

Parent

Resources

In her Element

by Jamila Gavin and Jacinta Read



10 stories to make a difference

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted that you are interested in sharing ***In Her Element*** with your child. ***In Her Element*** is part of our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection, which has ten inspiring stories for young readers that celebrate difference and individuality.

Inside these pages you'll find activities inspired by ***In Her Element***, for your child to do at home, together with information to help you support your child's wellbeing and learning.

A strong suggestion is to read the book aloud once for the story, then again to focus on particular aspects, passages or themes. The following activities are grouped by desired outcome and are for a range of abilities and additional needs of a child. Some extension activities are included, but all the materials can be adapted beyond the target audience according to the interest and abilities of your child.

The following activities would be suitable for the allocated age group:

- Reading independently or as group **11+ years**
- Exploring through the creative learning activities in this pack **11-14 years / KS3**

All the books in our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection are beautifully illustrated and perfect for children aged 5 and up. They reflect the need for greater inclusivity and more diversity in children's books with the stories including characters of colour, LGBTQ+ and disabled characters.

The **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection is available to buy from www.pop-up.org.uk/shop. Teacher and Parent/Carer Resource packs are available to download from www.pop-up.org.uk/shop.

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Artwork © Jacinta Read.

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About this resource pack

There are seven sections:

1. About this resource pack
2. About this book (includes themes and insights from the writer and illustrator): Page 4
3. Arty starter: making your superhero: Page 5
4. Thinking and talking: expressing yourself: Page 7
5. Taking it further: happy place: Page 8
6. Word Search: Page 9
7. Glossary: Page 10

This pack will help your child talk about:

- teenage friendships
- their own and other people's feelings
- difference in a positive way

2 About this book

Sent to a boarding school for disabled people, a young girl with cerebral palsy, Sophie finds herself floating independently for the first time like the life of a whale she dreams about.

But is she? When Sophie's parents drops her off at the boarding school, she initially is met with hostility from her spiky roommate Amber.

As the sea swirls deeper into Sophie's new life, Jamila Gavin shows Sophie finding peace where loneliness threatened to take over. The memory of the water and the beautiful sea animals helps her keep going.

Sophie soon discovers there is much more to Amber than initially meets the eye...

About this book's themes

This rich and sometimes overwhelming sensory world addresses important themes, including:

- Overcoming adversity and change
- Navigating teenage friendships
- Accepting differences between internal and external appearances

About the author and illustrator



Jamila Gavin is a writer of Anglo-Indian heritage who emigrated to Britain as a child. She's been publishing children's books for all ages since 1979, often inspired by the changing face of multicultural Britain, and driven by a desire to see children of all backgrounds reflected in the stories they read. Jamila's books include the *Grandpa Chatterji* series, *The Surya Trilogy* and *Blackberry Blue*. Her historical novel *Coram Boy*, set in 18th Century England, won the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year, is in development with BBC TV, and was adapted for stage, with a run at the National Theatre and also on Broadway.



Jacinta Read is a Eurasian illustrator and writer whose work is influenced by her love of dance and old musicals. As a neurodivergent child who struggled to read, it was illustration that opened up the wonderful world of literature to her; she hopes her pictures will do the same for others. Jacinta lives in Oxford with her husband, two children, and Louie the red Jack Russell. She's an illustration mentee on Pop Up's Pathways Into Children's Publishing programme (2019 - 2021). *In Her Element* is Jacinta's first published children's book.

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Arty Starter: making your superhero

For this activity, you will need: modroc plaster wrap, pipe cleaners, a cup of water, paint and paintbrushes.

Show your child the picture on page 21.

Talk to your child about the ending of *In Her Element* with regards to Amber saving Sophie in the pool. Did Sophie save Amber? In what way, did they both save each other?

Re-read Amber and Sophie's behaviour and attitude towards water on pages 20-23. Then ask your child if there is anything they're fearful of or something they wish they could do. Share with them your own personal thoughts and feelings.

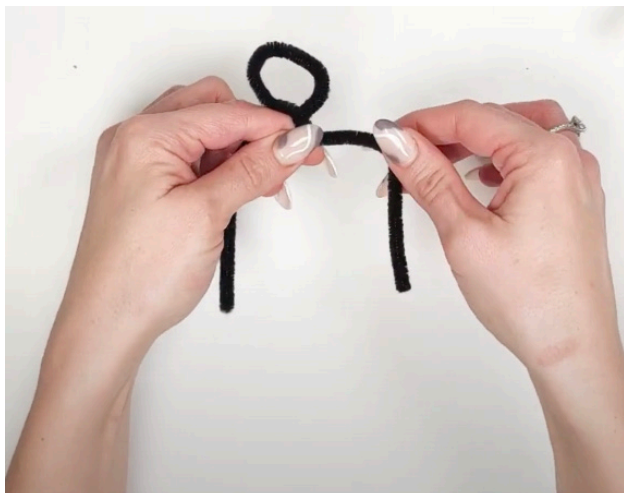
To help us overcome our own obstacle, we will be creating a 'superhero' using Modroc! Your superhero can take the form of a human body, an animal or an object.

Follow the step-by-step guide below to see how we've create our human superhero:

[Modroc Superhero Video Tutorial \(with BSL\) here](#)

1. Take a pipe cleaner and twist it into a circle to make your superhero's head and arms.

2. Use 2 more pipe cleaners to make the body and legs.



Sophie and Amber, p. 21

3. continued

3. Take your final pipe cleaner and twist it into a triangle shape and attached it to the neck of your superhero to make a cloak.



4. Dip a strip of Modroc into a cup of water and gently lay it around the pipe cleaner frame. Keep rubbing the Modroc so all the holes disappear.



5. Layer up the whole pipe cleaner frame to make the Modroc Superhero model. Make sure you do lots of layers to make it nice and strong.



6. Once your Modroc Superhero is dry you can paint it.

Think about your element and fear to help come up with ideas of the colours and design to give the superhero a theme.



4

Thinking and talking: expressing yourself

Ask your child what is Sophie and Amber's element in this story, and why.

Talk about the significance of Sophie and Amber's element with regards to their individual lives and how they communicated and expressed themselves.

What are the different forms of communication used in the story? Think about the way different characters in the story express their thoughts and feelings and if attitudes and behaviour resulted in any conflict?

Encourage your child to think critically by evaluating what's said in the text, as well as what is shown in the artwork, and come up with many possible answers. Remember that ones' disability may or may not impact on all the ways they express themselves.

Are there any similarities in the way Sophie and Amber communicate and express themselves? How did Sophie and Amber overcome their conflict?

Talk to your child about communication. Why is it important your child does not allow others dim their own voice in order to appease peers? Sometimes it is hard to express yourself and communicate with others, especially during times of conflict. But by remaining true to themselves, they'll unconsciously liberate others to do the same.

Extend this activity by trying to communicate something (a feeling or need) to each other without words - just body language, facial expressions, or eye movement. How did they find the exercise? Was it easy/hard? How can we tell what someone is thinking/feeling just by looking at them?

Sophie, p. 10



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Taking it further: happy place

Read this passage:

“She was sure she could hear the roar of the sea, the sucking rattle of pebbles on the shore, the scream of seagulls, and a whale singing.” page 6

This book visually shows Sophie and Amber’s happy place, and this quote from the first few pages illustrates Sophie thinking about her “happy place” (the sea) and imagining all the different sounds from there. Sensory descriptions, as well as illustrations helps children understand the plot and characters in more depth, gives them the framework to write a sequel and inspires them to create their own stories.

Ask your child to write or tell Amber’s story as a sequel to this book. Explore the possibility Amber’s recollection of her encounters with Sophie might be different from Sophie’s story.

Next, your child could write about their own ‘happy place’. Encourage them to use sensory qualities (e.g. sights/smells/sounds/tastes/feel) of the place to really describe it in detail as if they were right there.



Endpapers

6

Word Search

Help your child look for the following words and ideas from the story.

They're all about:

- diversity
- elements
- friendship

Support your child by

- discussing what each word means, and how these ideas are important in the book.

Expression

Swimming

Element

Wheelchair

Water

Communication

Dreams

Change

Happy Place

Friendship

Dolphin

Non Verbal

Adversity

Whale

Teenage

D	C	L	E	L	E	M	E	N	T	E	A	E	C
R	I	A	H	C	L	E	E	H	W	L	M	N	O
Y	N	B	D	W	H	A	L	E	H	E	O	N	M
E	S	R	L	E	T	A	D	A	G	I	S	N	M
G	H	E	M	H	E	O	P	N	S	M	N	I	U
A	G	V	O	G	E	P	A	S	A	L	Y	H	N
N	W	N	A	E	Y	H	E	E	D	E	T	P	I
E	H	O	I	P	C	R	R	N	R	O	I	L	C
E	O	N	L	M	P	D	E	N	E	D	S	O	A
T	E	A	Y	X	M	H	P	M	A	D	R	D	T
S	C	E	E	M	V	I	E	Y	N	N	E	W	I
E	C	I	E	H	M	H	W	A	S	I	V	R	O
W	A	T	E	R	E	I	C	S	V	N	D	A	N
N	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	H	I	P	A	I	N

7 Glossary

Adversity: a condition of trouble or difficulty.

Communication: the sharing or exchange of messages, information, or ideas.

Paraplegia: paralysis of the legs and lower torso because of spinal cord injury or disease.

10 stories to make a difference

In her Element is part of a collection of ten inspiring stories for young readers that celebrate difference and individuality.

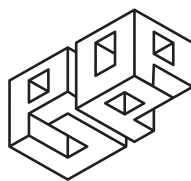
All the books in our **10 Stories to Make a Difference** collection are beautifully illustrated and perfect for children, aged 5 and up.



Each of the books is an exciting collaboration between well-known and emerging writers and illustrators, giving a platform to bold new voices.

We believe that all children should be able to find themselves, and discover others, through the stories they read. We therefore hope that these amazing stories will entertain and inspire the young readers in your lives.

Enjoy and feel free to get in touch with us at info@pop-up.org.uk.
We always love to hear from our readers!



Pop Up Projects
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