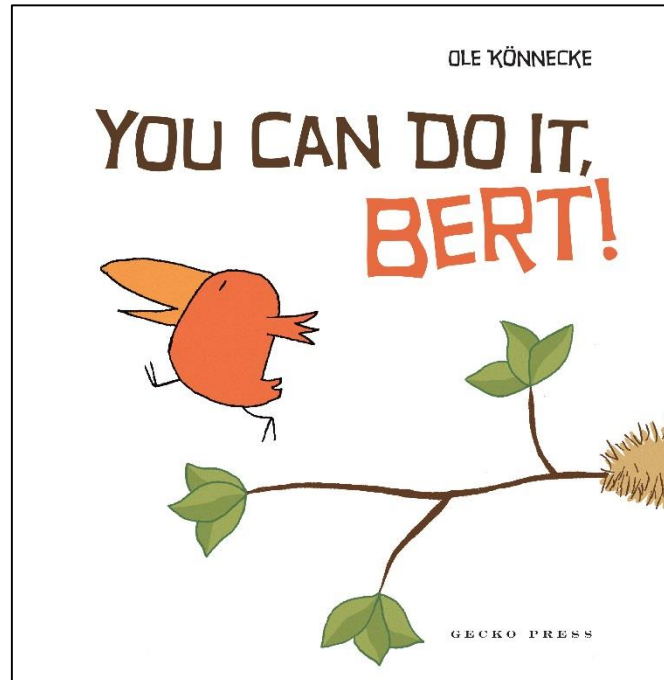


Teaching Notes

You Can Do It, Bert! by Ole Könnecke



Synopsis

This is Bert's big day. Bert has been preparing for this challenge for a long time. He is well prepared, both mentally and physically. But before he can take the plunge he might need some encouragement from his friends who all believe 'Bert can do it'!

The Author/Illustrator

Ole Könnecke was born in 1961 and spent his childhood in Sweden. He now works as a freelance illustrator in Hamburg, Germany. He won the Jugenbucher prize for children's illustration in 2004 and the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (German Youth literature prize) in 2005.

Themes

This positive and humorous picture book has several themes.

The themes of adventure and taking risks are evident as Bert faces his seemingly overwhelming challenge.

The themes of bravery, courage and determination are all illustrated when Bert must summon all these qualities to complete his task.

The themes of friendship, belief in others, the power of encouragement, and the desire to have fun are the catalysts and inspirations for Bert to try his best and finally succeed in facing, fulfilling and even enjoying the challenge he and his friends have set.



Activities

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. An affirmation can be defined as emotional support or encouragement. Look at the title of the book. Do you feel it is an affirmation? Why/why not? Think of another affirmation or positive turn of phrase to use as the title of and inspiration for, a short descriptive story which explores the theme of encouraging a character to do something they consider difficult or frightening. Then write, illustrate, bind and publish your own children's picture book of your story.
3. Examine the illustrations in the book. Do you like the style? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Choose your favourite illustration from the book and create your own artistic interpretation of it, for example, a painting, drawing, photograph, model, poem, etc. Or, design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text. Find another book illustrated by Ole Könnecke. Compare and contrast the illustrations. Are there many similarities or differences?
4. Choose two illustrations from the book. Carefully study the character or characters and their expressions. What range of emotions is evident? How has Ole Könnecke achieved these feelings in the illustrations? (Think about colour, size, composition, etc). Draw your own picture that expresses another emotion, such as sadness, happiness, anger or hope.
5. In groups, adapt the book for a puppet theatre performance in your classroom. Devise a script, create scenery, choose music and make puppets to represent each character. Act your adaptation out for your class. If you have access to a video camera, tape it.
6. Imagine you are a sports journalist sent to cover Bert's challenge. Write an article about the event, including eyewitness interviews. Present it in a newspaper format, including a picture of Bert.
7. In pairs, discuss what you think are the most humorous elements in this book and how they succeed in being funny and entertaining.
8. In pairs, take turns to read the story aloud to one another. Discuss which is your favourite page and why? Do you agree with your partner's choice? Why/why not?
9. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What do you like about it? Why? What did you dislike about it? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars, or a number out of ten.
10. Read another book by Ole Könnecke such as *Anton Can Do Magic* (Gecko, 2010), *The Big Book of Words and Pictures* (Gecko, 2011) and *Anton and the Battle* (Gecko, 2013). Write a plot summary and/or a book report.