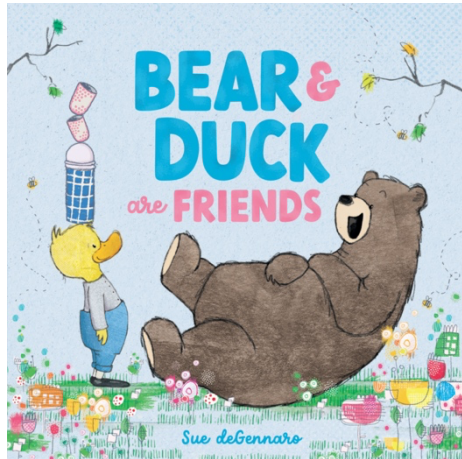


Teacher's Notes



Bear & Duck are Friends

Written and illustrated by Sue deGennaro

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

These notes may be reproduced for use within schools free of charge, but not offered in any part for commercial sale.

Copyright © Hardie Grant Children's Publishing 2022.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

3+ aged readers (grades prep - 2)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - ACELA1429
 - ACELA1439
 - ACELT1581
 - ACELT1582

THEMES

- Friendship
- Difference
- Nervousness
- Support
- Bravery

SYNOPSIS

Bear and Duck are the best of friends. But while Duck loves to try new things, Bear is more cautious. Sometimes this is a good thing, but sometimes it means that Bear is too afraid to try new things.

One day, Duck invites Bear to come to his dance class. Bear is terrified – what if he doesn't know what to do? At first it seems as if he's right to be afraid. While everyone else is dancing and laughing, Bear is fumbling and stumbling. It makes him miserable. Maybe he never should have tried. But Duck tells Bear to close his eyes and just listen to the music, and when Bear does, it feels wonderful! Perhaps trying new things when you've got a friend looking out for you isn't so bad after all.

When Duck asks Bear to come to his swimming class, Bear says – YES!

Bear & Duck are Friends shows readers that anything is possible when we've got friends who believe in us.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Sue deGennaro is a best-selling author and illustrator. She has worked with top calibre authors such as Ursula Dubosarsky and Jackie French, as well as writing and illustrating many of her own critically acclaimed titles, including *The Pros and Cons of Being a Frog*, which was shortlisted for the CBCA Early Childhood Book of the Year in 2013. *The Tomorrow Book*, written by Jackie French and illustrated by Sue deGennaro, won The Environment Award for Children's Literature in 2011.

Sue's illustrations are lively and fun – often imbued with humour, but also a wonderful softness. She spent years working as a trapeze artist in the circus, plus a stint in a lolly shop, so she knows all about what kids like. She's held many highly successful workshops with school children through Booked Out, and also teaches writing and illustration to adults.

THEMES

Bear & Duck Are Friends acknowledges that trying new things can be scary. What if we fall, or get it wrong? What if people laugh at us? Ask readers to share some of the fears they have about trying new things.

But sometimes fear makes us miss out on trying really fun new things. When we've got friends who support us and make us feel safe perhaps we can be brave enough to overcome our fears and try something new, just like Bear does in the story. Invite readers to share a time they've overcome their fear and to think about where they found strength or support.

WRITING STYLE

Bear & Duck Are Friends is a simple story, but Sue deGennaro uses dialogue to bring these characters to life for readers. Discuss the way that the writer uses question marks to show Bear's uncertainty. At first, Bear keeps his fears to himself, but when he tells Duck how he's feeling, Duck is able to offer support and help Bear to feel brave. What do Bear and Duck say in this moment?

Write a short conversation between two people in which one reveals that they're afraid of something. How does talking about their fear help them to overcome it?

COMPREHENSION

- Look at the illustrations on the first two pages of the story. What can you see in the pictures that shows you that Bear and Duck are friends?
- What are some of the differences between Bear and Duck? What are some of the similarities and differences between you and your friends?
- Find three rhyming pairs in the story – 'wiggled and giggled' is one!
- When Bear says he 'can't' dance, is he right? Why does he think this?
- How does Bear feel when Duck chooses to take him to dance class? Why?
- What does Duck say to Bear to make him feel good about dancing?



- How does Bear feel when he stops being embarrassed and starts to really dance freely?
- How is Bear different at the end of the book? What do you think he'll do next?

WRITING EXERCISE

Write about (or draw) a time that you've felt embarrassed or worried about doing something new. Now rewrite the scene, but imagine that Duck was with you – what do you think he'd say? How might things happen differently?

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Sue deGennaro uses simple sketches to bring Bear and Duck to life. Her illustrations capture many of the differences between the two characters – their size, shape, the way they move, the clothes they wear – what other differences are visible in the pictures?

Discuss Bear's expression in each of the scenes. What do people's facial expressions tell us about how they're feeling? How does Bear feel? How else can we see how he's feeling in each scene?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. Sue DeGennaro has chosen to use two very different animals – a bear and a duck – to tell the story of friendship. Imagine that you are going to write a story about one of your best friends. What kind of animal would each of you be? Draw a picture of the two of you as your animals and explain why you've chosen the animals you have.
2. *Bear and Duck* is all about finding the courage to try something new. Think of something you've always wanted to do but have been too afraid to try and plan to try it with a friend. Share your experience with the class – did it meet your expectations?
3. Think of an activity that Bear might do next, and draw a picture of him doing it.
4. Duck tells Bear that he's right there with him to make him feel better. What are some other things you could say to a friend to help them find their courage?

RELATED READING

The Pros and Cons of Being a Frog by Sue deGennaro

