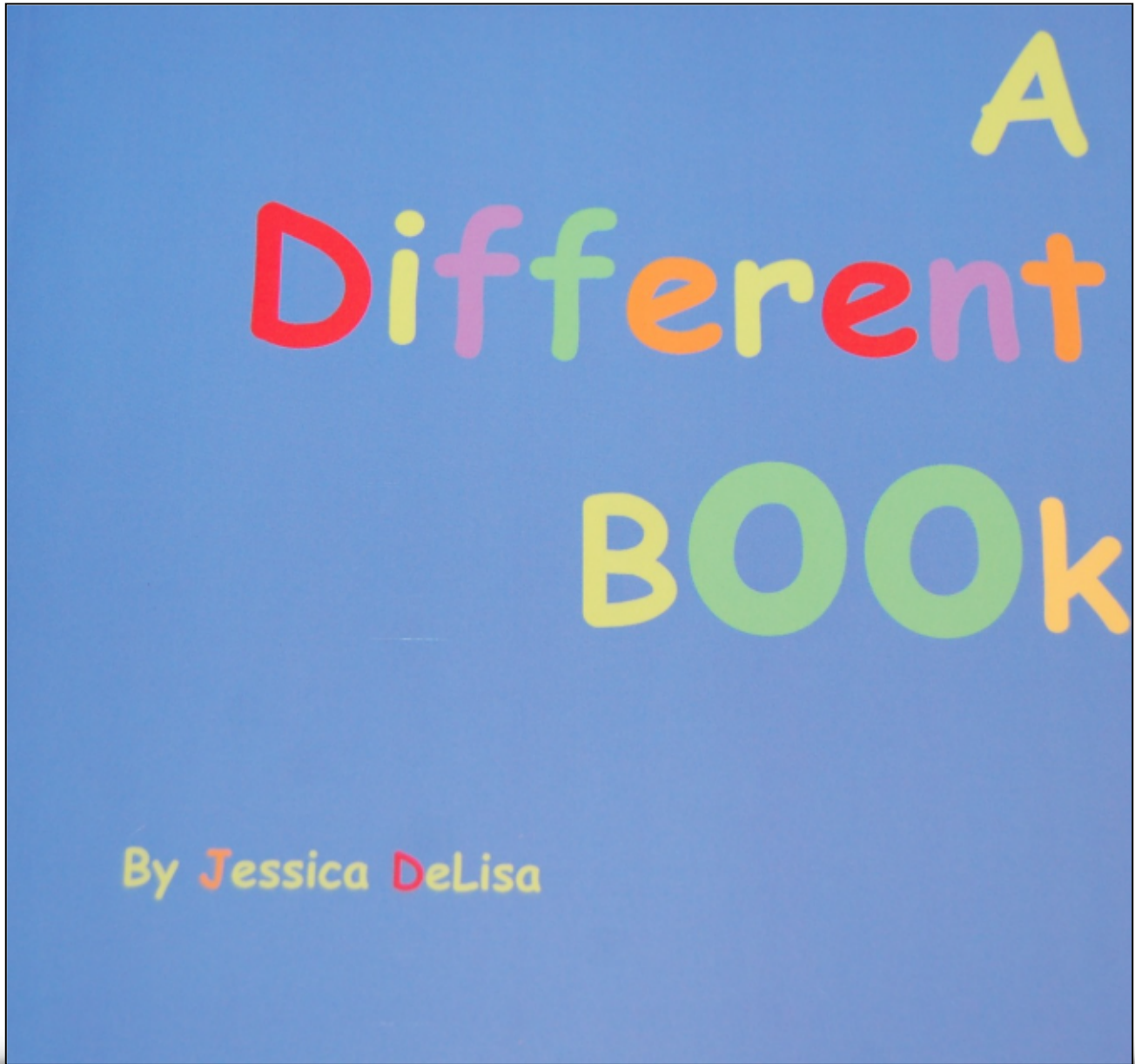


Educators' Companion Guide

Interactive reading. Meaningful conversations.
Confident learners.



Classroom Activities • Discussion Questions • SEL
Connections • Writing Extensions

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Welcome

Thank you for choosing *A Different Book* to share with your students.

As an educator, I have always believed that some of the most meaningful classroom conversations begin with a meaningful reading experience. *A Different Book* was created to do more than entertain—it invites children to participate, wonder, laugh, and discover that the things that make us different are often the things that make us special.

Whether you are reading this book during a morning meeting, a literacy lesson, or a social-emotional learning activity, my hope is that it creates opportunities for students to celebrate individuality, practice empathy, and recognize the unique strengths they each bring to your classroom community.

This guide was designed to help you extend those conversations with engaging questions, classroom activities, and writing prompts that encourage reflection, creativity, and connection.

Thank you for helping children discover the joy of being themselves.

– Jessica DeLisa, Ed.D.

Jessica's Classroom Tip

Many students naturally ask how *A Different Book* was created after hearing it read aloud.

Use this curiosity as an opportunity to talk about the writing process. Share that books begin as ideas, improve through revision, and become reality because someone decides to create them.

Students often leave believing:

"Maybe I could write a book someday."

That may be one of the most meaningful lessons they take away.

Quick Start

Recommended Grades

PreK–Grade 6

Best Used For

- Beginning of the school year
- Building classroom community
- Morning Meeting
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Character Education
- Library lessons
- Celebrating individuality and belonging

Time Needed

15–20 minutes

(Additional activities can extend the lesson.)

Materials

- *A Different Book*
- Chart paper or whiteboard (optional)
- Student journals or writing paper (optional)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for extension activities

Learning Focus

After participating in *A Different Book*, students will:

- Recognize that differences make each person unique.
- Reflect on the qualities that make them special.
- Practice listening and following directions during an interactive reading experience.
- Participate respectfully in whole-group discussions.
- Celebrate the unique strengths of their classmates.

Preparing for Your Read-Aloud

A Different Book is designed to surprise, engage, and delight readers. While it's easy to pick up and enjoy, taking a few minutes to prepare will help you create the best possible experience for your students.

Read the Book Before Sharing It

Read through the book once on your own before introducing it to students. Becoming familiar with the interactive moments will help you read confidently and give students time to react, laugh, wonder, and participate throughout the experience.

Let Students Enjoy the Moment

One of the joys of *A Different Book* is watching students respond. Resist the urge to rush through the pages. Pause often, allow students to react naturally, and let their curiosity guide the conversation. Some of the best moments happen in the pauses.

A Note About “Edde”

One page includes the name Edde, an alternative spelling of the more familiar spelling Eddie. Simply pronounce it “Eddie” and continue. You make a statement that the spelling is different. Students are often intrigued by the different spelling, which naturally reinforces the book's message that being different is something to celebrate.

Preserve the Surprise

During one of the interactions, readers are instructed to close the book and open it again.

Learn the Tricks:

- Close the book with your left hand. The back cover will be showing.
- The back cover says “Open Me,” creating another interactive surprise.
- With back cover showing, open the book starting from the back and continue reading.
- You will need to skip past the white blank page that is required for printing. You may remove this page from your copy.

Teacher Tip: Before this moment, **hold the book so students cannot see the back cover.** Preserving the surprise makes the ending much more memorable.

Don’t Worry About Getting it Perfect

Every group of children responds a little differently—and that's part of the fun. Enjoy the experience alongside your students, embrace the unexpected, and let their curiosity shape the conversation.

Before you Begin

Activate Student Thinking

Before showing the book, ask students:

“What do you think could make a book different?”

Allow students to share their ideas. You might hear responses such as:

- It could have no pictures.
- It could be upside down.
- It could tell a funny story.
- It could be really tiny or really big.
- It could let you make choices.
- It could be interactive.

There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is simply to spark curiosity and encourage students to begin thinking creatively.

Build Anticipation

After students have shared, hold up the book without revealing the back cover and say:

"Today we're going to read *A Different Book*. As we read, pay close attention and see if you can figure out what makes this book different."

Avoid giving additional clues. Let students make discoveries throughout the reading experience.

Teacher Tip

Children love making predictions. This brief conversation creates curiosity before the first page is even read and encourages students to become active participants in the experience.

Making predictions before reading activates prior knowledge and increases engagement by giving students a purpose for reading.

Discussion Questions

Let's Remember

These help students revisit the experience.

- What made this book different from other books you've read?
- What surprised you the most?
- Which part made you laugh or smile?
- Were there any parts you didn't expect?
- What directions did you have to follow during the reading?
-

Why It works: Beginning with recall helps every student enter the discussion successfully before moving into deeper thinking.

Let's Reflect

These help students connect the experience to themselves.

- What makes you unique?
- Have you ever felt different from someone else?
- Why do you think being different can be a good thing?
- What is something you're proud of about yourself?
- What is something special that another person brings to your classroom?
- What is the same about about the book and how we treat the book?
-

Why It works: Reflection encourages students to connect the book's message to their own experiences and develop self-awareness.

Let's Grow

These move students from thinking to action.

- How can we celebrate differences in our classroom?
- What can we do when someone feels left out?
- How can we help classmates feel like they belong?
- What's one way you can encourage someone this week?
- What is one unique strength you can share with others?

Why It works: Ending with action helps students transfer the book's message into everyday classroom interactions.

Teacher Tip

There are no "correct" answers to these questions. Encourage students to listen respectfully, build on one another's ideas, and celebrate the variety of responses shared by the class.

Classroom Activities

Activity 1 (PreK – Grade 1): Everyone Is Different, Everyone Belongs

Objective

Students will recognize that every person has unique qualities and that our differences make our classroom special.

Time

15–20 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper or plain paper
- Crayons or markers
-

Directions

1. After reading *A Different Book*, ask students:
2. "What is something that makes you special?"
3. Invite each student to draw a picture of themselves doing something they enjoy or showing something that makes them unique.
4. When everyone has finished, invite students to share one thing about their picture with the class.
5. Display the pictures together on a bulletin board titled:

Our Classroom Is Different—and That's Wonderful!

Why It Works

Giving students an opportunity to celebrate themselves while learning about their classmates helps build belonging and appreciation for individual differences.

Extension

Have students walk around the room and find one thing they have in common with another student's picture and one thing that is different.

Teacher Tip

Encourage students to think of things that might be different from most of the other students.

Activity 2 (Grade 2–3): Things That Make Me, Me

Objective

Students will reflect on their unique qualities and recognize that everyone contributes something valuable to the classroom community.

Time

20–30 minutes

Materials

- Writing paper
- Crayons or colored pencils

Directions

Complete the sentence:

I am different because...

Students should include:

- something they enjoy
- something they are good at
- something that makes them unique
- something they are proud of

Invite volunteers to share.

Discuss:

How would our classroom be different if everyone were exactly the same?

Why It Works

This activity helps students build self-awareness while recognizing the value of diversity within a classroom community.

Extension

Create a classroom book titled:

The Things That Make Us Different

Activity 3 (Grade 4–6): People Might Not Know...

Objective

Students will reflect on the experiences, strengths, interests, and qualities that make them unique while building empathy and appreciation for their classmates.

Time

20–30 minutes

Materials

- Student journal or writing paper

Directions

Invite students to complete the sentence:

People might not know that...

Encourage them to share something that others may not know about them. Examples might include:

- a talent or hobby
- a favorite tradition
- a challenge they have overcome
- something they are proud of
- an interesting fact about themselves

After writing, invite students to share with a partner, a small group, or the class if they feel comfortable.

Conclude with a discussion:

- What did you learn about your classmates?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Why is it important not to make assumptions about others?
-

Why It Works

Students often discover that every classmate has experiences, strengths, and stories that aren't immediately visible. This activity builds empathy while encouraging students to value one another beyond first impressions.

Extension

Create a classroom display titled:

More Than Meets the Eye

Students may choose one sentence from their writing to anonymously display.

Activity 4 (Grade 4–6): What Would We Lose?

Objective

Students will explore how individual differences strengthen a classroom community and recognize the importance of belonging.

Time

20–30 minutes

Materials

- Chart paper
- Sticky notes (Optional)

Directions

Ask students:

What if everyone in our classroom were exactly the same?

In small groups, have students brainstorm what would be lost if everyone had the same:

- ideas
- talents
- interests
- personalities
- cultures
- perspectives
- dreams

After sharing, ask groups to complete this statement:

Our classroom is stronger because...

As a class, develop a shared definition of:

Belonging, respect, empathy, or acceptance.

Record the class definition and display it throughout the year.

Why It Works

Students move beyond simply accepting differences to recognizing that differences strengthen communities. They begin to see belonging as something they can actively create for others.

Extension

Have students identify one action they can take this week to help every classmate feel that they belong.

Activity 5 (All Grades): Make Your Own Book

(A Planning Worksheet is included on p. 16–17)

Objective

Students will apply what they learned from *A Different Book* by designing their own interactive book and discovering that authors use creativity to surprise, engage, and inspire their readers.

Materials

Time

30-60 minutes

- Paper
- Construction paper or cardstock for a cover
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Stapler, binding rings, or another method for assembling pages

Directions

Begin by asking students:

What made *A Different Book* different?

Encourage students to think beyond the message and consider the reading experience itself.

Then ask:

If you were an author, how could you make your book different?

Brainstorm ideas together before students begin planning.

Invite students to create their own interactive book. Their books might:

- ask readers to participate
- include surprises
- use unusual page layouts
- encourage movement
- invite readers to solve a problem
- tell a story in a unique way
- celebrate something that makes them unique

When students finish, invite them to read their books with classmates, younger students, or family members.

Why It Works

Creating their own books helps students move from being readers to becoming authors. They begin thinking intentionally about audience, creativity, and how authors design experiences for readers.

Writing Extensions

Reflect

These prompts help students connect the book's message to their own lives.

Choose one:

- What makes you different, and why are you proud of it?
- Describe a time when being different helped you or someone else.
- If everyone in the world were exactly the same, what would life be like?

Why It works: Reflection helps students build self-awareness and connect literature to their own experiences.

Imagine

These prompts encourage creativity.

Choose one:

- Imagine your classroom suddenly became "different." What would happen?
- If you could create one page to add to *A Different Book*, what would it say?
- Invent a completely new kind of book. What would make it different?

Why It works: Creative thinking encourages students to stretch their imagination while applying the ideas from the book.

Encourage

These prompts help students build empathy.

Choose one:

- Write a letter to someone who feels different.
- Write a note encouraging a younger student to be proud of who they are.
- Write about a classmate's strength and why it makes your classroom better.

Why It works: Writing for a real audience helps students practice kindness while reinforcing the message of belonging.



These prompts move students into action.

Choose one:

- Design a classroom where every student feels like they belong.
- Make a list of five ways your class can celebrate differences this year.
- Write one goal for helping someone feel included this week.

Why It works: Students move from understanding the message to living it.

★ **Jessica's Classroom Tip**

Invite students to choose the prompt that speaks to them rather than assigning the same one to everyone. Giving students voice and choice often leads to more meaningful writing and stronger classroom discussions.

Continue the Conversation

One of the greatest gifts of *A Different Book* is that it often sparks conversations long after the reading experience ends.

Some classes may spend time discussing individuality and belonging. Others may become excited about writing their own books. Still others may explore kindness, creativity, or the many ways people contribute to a community.

Follow your students' curiosity.

The most meaningful learning often begins with the questions students ask after the book is over.

★ **Jessica's Reflection**

I hope *A Different Book* is more than a one-time read-aloud.

I hope it becomes a reminder that classrooms are strongest when every child feels seen, valued, and encouraged to be themselves.

Thank you for creating those kinds of classrooms every day.

— Jessica

Continue the Connection

There is no single "right" way to extend the learning from *A Different Book*. Every classroom is unique, and every group of students will respond differently.

As an educator, you know your students best. If they become interested in another topic or activity inspired by the book, lean into that curiosity. Whether you choose additional writing, art, STEM, social-emotional learning, drama, or another creative extension, those experiences can deepen students' understanding and make the message even more meaningful.

The goal isn't to complete every activity in this guide—it's to create opportunities for students to think, participate, and celebrate what makes themselves and others unique.

Family Connection

Send students home with one simple conversation starter:

What makes each member of our family unique, and how do those differences make our family stronger?

Encourage students to share one thing they learned about a family member that they didn't know before.

Classroom Challenge

This week, notice one unique strength in a different classmate each day.

At the end of the week, reflect:

How did looking for the best in others change the way you saw your classmates?

Keep Exploring

Continue building classroom conversations around:

- Confidence
- Belonging
- Individuality
- Kindness
- Creativity
- Perspective
- Empathy
- Growth

These themes can be revisited throughout the school year and naturally connect to literacy, social-emotional learning, classroom community, and character education.

Name _____

Plan Your Own Different Book

Let's plan for you to create a book unlike any other.

Start by thinking about these questions.

1. What will make your book different?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ It asks readers to do something. | ☐ It uses unusual pages. |
| ☐ It has a surprise. | ☐ It makes readers think. |
| ☐ It tells the story in a unique way. | ☐ Something completely different! |

My idea:

2. What message do you want your readers to remember?

Circle one or write your own.

Kindness	Being yourself
Friendship	Helping others
Confidence	Never giving up

My own message:

3. How will readers interact with your book?

Will they...

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Answer questions? | ☐ Solve something? |
| ☐ Turn the book? | ☐ Make a choice? |
| ☐ Stand up? | ☐ Something else? |
| ☐ Laugh? | |

4. Sketch your cover.

5. Finish this sentence.

When someone finishes reading my book, I hope they...

Jessica DeLisa's Challenge ★

Great authors don't just write books.

They create experiences.

How will your book surprise your reader?

A letter from the author

Dear Educator,

Thank you for sharing A Different Book with the children in your life.

Long before I became an educator, I dreamed of becoming an author. I wanted to write a children's book with a message that would stay with readers long after they closed the cover. The challenge was that I couldn't illustrate, and for a long time I believed that meant my dream had to wait.

While studying creativity, I realized I had been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking, "How can I make a children's book with pictures?" I began asking, "What if a children's book didn't need pictures to be memorable?"

That simple shift became A Different Book.

As I began sharing the book with students, I noticed something remarkable. Children laughed, gasped, leaned in, asked questions, and couldn't wait to figure out what would happen next. One young boy looked at me after we finished reading and joyously said,

"That book is magic."

He reminded me that children are wonderfully open to new possibilities when we invite them to experience something different.

But beneath the interaction is the message that matters most to me.

Like many children, I often felt different growing up. Those experiences shaped who I am and eventually inspired this book. My hope is that every child who reads A Different Book leaves knowing that the things that make us different can also become our greatest strengths.

As educators, we have the privilege of helping children recognize that truth—not only through the books we share, but through the classrooms we create.

Thank you for creating spaces where children are encouraged to wonder, participate, and celebrate what makes them uniquely themselves.

Warmly,

Jessica DeLisa, Ed.D.

Continue the Journey

Bring A Different Book to Your Classroom

Author Visits

Interactive presentations designed to:

- Spark curiosity and creativity
- Inspire young writers
- Celebrate individuality
- Give students a behind-the-scenes look at the writing and publishing process

Professional Learning

Workshops and presentations for educators on topics including:

- Student ownership of learning
- Data-informed classrooms
- Supporting students who face adversity

Get Your Copy of *A Different Book*

A Different Book is available through:



Amazon (Prime eligible)

or



JessicaDeLisa.com

A Note About Amazon

Because *A Different Book* is printed on demand, Amazon may occasionally display **"Temporarily Out of Stock."**

If you see that message, don't worry—it simply means Amazon is waiting for an order before printing. Orders are still accepted and fulfilled.

Stay Connected

Visit **JessicaDeLisa.com** for:

- Author visit information
- Professional learning opportunities
- Speaking and conference information



Let's Stay Connected

I'd love to see how your students use *A Different Book*.

Share photos of classroom activities, student-created books (without student faces unless permitted), or bulletin boards inspired by the book. Send to jessicadelisa@gmail.com or tag **@JessicaDeLisa**

One final thought...

Every child deserves someone who believes in their potential. Thank you for being that person.