Learning Guide

Being Yourself

We hope hearing about how author Jane Yolen and cartoonist Craig Yoe found great careers by just being themselves inspires you to be your true self, too! Extend your learning with this print-ready Learning Guide!

What's in this Learning Guide?

Get Set to Listen:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2-8.2

Discussion Questions
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.3

Writing Prompts and Extension Projects
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.8

As Unique as You: Simile Poems
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4–RL.5.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4–W.5.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2–SL.5.2

Design a Muppet/Superhero!
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-6.4; CASEL: Social Awareness

Make a Mash-Up
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-8.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-8.4; VA:Cr1.1; VA:Cr2.1; 21st Century Skills: Creativity & Innovation, Collaboration & Communication, Critical Thinking

Additional Resources and Book List

The Children's Hour
kids public radio

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https://www.childrenshour.org/being-yourself/

Get Set to Listen

1. Before listening!

Write down your response to one of these questions. Share with a partner or small group when you are finished.

- What makes you unique or special?

2. After listening!

Write down your response to the following question. Share with a partner or small group when you are finished. How did your thoughts about how we can be ourselves change after listening to this episode?

Our guests Jane Yolen and Craig Yoe talked about how they tapped into their true selves to have successful careers. What are some ways you can express your true self?

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Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to “be yourself”?

2. Why is it sometimes hard to be yourself around others?

3. How do you feel when people accept you for who you are?

4. What makes you unique or special?

5. Have you ever tried to fit in by pretending to be someone else? How did that feel?

6. How can we help others feel comfortable being themselves?

7. What are some situations where being yourself takes courage?

8. Why is it important to appreciate differences between people?

9. How do your interests, talents, or values show who you are?

10. How can being yourself make your community or classroom a better place?

Group Discussion Strategies

Think Pair Share:
1. Individually, student writes down their answer to a question.
2. Students pair up and tell each other their answers.
3. Teacher calls for volunteers to share with the whole class their answer (and/or their partner’s answer). Teacher notes key words/phrases on board.

Round Robin:
1. Teacher poses one question (written on top of a large page) to students, who are assembled into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Students take turns brainstorming the answers. The recorder of the group writes down all answers.
3. The leader reads the group’s ideas to the entire class. Teacher moderates.

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Writing Prompts

Narrative Prompts

1. Write about a time when you felt proud to be yourself. What happened, and how did you feel?
2. Tell a story about a character who learns it's okay to be different.
3. Imagine you visit a world where everyone has to act the same. What would you do to help people express themselves?

Extensions:

- Create a comic strip or illustrated timeline showing the event and your emotions.
- Turn your story into a short play or puppet show to perform for your class.
- Design a "Be Yourself" poster to encourage individuality in your school.

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. Explain what it means to "be yourself" and why it's important.
2. Describe three qualities or talents that make you special and how they help you or others.
3. Write about how being yourself can make a team, classroom, or community stronger.

Extensions:

- Interview a friend or family member about what makes them unique and include their answers in your writing.
- Create a "My Strengths" collage using pictures or words that represent you.
- Work with classmates to make a "We Are All Unique" mural showing everyone's contributions.

Opinion/Persuasive Prompts

1. Do you think it's more important to fit in or to stand out? Why?
2. Write a persuasive essay convincing others to always be true to themselves.
3. Should schools do more to help students express their individuality? Explain your opinion.

Extensions:

- Turn your essay into a public service announcement or short video.
- Design a new "Spirit Day" that celebrates being yourself and write a proposal to your principal.

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As Unique as You: Simile Poems

Read

Jane Yolen's poem book *Quiet as Mud*.

or

Listen

- [Part 1: Author Jane Yolen describes and reads her book, *Quiet as Mud*]

Learn

Jane Yolen uses **similes** in her poem.

A **simile** is a figure of speech that compares two different things using the words "like" or "as."

"What are some examples of similes Jane Yolen uses?"

"What are some similes that describe you?"

I am _____ as/like _____.

I am _____ as/like _____.

I am _____ as/like _____.

Write

a poem describing yourself using at least 3 similes.



Share

- Put on a poetry reading for your family, friends, or classmates.
- Compile your friends or classmates' poems into a poetry collection book.

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Make a Mash-Up!

Cartoonist Craig Yoe says:

“One of the greatest ways to think of a new idea is to put two disparate things together and fuse them.”

You can create your own mash-up!

Listen

- Part 2: Cartoonist and former manager of the Muppets, Craig Yoe talks about mash-ups

Discuss

“What happens when we mix two different things together?” (e.g., fork + spoon = spork, scooter + skateboard = hoverboard!)

Choose Two Things

Pick two cards from the “Mash-Up Cards” deck or think of your own.

Brainstorm the Mashup

Ask guiding questions:

- *What would this new thing look like?*
- *What would it do?*
- *Why would it be useful or fun?*
- *What problem could it solve?*

Check out this article about The Art of Un-useless Inventions for some inspiration.

Create

Draw or build your mashup.

- Write a short story, comic, or advertisement about it.
- Name it and describe how it works.

Share

Present your mashup in a “Pitch Presentation.”

- *How did you come up with your idea?*
- *What was challenging or surprising about combining two different things?*

Extensions

- Design a real-world prototype or 3D model.
- Write a commercial or comic strip featuring your mashup.
- Make a mashup gallery with titles and artist statements.
- Mash up two songs or rhythms to create a new style of music.

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Mash-Up Cards

toaster	spaceship	cat
soap	musical instrument	shoe
bicycle	pants	backpack
fork	pogo stick	glasses
hat	umbrella	necklace
breakfast	shower	travel

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Design a Muppet/Superhero!

Listen

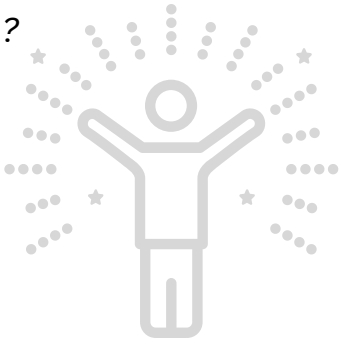
- [Part 3: Making up characters for The Muppet Show with cartoonist Craig Yoe]

Create a Muppet or superhero character that represents your unique strengths, values, and positive traits, and explore what it means to use your "powers" to help others.

Discuss

What makes a Muppet or superhero special?

- *What qualities do they have (bravery, kindness, creativity, honesty)?*
- *Do superheroes have to wear capes or have powers?*
- *Can you be a superhero in your own way?*



Plan

Complete the "Design a Muppet/Superhero!" worksheet

Create

Draw your superhero! Use the template or a blank sheet of paper. Add symbols or costumes that reflect their powers or personalities.

Extension

Design a comic panel showing your character in action helping others. (See template)

Share

Introduce your superhero to the world!

- What makes your Muppet/Superhero special?
- How do they make the world better?

Upload your character to our Instagram @tchradio, TikTok @thechildrenshourradio, and Facebook page, and check out others' characters!

Mail your character to:
The Children's Hour
PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197

Record a Voice Message
This might be used on The Children's Hour!



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Design a Muppet/Superhero!

Cartoonist Craig Yoe says:

"Create a Muppet or superhero! Draw your own comic book! You'll have a blast doing that. You'll have tons of fun. My superheroes are silly. That's their purpose in life: to make the world safe for silliness. But your superheroes might want to help the environment, or help people to love each other and get along, or to fight climate change. That's up to you. You figure out who they are and what they do and how they interact with each other and how they defeat those evil, dastardly villains. Why don't you do that? Maybe you can send me some of the drawings!"

My Muppet/Superhero Profile:

- Muppet/Superhero's Name: _____
- Secret Identity: _____
- Superpower(s): _____
- Sidekick or Partner: _____
- Arch-nemesis (problem or challenge they fight): _____
- Catchphrase: _____
- Strengths or Values: _____
- How does your Muppet/superhero help others? _____

_____

Remember: kindness, creativity, empathy, and fairness can be "superpowers" too!

Introduce your Muppet/superhero to the world!

- *What makes your Muppet/superhero special?*

_____

_____

_____

- *How do they make the world better?*

_____

_____

_____



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Design a Muppet/Superhero!

Create

Draw your Muppet/superhero! Add symbols or costumes that reflect their powers or personalities.

Introduce your Muppet/superhero to the world!



Upload your character to our Instagram @tchradio, TikTok @thechildrenshourradio, and Facebook page, and check out others' characters!

Mail your character to:
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PO Box 70236
Albuquerque, NM 87197

Record a Voice Message
This might be used on The Children's Hour!



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Design a Muppet/Superhero!

Design a comic panel showing your Muppet/superhero in action helping others.



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Additional Resources

[9 Self-Confidence Building Activities for Students]

[How to Teach Your Children to Believe in Themselves]
This article is from Train Up a Child Publishing Blog, which has resources and curriculum for homeschoolers.

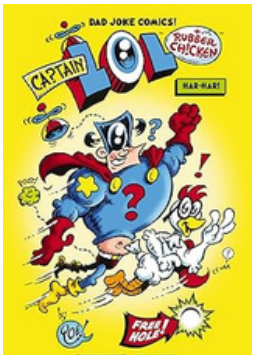
[Chindogu: The Art of Un-useless Inventions]
Read all about Chindogu, the art of creating things that are (almost) useless, but are seriously silly.

Videos

[10 Powerful Self-Esteem Videos You Need to Show Your Students]
These 10 short self-esteem videos (under five minutes each) can easily boost students' confidence and fit into morning meetings, lessons, announcements, or classroom downtime.

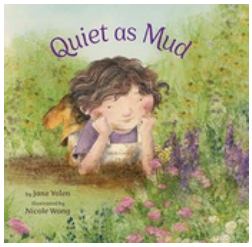
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Book List

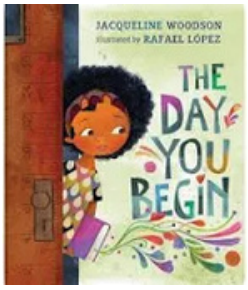


Captain LOL and Rubber Chicken: Har Har (Dad Joke Comics)
by Craig Yoe

Join Captain LOL and his sidekick, the Rubber Chicken, for hilarious superhero adventures packed with jokes, fun facts, and interactive surprises that make reading and learning a laugh-out-loud experience.
ages 8-12

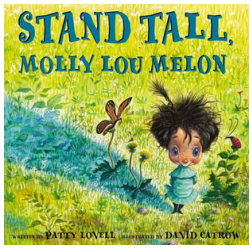


Quiet as Mud
by Jane Yolen
A gentle poem celebrating what it's like to be quiet and thoughtful in a noisy world.
ages 5-9



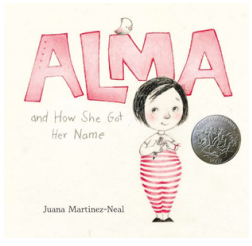
The Day You Begin
by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López

A lyrical story about finding courage to connect and embrace what makes you unique, even when you feel different or alone. Available in Spanish.
ages 5-9



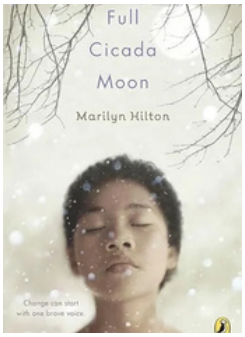
Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon
by Patty Lovell, illustrated by David Catrow

Molly Lou Lemon proudly embraces her differences and, with her grandmother's advice, stays true to herself when faced with a bully.
ages 2-7



Alma and How She Got Her Name
by Juana Martinez-Neal

A young girl learns the meaning behind her many names and discovers that each one connects her to her family's story—and to who she's meant to be.
ages 3-7



Full Cicada Moon
by Marilyn Hilton

Set in 1960s Vermont, this story follows a seventh-grade girl of Black and Japanese heritage as she navigates a new town and school, challenging racial and gender stereotypes while ultimately finding acceptance and joy in her community.
ages 10+

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