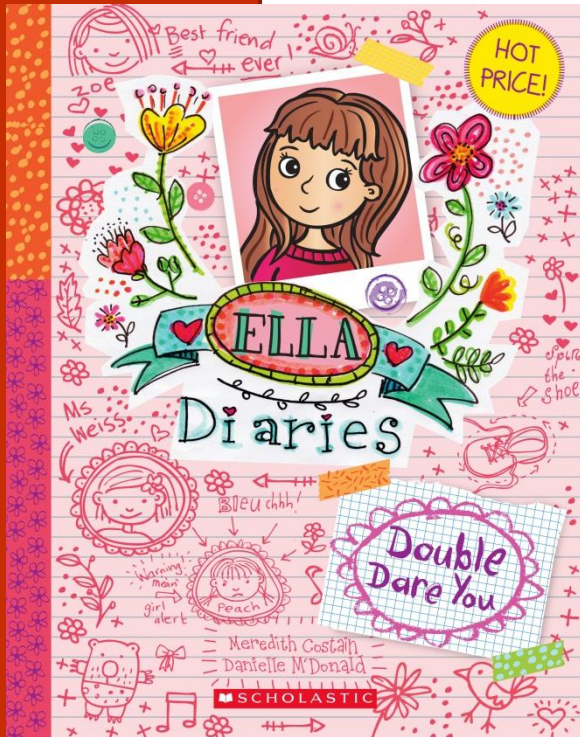


ELLA DIARIES

DOUBLE DARE YOU

MEREDITH COSTAIN | DANIELLE MCDONALD (Illustrator)



WARNING: You are about to read my UTTERLY BIGGEST SECRETS. Can I trust you? OK then. I'm Ella, and this is my diary.

It's the beginning of the school year, and everything is perfect. Ella has a new uniform, glittery stationery and can't wait to meet her new teacher. Until class starts that is—and EVERYTHING goes wrong.

She can't believe she has to sit next to her absolutely WORST ENEMY EVER, Peach Parker! No matter how far she moves her pencil case across the desk, Peach is in her SPACE. Where's her BFF Zoe? Can this year get ANY WORSE?

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TEACHER NOTES

- The first day of school can be both special and scary. Which aspects can be special and which can be scary? What are some of the events that made Ella's first day back at school so scary and the 'worst day of [her] life'? How does she react? Consider asking students to share their thoughts/experiences on their first day back at school either in a discussion or a writing task.
- Identify some of the ways that Ella and Zoe are good friends to each other? What are some of the qualities that make a good friend and that your friends have? Why is it so important to have good friends?
- 'My best friend Zoe has a diary, and she says you can tell it all your secrets and stuff about how you feel, like when something makes you sad or angry.' What are some of the feelings that Ella expresses in her diary in **Double Dare You**?

How is a diary entry different from other forms of writing and record-keeping? Do you think the story would have been different if it wasn't a diary record, or if someone else told Ella's day-to-day events? How might one confide differently to their diary than a friend and why?

- Discuss a scene recorded in Ella's diary with students, changing something about it so a different scenario is created. Ask students what they think Ella's reactions and emotions might be and how she might describe and/or illustrate the new set of events?
- Ella writes and draws about a thing called 'personal style'. Why do you think Ella gets so excited about 'personal style'? Do you and/or anyone you know have a 'personal style'? What makes a style 'personal' and why would anyone want to have it? Ask students to create a labelled illustration of themselves (or someone they know) showing them in a 'personal style' outfit. Pin up the final illustrations around the classroom.
- Ella exercises her imagination by writing every day in her diary and in other forms. Look back at the story of Double Dare You and take a closer look at the ways in which Ella tells her diary about the day's events: her crossing out words, rewriting, pictures and scribbles, lists and font art. Do you think the story would be the same without these aspects? Do they tell us more about Ella? If so, what are some of things we find out, or that are emphasised, in these aspects of Ella's story. Ask students to write their own account of a day's events using a style similar to Ella's and/or with their own writing quirks.
- Ella loves being a 'secret scribbler' and writing poems and haikus. Discuss why poems may be an appealing form of writing and some of the techniques unique to poetry. Show students some other examples of poetry. Ask them to write their own poems using some of the techniques Ella uses such as rhyme or 'words that start with the same sound' (alliteration) as well as others they may have learnt about. (Some themes that can be suggested for their poems could include friendship, their favourite game/craze, their first day of school, their dreams or their pets.)
- Ask students what they think about how Ella 'gets back at' Peaches for her bullying behaviour and the result? Why is Peaches' behaviour considered bullying, and how does it

make Ella and her classmates feel and react? Discuss with students what constitutes bullying and positive ways to respond to it. Also consider why someone might display bullying behaviour and how it can be prevented. The class could then be split into smaller groups to create bullying awareness pamphlets using text and illustrations, and then each group could communicate to the rest of the class why particular design decisions were made.

- Handball and B-ball (basketball) are the crazes in Ella's schoolyard. Ask students what the current schoolyard craze(s) are and what have been schoolyard crazes in the past. What is it students like in particular about any of these crazes? Ask students to discuss with their parents, guardians and siblings if they can identify any other schoolyard crazes they participated in. Consider how a craze can begin and how it spreads and thrives. Help students create a list/guide from this research (they can be creative with text and illustration). Finally, have a 'schoolyard craze' week or month where students get to play some of the different crazes they have learnt about.