



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

All stages of Primary School

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Life Skills; Civics and Citizenship
- **General capabilities:** Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Visual Language; Ethical Understanding; Personal and Social Capability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Learning about literacy and language
- Developing emotional intelligence
- Learning about ethics
- Learning about visual literacy
- Learning about picture books through imaginative thinking and creativity
- Learning about sustainability and the environment
- For fun!

THEMES

- Friendship
- Community and citizenship
- Kindness and empathy
- Resilience and wellbeing
- Sustainability and climate change
- STEM through space exploration

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Tracey Dembo

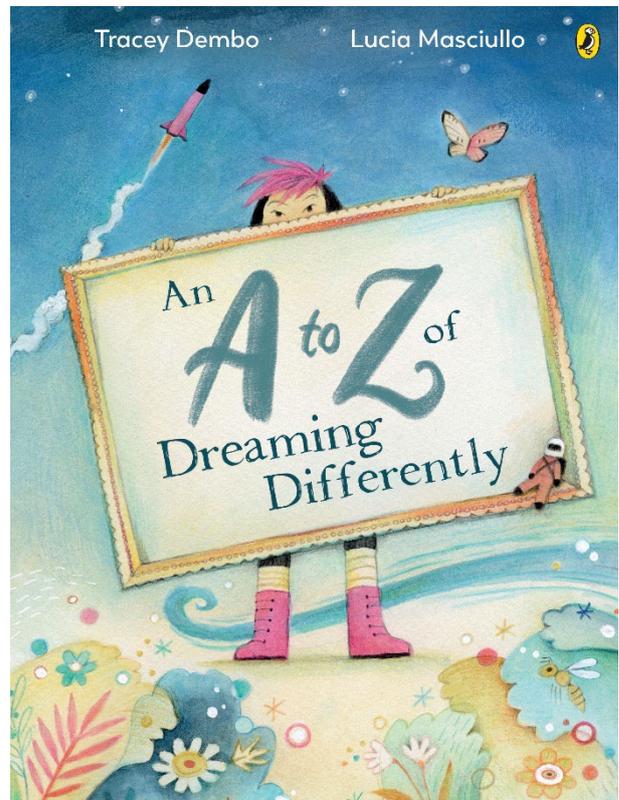
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Tracey Dembo

Lucia Masciullo



An A to Z of Dreaming Differently

Tracey Dembo & Lucia Masciullo

PLOT SUMMARY

A is for Attitude.

May you have bucketloads of it, kid.

B is for Brave and Bold.

Two good things to be.

This affirming alphabet story is a reminder to be yourself, without apology. And no matter the zig-zag journey, don't ever give up on dreams.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tracey Dembo is a children's author who is passionate about encouraging big questions, daring dreams and wild imaginations. She believes in the importance of play, and has a strong interest in children's early learning and development. Tracey was awarded a mentorship in the 2020 Maurice Saxby Creative Development Program. Her debut picture book is *An A to Z of Dreaming Differently*.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lucia Masciullo grew up in Livorno, Tuscany. She moved to Australia in 2007 and since then she has been happily working as an illustrator. She has illustrated more than 20 books, among which are the CBCA Honour Book and Prime Minister Award short-listed *Come Down, Cat!* by Sonya Hartnett, and the Our Australian Girl series. She now lives on the Gold Coast.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Tracey says:

When my daughter was 4 years old, a well-meaning adult gave her a picture book about the importance of following rules. I can't remember the exact details of it, but it was one of those slightly old-fashioned, moralistic books about a kid who was taught that there are consequences if rules aren't observed.

As I sat reading this book to my daughter, I suddenly felt . . . angry. This initially surprised me as it was, after all, *just* a children's book. But then I glanced at my daughter curled up next to me. This was a kid who was always trying so hard to do the right thing, that she would sometimes not speak up for simple needs for fear of interrupting the teacher.

And I realised that the reason I was furious was because a book about blind obedience was the very thing my daughter did **not** need at that moment. She was already getting enough messages from the world about following rules. What was missing from the conversation was a book that did the opposite.

A sudden stream of thoughts filled my head. There needed to be a book about writing your own rules. About asking questions and being curious. About trusting your own instincts and relying on your gut to make a decision. About following your own path. About not feeling like you need to shrink yourself or to conform because of what someone else thinks. That it is all right to stand up for what you believe in. That it is good to speak up. That it is okay to be unapologetically YOU.

And so the seed of an idea was born. But where to start? Then it occurred to me: the alphabet is

something that every child has to learn. And if I wanted to teach a new set of rules, what better vehicle than this?

Words immediately started jumping into my brain: *A is for Attitude. May you have bucketloads of it, kid.*

Which is how my new picture book, *An A to Z of Dreaming Differently*, came to be.

ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION

Lucia says:

I really enjoyed Tracey's manuscript from the moment I first read it. It was truly inspiring, with no descriptions, allowing me to freely imagine what to depict on the book's pages. It was also the first time I had worked on an ABC book, which was a new and exciting challenge for me as an illustrator.

During the preparatory sketch phase, the Penguin team and I decided to create a mix of recurring characters, to give a sense of a visual story across the pages, instead of featuring completely different children on each page. I therefore designed a diverse group of four children, consisting of two girls and two boys, each with their own distinct personality and interests: One boy had a passion for science and technology, another was a skateboard enthusiast, while one of the girls was an artist and the other an environmentalist.

As I worked on the individual pages, I started seeing a path forming and began contemplating the idea of incorporating a proper story, narrated visually, with protagonists (leading characters) and specific challenges for them to overcome. The resolution of the story had to come at the end of the book, so when I came across the final words, "zooming up, up, up, towards those dazzling dreams", a revelation struck me: they wanted to build a rocket, of course! And I organised the visual story in a way that the text would describe a particular moment in their journey.

Coincidentally, last year I met a girl who had previously worked in summer camps for high school students focused on rocket building. It was an amazing coincidence! She provided me with valuable information and tips regarding the supplies the protagonists would need and the challenges they could face.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What does the beautiful cover of this book tell us about the story to follow? Look at the character holding the frame, as well as the details around the edges and in the background.



- Do these things tell us it will be a rollicking, fun picture book or more of a gentle story about feelings?
2. How do you feel when you look at the cover? How does the book feel in your hands?
 - The cover of the book has a special texture. It is slightly rougher than the glossy finish on many picture books, but it is a more natural and environmentally friendly cover. It also replicates the look and feel of the watercolour paper that the illustrator created the pictures on.
 3. Now turn the book over and read the blurb on the back cover. Are you surprised by the description? Or does it match the feelings that the front cover ignited in you?

Activities

1. Read the book together without stopping for questions or to talk about the text.
2. (For older readers:) With your eyes closed, listen to someone read the text to you so that you don't see the pictures. Choose the text for one letter and draw a picture to illustrate your thoughts and feelings, or how you imagine a picture to go with the words. This could include characters or not. It could be abstract or realistic. Remember that there isn't a right or wrong way to illustrate this.
3. Read the book a second time and with this reading, stop after each letter entry and discuss with your class what the words and sentiment mean to each of you.
4. Look at the pictures on each page and how they show the feelings and emotions in the text. Would you draw the pictures differently in any way?
5. Ask the children what they think the story is about. Did they get their ideas from the words or the pictures?

WRITING STYLE

Tracey's writing is 'spare' and every word she uses matters. Every sentence is 'charged' with meaning and emotion.

The alphabet 'structures' the words and story. Short, sharp sentences speak directly to you, the reader.

Note that the text for each letter is distinct and separate in its meaning, but the sentiment and intent that is loaded into each 'charged' sentence ties it all together and helps it to flow as a story across the book.

Sometimes, a sentence bridges letter entries and flows across the pages (for instance, see O and P) and

sometimes the text for one of the letters explicitly references other pages that have a similar sentiment (for instance, see Q and W).

Questions

1. The text in the book is a series of statements. How would you describe them? Bossy or suggestive? Inspiring? Funny?
2. Discuss the vocabulary (words) used in the book.
 - Is it mainly positive or negative?
 - Do the pictures give the words more of a positive or negative spin?
 - (For older readers:) How does the visual context affect your reading of the book?
 - Words such as special, brave, dreaming, different, dare, exploring, feisty, fierce . . .
3. Ask the children if these words help to describe the way they felt about the story, and if there are any other words that they would use to describe the book.

Activities

1. Visit your school library and find some other alphabet books. Can the children explain in their own words the difference between those concept books and this alphabet story?
 - Good introduction to the differences between nouns (which most early-concept alphabet books concentrate on), verbs, adjectives and their uses in sentences. Stages 1 and 2 could identify the word-types in the text for each letter.
2. Words are one way of communicating. What is another way of communicating?

ILLUSTRATIONS

Picture books tell their stories through illustrations as well as through words. The illustrations in this book both complement the words by showing their meaning, as well as add to the words by giving a visual story and characters that aren't explicitly referenced in the text. Can you think of any other books that do this?

Questions

1. Discuss the illustrations in the context of the text and how they complement the words and the language to visually show what the text is saying.
 - Consider the characters and how sometimes one person is shown, other times a group is shown to illustrate the text.



- Look at how each character is depicted in the pictures, one at a time. What story do the pictures tell about each character? What are their likes and passions?
 - Look at the colour palette used in the context of the text. How do they complement each other? (For instance, see K and U.)
 - Take some time to consider the illustrations for V, and how they cleverly illustrate the text 'Be seen AND heard'. Ask the children if they know what the children pictured are doing. This page could also be a springboard into discussing sign language and, specifically, Auslan that the Australian Deaf community use. (See also worksheets.)
 - Look at the pictures for the letter B. What do you think is happening here? What clues are there on the page to support your idea?
2. Discuss the illustrations without the text.

Activities

1. How many main characters are there in the illustrations? Write down two things about each character that you can tell about them from the pictures.
2. (For older readers:) Write a story around the illustrations. Consider the characters and their friendships, as well as themes such as the environment, space, school projects.

POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. How did this story make you feel? Did you find yourself on a rollercoaster of emotions, or a steady stream of the same feeling with each turn of the page?
2. Was there a particular letter for which the text resonated with you more than others? If so, why?
3. Tracey says she wrote this book about not following rules. How does the alphabet structure to the story support this?
4. Thinking about the text for the letter X, how does Tracey break the rules?
5. (For older readers:) Staying with the text for the letter X, what do you think the line means that reads: 'And this is an example of thinking outside one.'?
 - Discuss metaphors (and similes, if the comparison is useful in understanding the concepts). A metaphor compares something directly to something else. A

simile compares something to something else using the word 'like' or 'as'.

Metaphor: There was a blanket of snow.

Simile: The snow was like a blanket.

- Can you find any other metaphors in the book? Discuss the visual metaphor for the letter R, as well as the text across the pages for the letter Z. (See also Space / Stem questions below.)
 - Try writing your own metaphors and similes.
6. Have you read other stories that have been illustrated by Lucia Masciullo?

Activities

1. What letter does your name start with? Are there any words that start with the same letter that describe you?
2. Alliteration is the name given to a sequence of words that start with the same letter sound. How many times does Tracey use alliteration in the book?
3. Tracey uses alliteration in this book to repeat the key letter of the alphabet. But alliteration also helps to emphasise the words that are important in the text, by linking them together with the repetitive sound. This repetition helps to make the words more memorable, as well as being pleasing to say and hear when reading aloud. Try writing your own alliterative sentences.
4. (For older readers:) Either as a class or on your own, create an alphabet of emotional rules, thinking about all the things you like to feel, or all things you like to tell yourself, when things *are* going well, and when things are *not* going well.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Emotional Intelligence

Understanding how you're feeling and what might have triggered that feeling is a great tool to cultivate and nurture. It not only helps your mental health in knowing how you're feeling and why, but also helps you to finish tasks and overcome challenges, as well as helping you to form positive and meaningful friendships, and to be good citizens.

Questions

1. Describe how you are feeling right now. Do you know why you are feeling that way / what might have prompted that feeling?
2. Using the Feelings Worksheet, can you name the different emotions?



3. Look at a friend in your class. How do you think they are feeling? What are your reasons for thinking this?
 - This could be a springboard to discuss the concept of empathy.
4. Look at the pages for the letter C. Why do you think Tracey included both positive and negative statements here?
 - Consider discussing how every feeling is valid and meaningful, whether it is a positive or a negative feeling.
 - Could also be a springboard for discussing when it is okay to give up, and when it is important to keep going.
5. Staying with the letter C, what do you think the character with the skateboard is feeling? Has there ever been a time when you didn't want to join in with what others are doing?

Activities

1. Look at the pictures in the book. Can you name four different emotions that the characters show?
2. Look at the picture for the letter R. What emotion do you think the character is feeling here? Has there ever been a time you have felt that way?
3. Think about an emotion that you often feel. Some ideas include excited, sad, angry, scared, sleepy, frustrated, relaxed. Can you draw an animal to show that emotion, like the picture for the letter R does?

Friendship

The saying goes that 'Good friends are hard to find'. Once you find a good friend, it is important to *be* a good friend to keep the friendship.

Questions

1. Read the text for the letter T. What do you think the author means? Can you write this in your own words?
2. Where else in the book can you see the qualities of a good friendship being shown?

Activities

1. On a big piece of poster paper, write the word FRIENDSHIP. Underneath this word, add some words that help describe what friendship means to you and/or your class. Examples include respect, kindness, honest, trustworthy, loyal, caring, encouraging, genuine, fair. Are there any words in the book that you can add to your poster?

Protective Behaviours

Questions

1. Look at the pictures and words for the letter N.
 - What do you think has happened here?
 - How do you think the character in the pink T-shirt is feeling? Examples might include sad, threatened, unsafe, upset, angry, hurt, wronged.
 - Do you think the character with the backpack is helping the other character with those feelings, such as feeling less unsafe, for example? What are some words that describe how the character with the backpack is helping? Examples to speak around might include protecting, sticking up for, calling out wrongdoing.
 - What would you do if you were in this situation?
 - What might the characters have done after what is shown in the picture? For example, speak to a grown-up.

Sustainability and the Environment / Citizenship and Democracy

Questions

1. Look at the pictures for the letter F. Do you know what the children are doing?
 - Engage the children in a discussion about peaceful protests, and how they are a way for people to express their belief that an unfairness or injustice has been done, and that they want a change to happen to fix that unfairness or injustice.
 - Introduce the children to Greta Thunberg's story and School Strike 4 Climate.
2. Discuss other reasons for protesting. If there is anything in the current news, BTN might be a good resource to help with this discussion, too.
3. Ask the children what the characters are doing in the pictures for the letter K.
 - Discuss other ways children can get involved in helping protect the environment, at school and/or in the wider community. Ideas might include planting trees for Planet Ark's National Tree Day, getting involved in a school garden, planting native plants for native bees.



- Kids could research specific or general examples. For instance, you could explore the story of 11-year-old student Molly Steer who campaigned against single-use plastic straws. You can learn about her campaign [Straw no More here](#).

Activities

1. Imagine you are attending a protest for climate change. Create your own poster or placard to take with you.
 - Coming up with punchy statements could be a class project before they make their own individual posters.
2. (For older readers:) Design a poster with a strong, simple message about an issue you are passionate about. What words will most clearly get across your message?

Space / STEM

Questions

1. Lucia included lots of visual references to space throughout the book. How many can you spot?

2. (For older readers:) Consider how the space theme is metaphorical as well as being a concrete rocket project that the characters work on together.
 - Space has always been regarded as inspirational by humans. Ask the children to think about and discuss reasons why. Thoughts could include the idea of space as the unknown, the wonderment of it, the romanticising of stargazing, the human desire to explore and learn.
 - Historical examples about how space has been used to inspire could include the US space program and JFK's speech to put a man on the Moon.
3. The pictures for the letters Q and W show astronauts on board the International Space Station. Go to your school library and find out more about the ISS.
4. If you could ask an astronaut a question, what would it be?

Activities

1. Pull out the LEGO and build a rocket, or design and draw your own space rocket.



Worksheet 1: Auslan



The illustrations above show the characters signing words using Auslan – the sign language used by the Australian Deaf community. From left to right, the characters are signing the words: heart, friendship, love, friend.

Using the fingerspelling guide below, can you fingerspell your name in Auslan?



Worksheet 2: Emotions

Draw a line between the emotion shown, and the word that describes it.



surprised



embarrassed



sad



excited



happy



angry



worried

Worksheet 3: Colouring page



Worksheet 4: Colouring page

The picture below is from the letter G in the book and illustrates having gigantic ideas and ginormous feelings. Add your own ideas to the picture below, and then colour it all in. Are there certain colours you can use to show how you are feeling?



Worksheet 5: Colouring page

The picture below is from the Letter Y in the book and illustrates being yourself. Draw some pictures that show you being yourself – you could add them to the picture below, and then colour everything in.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



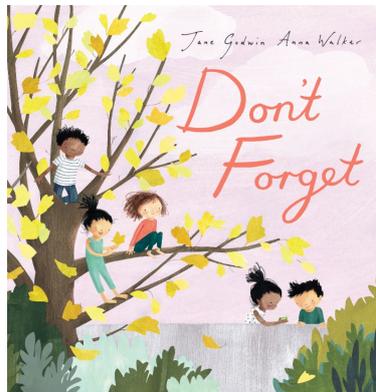
Blue Flower
by Sonya Hartnett & Gabriel Evans

A beautifully told picture book about self-esteem, resilience and the discovery that being different can be something wonderful. From award-winning author Sonya Hartnett, with stunning illustrations by Gabriel Evans.

Shortlisted for the CBCA 2022 picture book award, this is a gentle exploration of a child's realisation that it is her individual differences and creativity that make her special, with stunning illustrations by the talented Gabriel Evans that delicately and sensitively convey the child's emotional journey.

A young child describes her qualms about going to school and how hard she finds asking the teacher for help, how she feels shy about making friends, not being funny or a fast runner. But through her love of art, a conversation with her mother and her observations about nature she comes to see that being different might not be a bad thing after all.

A beautifully told story about being happy in yourself for who you are.

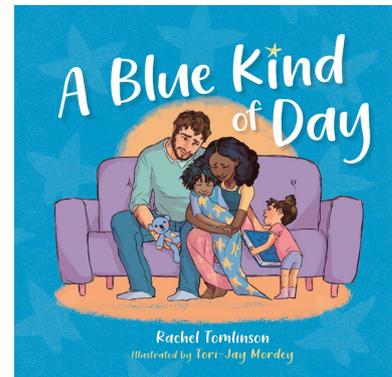


Don't Forget
by Jane Godwin & Anna Walker

A timely and uplifting picture book for 5+, reflecting on what's important for each of us to remember, from the creative team that brought us *All Through the Year* and *Today We Have No Plans*.

*Don't forget to make your bed,
and wear socks that fit your feet...
Don't forget to care, to play,
To run, to laugh...*

Sometimes, we need to remember all the things we can do to be part of the world. Small things, like offering a smile. And bigger things, like hoping, dreaming, imagining...



A Blue Kind of Day
by Rachel Tomlinson & Tori-Jay Mordey

A moving picture book debut about depression, sensory awareness, and the power of listening, from Australian psychologist and author of *Teaching Kids to be Kind*.

Coen is having a sniffing, sighing, sobbing kind of day.

His family thinks they know how to cheer him up. His dad wants to go outside and play, Mom tells her funniest joke, and his little sister shares her favorite teddy. Nothing helps. But one by one, they get quiet and begin to listen. After some time, space, and reassurance, Coen is able to show *them* what he needs.

With poignant text and stunning illustrations, *A Blue Kind of Day* explores how depression might feel in the body and shows us how to support the people we love with patience, care and empathy.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
An A to Z of Dreaming Differently	Tracey Dembo & Lucia Masciullo	9780143778905		\$24.99		
Blue Flower	Sonya Hartnett & Gabriel Evans	9781760894450		\$24.99		
Don't Forget	Jane Godwin & Anna Walker	9781761040955		\$19.99		
A Blue Kind of Day	Rachel Tomlinson & Tori-Jay Mordey	9781761046384		\$24.99		
TOTAL						

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