

Teacher's Notes



The Very First You

**Written and illustrated by Scott
Stuart**

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Grades 1-2

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - Exploring different ways of expressing emotions (ACELA1787)
 - Understanding purposes of repetition and contrast in simple text (ACELA1448)
 - Exploring differences in words (ACELA1452)
 - Comparing different kinds of images in narrative (ACELA1453)

THEMES

- Identity and self-expression
- Celebrating differences
- Inclusion
- Creativity
- Imagination

SYNOPSIS

What makes you different from everybody else?

The very first you celebrates the way we all move through the world differently – we want different things, have different ideas, and feel things differently. Ultimately though, *The Very First You* is a celebration of how much better the world is with each of us in it.

A passionate champion of difference and diversity, in this bright and lively picture book Scott Stuart shows kids that the things that make them unique are the things that make them so special to everyone around them.

How will you be the best you you can be?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Scott Stuart is a writer, illustrator and designer who still watches kids' movies when his son is not around. He is passionate about dismantling gender stereotypes and empowering children to follow their own unique path. Scott's stories and his uplifting online presence has attracted over 250K followers and 8M likes on TikTok. Scott's own path has led him to an assortment of passions, including rugby, dancing, midnight rodeos and karaoke.

The Very First You is Scott's second picture book with Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, following on from *How to Be a Real Man*.

THEMES

The Very First You is a celebration of difference and diversity, and shows characters who find joy in each others' differences rather than excluding people who aren't like them. Readers might also use this book as an opportunity to think about who they want to be in the world, and what they expect from other people. Classroom discussion topics might include:

- How do we make space for people who are different to ourselves, and why is this important?
- What changes do we want to make in the world around us?
- How do we talk to other people about what we want?
- Why is freedom of expression important?

WRITING STYLE

Scott Stuart uses simple end rhyme to enhance comprehension and provide a gentle rhythm to the story. Readers can use this rhyme to remember verses in the book, and to help them with words that they might have been unfamiliar with.

The book is written in second person 'you', which provides an opportunity to talk to readers about the different points of view we can use in a story, and the effect each of these have on the reader. Readers might consider how the use of 'you' in the story brings them into the verses and makes them a part of the book.

COMPREHENSION

- How do you see kids expressing themselves differently in the illustrations?
- What would you be doing in each of the scenes? Draw yourself into one of the scenes.
- How do you think the kids in the book feel? What makes you think this? Why do you think they feel this way?
- Make a list of the different ways people share their unique selves in the book. Can you come up with any ways or places that you're able to be yourself?
- What does it feel like to **NOT** be able to be yourself? When have you felt like this?
- Why do you think the author of the book has chosen to make it so colourful? How do the illustrations show the book's theme of difference?



- What does your school do to celebrate difference? How could you celebrate difference in your classroom?
- Draw a picture of one of the ideas in your brain.
- Pair up with someone in the class that you don't know very well and share something about yourselves with each other.

WRITING EXERCISE

Using second person point of view (POV) – 'you' – write a short rhyming verse about something that makes you unique. You might use one of the topics in the book as a prompt!

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Illustrations in the book are full of colour and show the way the characters see themselves in each of the ways described on the page. The diversity of expression comes to life in the variety of kids (and creatures) who enact and respond to the verses.

Readers might observe that the characters are active and expressive and use this to start a discussion about how we show movement and emotion in illustrations, and how these elements contribute to our overall understanding of a story.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Rewrite one of the verses in the book in first person POV – 'I'. How does this alter the story? Which POV do you like better and why?
- The writer says 'you see the world in your own special way – a way that should make you feel proud.' Write about a time that you've felt proud to see the world the way you do.
- Make a list of all the things you have in common with your friends. Name one thing that makes you different. Do you celebrate these difference in your friendship? How? (If not, how could you start?)
- 'You imagine new worlds that only you can'. Create a new world entirely from your imagination. Describe one of the characters from your world, and draw them in their home.
- In what ways are you being the best 'you' you can be right now? How would you like to be the best 'you' you can be in the future? Write a letter from your future self to yourself right now – what does the world look like in the future?

