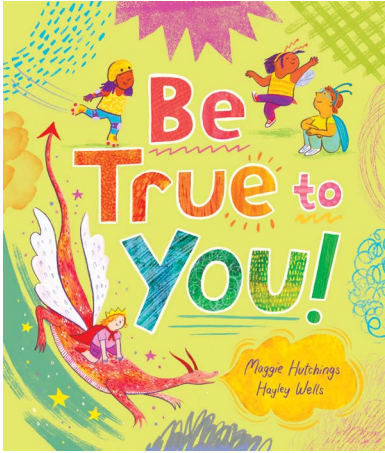




Teacher Notes

Be True to You

by Maggie Hutchings and Hayley Wells

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh.

Publication details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781922863898
Size/format: 270 x 230mm, 24 pages, HB
RRP: \$22.99
Pub Date: 28 May 2024
Reader ages: 3-7 years

Themes

- Confidence
- Self-love
- Celebrating difference

About the Book

Inside every body

a heart sings brave and true.

Slow down and listen carefully.

It's singing ...

'This is YOU!'

A wonderfully uplifting reminder that we are all different, and that showing our true selves to the world is never wrong.

About the Author and Illustrator

Maggie Hutchings is a counsellor, family-dispute mediator, writer and artist who spends her weekends covered in paint and scribbling lists that are never completed. She is a famously mad aunt, nanna and mother who talks to herself out loud and falls over a lot in the garden at her house in northern New South Wales. Maggie writes stories with heart and soul for children and adults that encourage kindness, hope and resilience.

Hayley Wells is an Essex-based illustrator with an MA in Children's Book Illustration from Cambridge School of Art. Their first illustrated picture book, *The Spectacular Suit*, was published by Scribble in 2021 and their author-illustrator debut, *The More Monster*, was published by Pavilion in 2022. When they're not illustrating, Hayley can be found growing vegetables at their allotment or falling over on roller skates.

Before Reading:

- Reflect on the title of the book *Be True to You*. What do you think it means to be true to yourself? Is it an easy thing to do?
- Explore the cover of the book – how does it make you feel? What kind of story do you think this is going to be?

Before Reading continued:

- Read the blurb of the book aloud. What information does it give you about the following –
 - Who the book is about (character)
 - What happens in the book (plot)
 - Where the story takes place (setting)

Comprehension questions

- According to the book, what is inside everybody?
- What is the heart singing? Who is it singing to?
- Who gets to tell you who you are?
- Is everyone the same? What are some of the differences between the characters in the book?
- What are some other words for difference?
- Is difference always visible?
- What does the book suggest you say to someone if they seem alone or sad? What else could you say?
- What does the book tell you to do if someone doesn't like who you are?
- What does the word 'symphony' mean? How is the world like a symphony?
- Why do you think it's important to feel proud of who you are? How does it feel when someone doesn't like you, or wants you to be more like someone else?
- Why might people feel that they need to hide who they really are? How can we help them to feel supported?
- How does the illustrator use shapes and colours to show difference in the book?
- What would the world be like if everybody was the same?

Literacy

- **Vocabulary:** make a list of all of any new words you encounter in the story. Look them up and write down the meaning in your own words. Try to practice using them at least three times throughout the week.
- **Metaphors** are when someone compares one thing to another without using the words 'like' or 'as' (you can watch an easy video on metaphors here - https://youtu.be/kVNal4_izVU). The story uses a symphony as a metaphor to show how difference is a good thing. What is the difference between a metaphor and a simile?
- Come up with a simile for the following, and then see if you can turn one into a metaphor.
 - Felix is fast, like a _____
 - The sun is hot, like _____
 - I'm as hungry as a _____
- Can you come up with another metaphor for difference?
- **Rhyming pairs** - when we find two words that rhyme we call them a rhyming pair, and there are a lot of these in the story! Underline the rhyming words you encounter as you read. Why do you think the author of this book has chosen to use rhyme? Where else do you hear rhymes like this?

Final reflections

- If you could give a copy of this book to one person, who would it be? Why?
- If this story was about you and your friends, what are some of the differences it would show?
- Did the book change the way you think about yourself or someone else? How do you think the story is trying to make you feel?
- Finish this sentence. This is a book about _____.

Creative Activities

- One of the themes of the book is difference – accepting and celebrating difference in other people and in ourselves. Describe some of the differences you see in people in the book? What are some of the things that make you different to the people in your class? In your family? In your friendship groups?
- Think of one thing that really makes you feel like yourself – maybe it's an activity, or something to wear, or something you need to say. Draw a picture that shows you as you see yourself with the caption 'Hello, this is me!'
- How does your school celebrate difference? In small groups, come up with a way to celebrate and share some of the differences in your classroom – it might be sharing food from your families, or telling stories or dancing. The first thing you'll need to do is figure out what makes you all different!
- Think about a time where you've felt absolutely, 100% yourself, and write about it.