



# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Book of the Month:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## The Day You Begin

Jacqueline Woodson (Author), Rafael López (Illustrator)

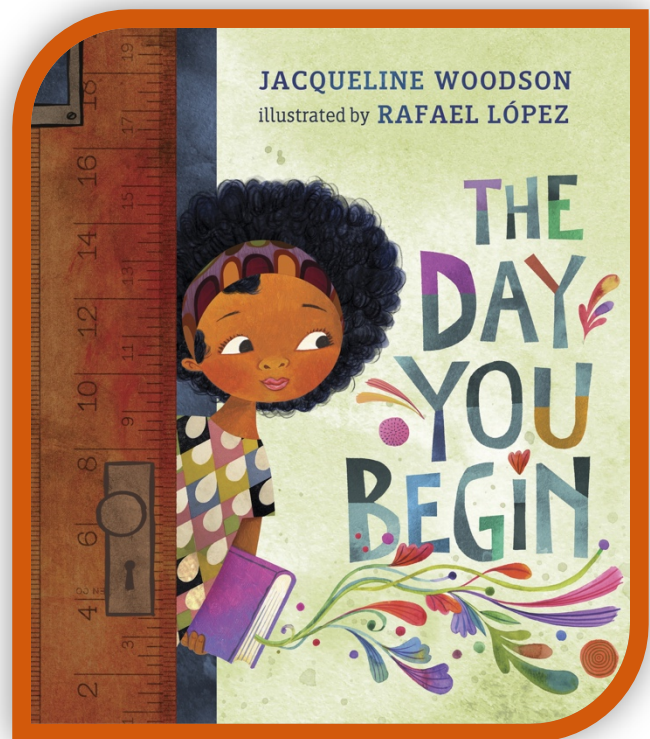
There are lots of reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat or something else just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it. This book reminds us that we all feel like outsiders sometimes and how brave it is that we go forth anyway. And that sometimes, when we reach out and begin to share our stories, others will be happy to meet us halfway.

ISBN: 978-0399246531

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 5–8



## Book Themes

Identity, Culture, Similarities and Differences, Feeling different

## Key Words

Discuss and define the words below with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of the words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and

point out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying for Elementary Age Children](#).

- |              |            |            |              |
|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| ■ brave      | ■ journey  | ■ souvenir | ■ unfamiliar |
| ■ fabulously | ■ kimchi   | ■ steady   | ■ unique     |
| ■ fragile    | ■ language | ■ stronger | ■ untraveled |
| ■ homeland   | ■ popular  | ■ travels  | ■ wider      |

### Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask these pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- How do you think the girl on the front cover is feeling?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout reading to check for comprehension and keep the students engaged. Below are some sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers.

- Why is the girl looking at her curls? (page 7)
- Why do you think the children are looking at the girl with the lunchbox? (page 16)
- What did Angelina like about her summer? (page 26)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What is the book about?
- Why does Angelina feel like no one is like her? Can you tell by Angelina's face how she feels about that?
- In what ways do the other children (Rigoberto and the other children) feel like no one is like them?
- When the children talk about their travels over the summer, how does Angelina feel? How do you know?
- Have you ever felt like that? How so?
- How does the girl with the lunchbox feel when the other children stare at her? Why do you think she feels that way?
- Have you ever felt that way about lunch and the food you bring to school?
- Why does the boy with the book not play with the other children?
- Have you ever felt that sometimes "the world feels like a place that you're standing all the way outside of?"
- How does Angelina feel when she shares her story about her summer?

- What happens after she shares her story?
- How do the children feel at the end?
- Why do you think the book is called *The Day You Begin*?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

## Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with students in order to extend the learning from the book.

### 1. Telling Our Stories

Read aloud this line from the book (on page 26), “There will be times when you walk into a room and no one there is quite like you until the day you begin to share your stories.” Ask students: *What do you think that means? How does telling stories help you know there are others like you?* Explain that because Angelina and the other children shared their stories about themselves and aspects of their identities, they could find the places where others are like them. Ask: *What aspects of identity or experiences in the story make each of the children unique (e.g., curly hair, skin color, language(s) spoken, country of origin, places to travel, culture and what food you bring to lunch, not athletic)?* Then, ask: *What is something that makes you unique? What aspects of your identity make you different than others? What is your story?* As you ask these questions aloud, give children drawing paper and markers/crayons and have them draw or jot down words and ideas that come to mind, ideas about what makes them different or unique from others. Then have students use those words/drawings to write a short essay or [acrostic poem](#) (using the letters of their name) that reflects their story and what makes them unique. Consider inviting parents/family members in to class and have the students share their essays and/or poems aloud.

### 2. Similarities and Differences

Discuss and explore similarities and differences, a major theme of the book. Ask students: *What are some of the identity groups or unique experiences of the characters in the story?* Brainstorm a list of identity groups/characteristics, starting with some discussed in the book such as: how people look, the language(s) they speak, the food they eat, where they are from, places they have traveled. Then branch out beyond the book by adding other groups/characteristics (including those of students in the class) until you have a long list; record those on the board/smart board. Use a concentric circles activity (where there is an inside circle and an outside circle with the same number of students, facing each other) or have students informally “mingle” around the classroom, talking to different students in pairs. Each time they have a new partner to talk with, students should identify something that is different and something that is similar about each other. This can include identity groups such as race, ethnicity, gender, language spoken, religion, etc. or can include hobbies and interests, but push students to not just focus on hobbies and interests. As they are talking in pairs, have them record on a sheet the similarities and differences like “we are both Latina” or “I am Muslim and she is Catholic.” After doing this activity, engage students in a discussion about what they discovered and learned.

### 3. Act Out or Draw Your Favorite Scene

Have students select a favorite scene from the book and act it out or draw it. First, brainstorm the different parts of the book or scenes that students like (e.g., when Angelina tells the other children about her summer, when the teacher says Rigoberto's name, when the children share their summer travel stories, when Nadja and her friend eat lunch, when the boy watches as children play and he

doesn't, etc.). Ask students to think about what might have happened right before and after that scene and act those parts out as well. If students want to draw the scene instead, have them create a picture and then write new text (not what is currently in the book) which can include narration, dialogue and/or thought bubbles to express what the characters might be thinking and feeling. Have students share the pages with each other and if possible, create a new book by compiling all of the pages together.

## ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on identity, culture and similarities and differences.

### Curriculum Resources

Diverse Books Matter, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter).

Dolls Are Us, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/dolls-are-us](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/dolls-are-us).

Hair, Identity and Bias, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/hair-identity-and-bias](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/hair-identity-and-bias).

Role Models and Stereotypes: Misty Copeland's Story, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/role-models-and-stereotypes-misty-copelands-story](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/role-models-and-stereotypes-misty-copelands-story).

Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems).

### Websites

Dos and Don'ts with Special Diversity Events

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events)

"Dos and Don'ts" to help schools host special diversity events that are thoughtful and create environments that are inclusive and safe for all multicultural students.

Early Childhood FAQs: The Question Corner

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children. See also, [Why Is It Important to Teach Young Children to Appreciate Diversity?](#)

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all)

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity and Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-)

[7=1&tid\[201\]=201&tid\[202\]=202&tid\[203\]=203&tid\[204\]=204&tid\[205\]=205&tid\[206\]=206&tid\[207\]=207&tid\[208\]=208&tid\[209\]=209&tid\[210\]=210&tid\[211\]=211&tid\[212\]=212&tid\[213\]=213&tid\[214\]=214&tid\[215\]=215](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

Similarities and Differences, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[214\]=214](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[214]=214)

