things you enjoy, things you're good at, people who are important to you or words that describe you.

Talk about:

- Are all these things part of the same person?
- Which one are you most proud of?

Challenge:

Add something that other people might not know about you.

Hat Swap (Perform)

Work with a partner to act out a short scene using one of Harriet's hats.

You might choose:

- the Sensible Hat
- the Clown Hat
- the Listener Hat
- the Calm-Down Hat

After each performance, ask the class:

- Which hat do you think they were wearing?
- What clues helped you decide?

Challenge:

Create your own new hat and perform a scene using it.

Hats Around Us (Investigate)

Hats can tell us a lot about what people do.

Look at pictures of different hats or talk about hats you have seen.

Investigate:

- Who wears these hats?
- How do they help people?
- Which hats keep people safe?
- Which hats are worn for celebrations or special occasions?

Challenge:

Design a new hat for a job that doesn't have one yet. Explain how it would help.

Dear Harriet... (Respond)

Imagine Harriet is your friend.

Write or draw a message to Harriet.

You might tell her:

- something you admire about her
- a time she was brave
- something you would like her to remember

Challenge:

Write Harriet's reply back to you.

Inside My Backpack (Explore)

Imagine someone wanted to learn about you, but instead of meeting you, they could only look inside your backpack.

Choose five things you would pack that tell others something about who you are. They might be favourite things, things you enjoy doing, something that is important to you or something that makes you smile.

For each item, explain why you chose it.

Talk about:

- What do your five items tell us about you?
- Which item would you never leave behind?
- Did anyone choose something that surprised you?

Challenge:

Choose one item that doesn't belong in a backpack but still tells others something about who you are. Explain why you chose it.

Book Check

Before You Close the Book...

- One idea I'll keep thinking about...
- One connection I made...
- One thing that surprised me...
- One question I still have...