

TEACHERS RESOURCES

What to say

when you don't know
what to say



DAVINA BELL + HILARY JEAN TAPPER

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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

From the award-winning and much-loved author of *All the Ways to Be Smart*, Davina Bell, comes a warm and whimsical guide to negotiating life's little moments and big emotions with empathy, kindness and words from the heart.

I'm not brave enough today. Maybe next time.

You're hurting my feelings right now.

You can cry. I don't mind.

Exciting new illustrator, Hilary Jean Tapper, has created a series of charming vignettes depicting the moments described in the text which are drawn from a child's everyday experiences. The same children appear in different frames in the book, each carrying their own stories. This is an engaging text about grappling with feelings and emotions and developing strategies for dealing with them.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>

Investigate the following sub-topics using skills developed in this Curriculum Area relating to **INQUIRY AND SKILLS** and **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**:

1. *Develop Methodology and Research Using Primary and Secondary Sources;*
2. *Synthesise and Evaluate Evidence;*
3. *Present Evidence;*
4. *Develop Alternatives.*

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

Discussion Point: In each image in this text a child responds to a challenge described in one sentence. Select any image and invite students to explain what it means to them; does the image remind them of something that they have experienced?

Discussion Point: Some of the emotions explored are fear, guilt, loss, being different, pain, uncertainty, embarrassment, negotiation, needing help, being made to feel uncomfortable, abandonment, shyness, bravery. Discuss any of these feelings and how you can deal with them.

Discussion Point: Discuss the various situations explored in this text which provoke these feelings, eg leaving your home, starting at a new school, losing a loved one, drawing on a wall (and then feeling guilty), having a sleepover, having someone ruin a project such as building a sandcastle. Invite students to suggest how they might deal with such situations. Then invite them to suggest situations that they have found challenging.

NEGOTIATING SKILLS

Discussion Point: Invite students to discuss how and when they disagree with family members or friends and how best to deal with misunderstandings or challenges.

Discussion Point: Read *No! Never!* by Libby Hathorn and Mel Pearce (Lothian, 2020) which deals with a child struggling to convey her feelings. This text presents a case-study of negotiating skill. How should parents deal with such emotion in their children?

Activity: Maurice Sendak's classic *Pierre: A Cautionary Tale in Five Chapters and a Prologue* (Collins, 1962) is about a boy who answers 'I Don't Care!' to every request. Do we sometimes express a 'false bravado' when we are actually very uncertain, insecure or shy?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Activity: Discuss the narrative person employed in this text, which is a combination of first person and second person: 'You can cry. I don't mind.' (p 7)

Activity: Invite students to write their own brief text describing their feelings in response to an incident they've experienced. (Use the texts in this book as a model.)

Activity: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author's Notes** below.]

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the

various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

Discussion Point: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. This depicts a line of children holding hands in a delightful pastel-coloured image. The vast blue sky behind them offers a sense of freedom as does the depiction of what seems to be a rural scene. Invite students to discuss what the scene suggests to them.

Activity: The **front endpaper** depicts a group of children eating ice-cream cones, observing another boy whose ice-cream has fallen onto the ground. The **back endpaper** has the children gathered around him in comfort. Draw your own problem or accident like this and then an image resolving the problem.

Discussion Point: The **title page** depicts a child in pyjamas clutching a favourite doll, looking very uncertain or nervous. Do you have a favourite toy which gives you comfort when you're frightened or feeling alone?

Discussion Point: The **format** of the book is square. How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

Activity: Creating characters entails studying **facial expressions and 'body language'**. Each child in this text clearly reveals their state of mind in both face and body. Describe the feelings of any child depicted in this book.

Discussion Point: Read any of the pages in this book and invite students to comment on what the image means to them. For example, p 4, features the words: 'I did it.' Why did the boy draw on the wall, do you think? See pp 6, 9 and 22 for a possible answer.

Activity: The **medium or style** employed by Hilary Jean Tapper is watercolour and pencil, and each image is hand-done. The **colours** used in this book are warm, charming pastels. Invite students to interpret a scene in the book in a similar style and medium. Discuss the differences between each interpretation.

Discussion Point: The **colours** used in this book are pretty pastels. Do the colours influence your feelings when reading this text?

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint, or collage a scene to accompany the brief text describing an incident which they wrote about above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1**. below.]

Activity: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography**.] [See also **Worksheet 4**.]

[See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Identify and discuss the emotions indicated by **emoji symbols**. [See also **Worksheet 3**.]
2. **Encourage students to draw a self-portrait of themselves**. Then discuss what the expression on the face they've drawn suggests about their feelings at present.
3. **Invite students to draw a face on a paper plate indicating a particular emotion**. Then pass the plates around the class inviting students to identify and discuss the emotions indicated by the faces which have been drawn.
4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
5. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research the topics above online.

Activity: Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography**.]

MATHEMATICS

Activity: Have fun counting things in this visual text.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Davina Bell. Compare this to her other books.
- Research the work of Hilary Jean Tapper. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other cumulative picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This thoroughly enchanting book is a jewel of a work. Each of the images describes an emotional response to a situation in an evocative and suggestive way. The written and visual text encourage children to value empathy, to be kind to each other and to understand their own feelings. Bell and Tapper have created an enduring classic which will offer comfort to children in the many challenging situations which they encounter in their everyday lives.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

I wrote this book because I wanted to give you some words you could use when you are feeling small in a big situation. I wanted to say to you – you are not alone! Everyone feels this way sometimes. You will get through it, and going through hard things makes our hearts bigger. I am with you and I'm proud of you! I hope this book is a reminder that we are all connected by how tricky and how wonderful it is to be alive. Happy reading always.

ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

One of my favourite parts of the illustration process is right at the beginning – reading through the story for the first time, imagining the scenes and sketching out ideas for the characters. Whenever I start a book, I grab a pile of printer paper and my mechanical pencil, and just sketch! It doesn't take long before the final characters appear on my page, and a rough outline of the story. It's a very creative and trusting process, and a lot of fun. I never really know where it is going, or how it will turn out, but something always comes.

For this book I used pencil, permanent ink and watercolour paint on watercolour paper. I create the outlines for the whole book before I add the paint, that way if I make any mistakes with the outlines, I can fix it or redo it before I begin painting. I paint all the backgrounds first across all of the scenes, and then each character, one by one. The painting process is very absorbing and takes a long time!

I find that I'm never satisfied, and always yearning for the next image. This can sometimes be frustrating, but I'm slowly learning that this is part of the creative process which inspires me to keep creating. I am inspired by the next character, the next scene, the next image, and I just love seeing each one come alive on the page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Davina Bell is a children's book editor and a writer for young people of many ages. Her picture books include *All the Ways To Be Smart*, *All of the Factors of Why I Love Tractors* and *Under the Love Umbrella*. Her debut young adult novel, *The End of the World is Bigger than Love*, won the 2021 CBCA Book of the Year for Older Readers and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards' Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature.

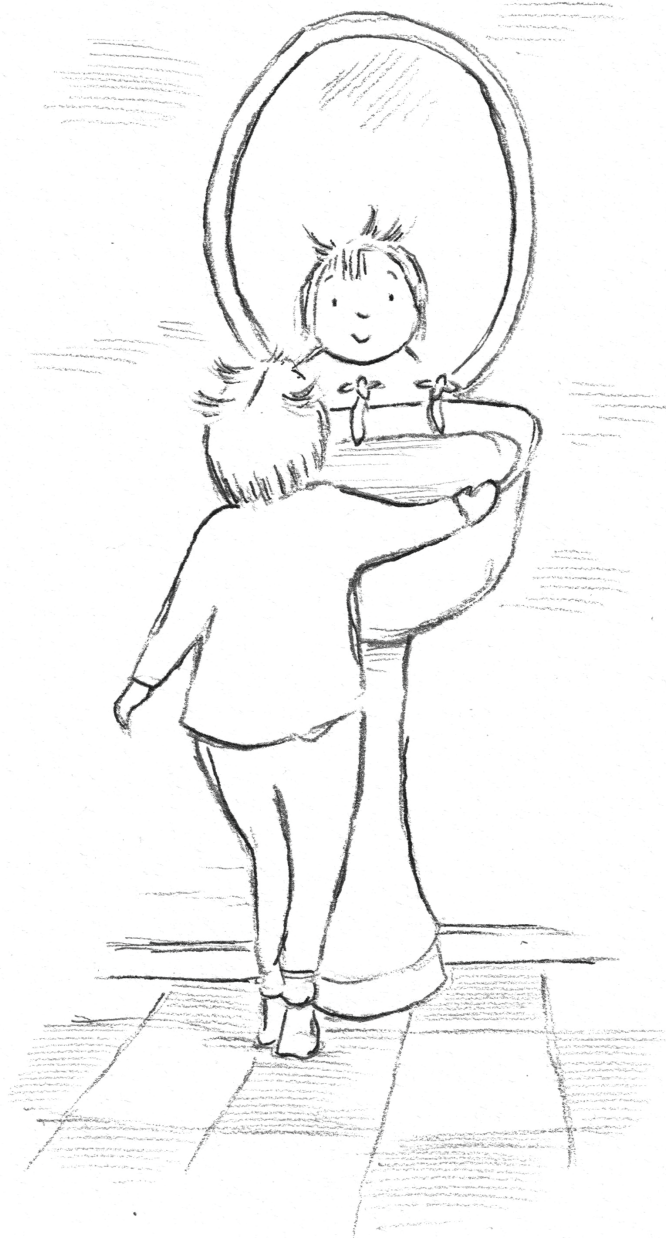
For more information, visit www.davinabell.com

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Hilary Jean Tapper is a New Zealand based illustrator, creative arts therapist and doll maker. She has drawn, painted and aspired to illustrate for picture books since she was a child. Hilary's grandfather, Garth Tapper, was a New Zealand painter and inspired her from her earliest years to pursue the arts. She works with watercolour, ink and pencil, and loves to draw children and nature. You can find out about Hilary and her work at www.hilaryjeantapper.com, or Facebook and Instagram @hilaryjeantapper.

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. COLLAGE THIS IMAGE












WORKSHEET 2. FEELINGS

Write a sentence using any of the words below.

Fear	
Shyness	
Uncertainty	
Guilt	
Loneliness	
Embarrassment	
Bravery	
Regret	
Scared	
Forget	
Wish	
Help	
Forgive	
Remember	
Unfair	
Different	
Angry	
Sad	
Lost	
Jealous	

WORKSHEET 3. EMOTIONS EMOJIS

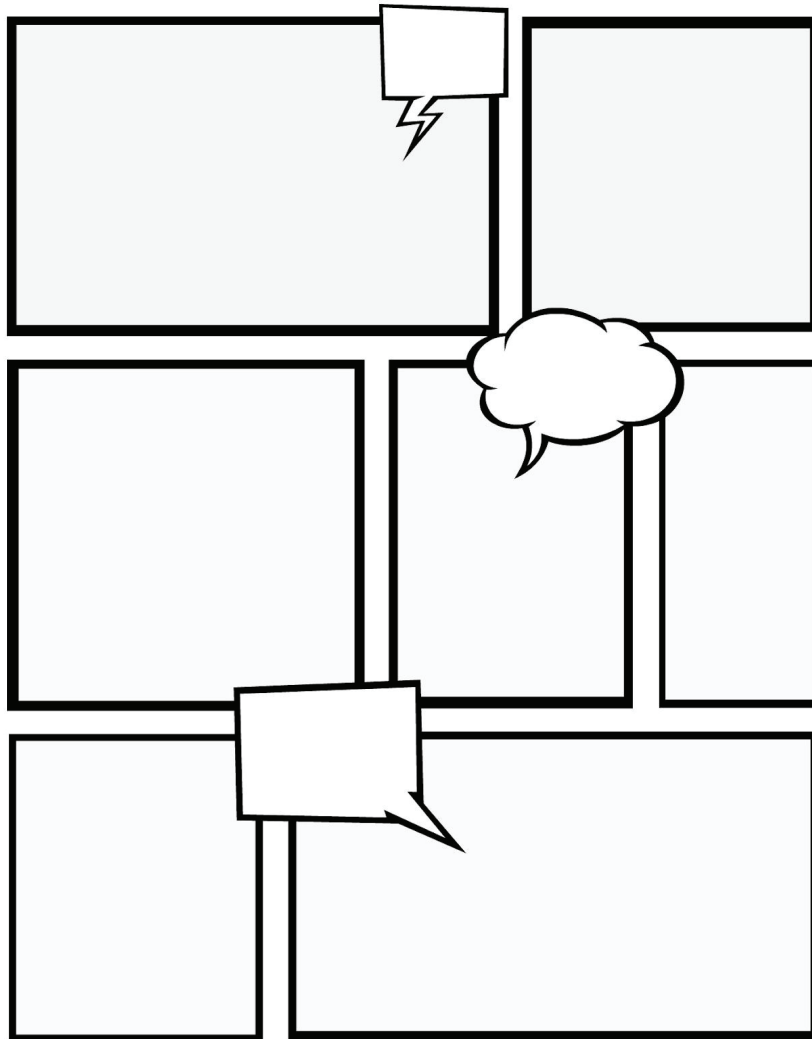
Invite students to identify the emotions indicated by the emojis below.

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	6.
		
7.	8.	9.

Answers: 1. Happy. 2. Worried. 3. Puzzled. 4. Angry. 5. Alarmed. 6. Sad. 7. Embarrassed. 8. Annoyed. 9. Upset.

WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at:

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>

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See also:

'21 Awesome Kids Books Exploring Feelings and Emotions' *Childhood 101*
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.