

Jack's Best Day Ever!

AUTHOR

GABRIELLE BASSETT

ILLUSTRATOR

ANNABELLE HALE

SCIS: 5445553

ISBN: 9781922800114



SYNOPSIS

Jack loves anything that zooms, digs and races. But Jack doesn't like change and he only ever wants to eat peanut butter sandwiches!

This heart-warming, hilarious story of friendship explores how it feels to be neurodivergent, and introduces children to the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all way to be human.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gabrielle is a mum of two and works at an Australian University. In her role she does a lot of disability, diversity and inclusion advocacy work with staff and students. Jack, the boy in the *Jack's Best Day Ever!* is based on her son.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Annabelle Hale is an illustrator based in Melbourne. She loves drawing, dancing and spending time outdoors in nature.

Find out more about Annabelle at <https://www.annabelle-hale.com/>.

STUDY NOTES

- What do you think this story might be about, judging from the cover?
- What can you tell about Jack's school from the opening two-page spread?
- How are Jack's sisters different from him?
- When did you first become aware that Jack may be neurodivergent?
- Why do you think Jack likes peanut butter sandwiches so much?
- Are you, or anyone you know, allergic to peanuts? What does this mean for you or them?
- Why do you think Jack likes watching the same movies over and over again?
- When Jack scoffed down the whole plate of peanut butter sandwiches at the birthday party, do you think he meant to be rude? Why do you think he did it?
- Do you think Jack should be invited to the next party? Why? Or why not?
- What would have made it easier for Jack at the party?
- Why was going to the zoo Jack's best day ever?
- Did you learn anything from Jack about the different animals he saw?
- Do you have a favourite animal? What can you tell us about it that we might not already know?

- What did Jack learn while he was at the zoo?
- What did you learn about neurodivergence from this story?
- Invite an older neurodivergent student to talk to the class about their early school experiences: what was difficult, what helped, and any advice they would give to fellow students as well as their younger self.
- Celebrate Neurodiversity Celebration Week in March (see www.neurodiversityweek.com).
- Have children research and create posters on famous and successful people who are neurodivergent, eg. animal scientist and author Temple Grandin; Oscar-winning actor Sir Anthony Hopkins; musician and singer Florence Welch; Olympic gold medallist Simone Biles; and climate activist Greta Thunberg.
- Invite neurodivergent parents or a neurodivergent member of your local community to speak.
- Encourage neurodivergent students to share their talents.
- Put up ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia fact sheets.
- Hold a neurodiversity-themed school assembly.

INCLUSION AND EMPATHY ACTIVITY

What you need:

- Yellow paper and red paper (or any two pieces of paper that are each a different colour)
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Pen
- An envelope for each group

Instructions:

- Give each group a box of the materials above.
- Tell students the group that finishes first will win. Ask them whether they believe this is fair. Students are likely to agree that it is.
- Ask them to do the following:
 - take the yellow paper and cut a circle out of it
 - use the glue stick to glue the yellow circle onto the red paper
 - use the pen to write 'I believe in inclusion' on the yellow circle
 - fold the red paper and place it into an envelope.
- At this stage, give each group, except one, a limitation. For example, two groups can only use one hand and two groups must work with their eyes closed—these groups will struggle to complete the task.
- The group with no limitations will finish first. They should be congratulated for finishing the task first but, inevitably, a frustrated student will state the obvious, ie. that the activity was not fair because some groups had limitations/ differences that made the activity harder to complete.
- Use this experience as an opportunity to open up a class discussion to explore and ask questions, such as:
 - Are we able to confirm that the winning group is actually the best?
 - How did you feel during the activity?
 - Was it a fair playing field? Was everyone on an equal footing?
 - Would giving the groups with limitations extra time have helped to level the playing field?
 - How might someone feel who has these limitations?
 - What can we learn from this activity?
- Point out that we all have limitations that make some things harder for us and that it is unkind to make fun of someone who is struggling because we do not know what they are experiencing or how hard they are working to overcome their challenges.
- Encourage students to share some of the things they are good at and some of the things they struggle with.