Kate and the Thing
By Heidi Cooper Smith
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$24.99

Moving to a new place, or starting a new school, can be overwhelming — more than anything you need a friend.

Luckily for Kate, she has the Thing. _Kate and the Thing_ is a story of courage and kindness, and the need to belong.

Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

**Themes:**
- **Starting School /Being New**
  Kate is starting at a new school, where she feels alone and awkward.
- **Making Friends**
  At first, Kate only has the Thing as her friend. However, she soon gains the courage and starts making friends with the other students.
- **Self-Courage**
  Over time, Kate depends on the Thing less and less. She finds the courage to play and talk with the other school children, until one day, she is no longer ‘new’.
- **The Need to Belong**
  Kate feels like she doesn’t belong at first as she’s the ‘new kid’.

**Discussion Questions & Activities:**
Have the teacher read the book out loud in class, making sure everyone can see the illustrations. Alternatively, students can take turns at reading each page aloud.

Discuss the Thing:
- The author describes the Thing as follows: “The Thing hovers between our reality and imagination. He’s a blank canvas, a big comforting pillow and a shield from the unknown but, above all, the Thing is a friend who shows up in your time of need.” Do you agree with her description of it? Why or why not?
- Write your own description of the Thing and share it with the class. How different is your response to that of the author?

Speaking and Listening
- Can you remember your first day at school? How did you feel?
- Do you wish you had the Thing when you started school?
- How does the Thing make Kate feel?
- For those just starting school - who do you think will help you settle in to school?
- Why do you think Kate depends on the Thing less and less?
- What should you do if you feel sad and alone at school?
- What special thing does Kate do when a new boy comes to her school? What makes it special?
- What should you do when other new kids come to your school?

Writing
- Write a recount of your first day of school. Now imagine if you had had the Thing with you. Rewrite that recount with the Thing.
- Write a letter to a new student. Tell them what they should expect on their first day at school.

Use the template attached so the children can make their own Thing.
Make Your Own Thing

The Thing is a big blank canvas for us to fill with our emotions and experiences. Use the below template to fill in your own Thing.