

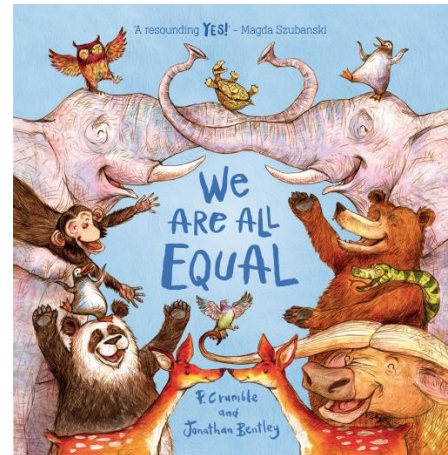
# We Are All Equal

Author

**P Crumble**

Illustrator

**Jonathon Bentley**



## Synopsis

In *We are all Equal* a cheerful cast of animals joyfully share with each other the differences between them all. What they do each day, the food they eat, how many legs they have, and how they structure their families varies, and they happily point all this out while constantly reasserting the basic message that even in difference we are all equal. The message in this book is clear and comprehensible, and presented in a format that is easily understood by the very young. Filled with caring and delightful creatures, the story is an approachable exploration of how physical, social and cultural diversity makes no difference to someone's basic worth and value in this world.

## About the Author

**P Crumble** is the best-selling author of many humorous children's books. His books include the *There Was an Old Lady* and *There Was an Old Bloke* series, *If You're Happy and You Know it*, *Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be?* and *Me and Moo*.

## About the Illustrator

**Jonathon Bentley** is an award-winning illustrator who has illustrated over 20 books, including books for Margaret Wild, The Wiggles and Andrew Daddo. When illustrating, he likes to work with a range of materials, including acrylics, oils, and line and watercolour. Jonathon is currently living in the UK.

## Themes

Diversity, difference, equality, acceptance, families, cultural differences, immigration, ethnicity, sexuality, love, caring, and compassion.

## Writing Style

A cheerful and approachable celebration of diversity and difference, *We are all Equal* is a delightful new take on age-old themes of acceptance and individuality. Written throughout in the first person plural, the viewpoint shifts between characters on a page-to-page basis, creating the impression of a chorus of diverse voices all sharing the same message while recognising and celebrating both their individuality and differences between them. The language used is clear and simple, as is appropriate to the intended audience of the very young. Written in verse throughout, the rhyme scheme utilises short sentences,

and a vocabulary of common and emotionally positive words. The title of the book, *We are all Equal*, appears as a refrain throughout, unequivocally reinforcing the basic message.

### Illustration Style

The artwork throughout consists of both full and half-page spreads, and has been rendered in pencil and watercolour using a palette of strong earth-toned hues. Bentley's figures are cheerfully expressive, and obviously friendly and approachable. The background is a gentle faded blue toned expanse, with the figures in contrast being depicted using complex linework and stronger hues throughout. The animals are realistically represented, with only the facial expressions displaying any use of anthropomorphism. The visual narrative parallels the text throughout, reinforcing both the basic message and the descriptions of features and activities found in the text.

## TEACHER NOTES

- 1) Before reading the story, as a class discuss the cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion are:
  - What is the picture on the cover showing?
  - What are the two animals featured, and what are they doing?
  - What does it mean when we say people are equal?
  - Is equal the same as saying people or things are the same as each other?
  - What do you think the story might be about?
  - Why do you think the illustrator might have chosen these two animals for the cover artwork?
- 2) After reading the story, discuss the meaning of the title again. What do you think that the author means when they say *We are all equal*? Is saying two people are equal the same as saying that there aren't any differences between them? Why/why not?
- 3) As a class discuss what the animals on each page are doing. Think about whether they seem happy or sad. Do you think that the differences between all the animals are something to be worried about, or something that they are celebrating? What makes you think this?
- 4) Choose something about yourself that you feel makes you different and special, and create an artwork celebrating this difference. It might be as small as how you wear your hair, as common as your favourite food, or as important and influential as the country your parents or grandparents came from.
- 5) Working with a partner, make a list of some of the things that the two of you have in common. Make another list of the things that are different. Are there any items on either of your lists that you found surprising? What did you find out about each other that you didn't know? Choose one fact about your partner that you think is a really good thing, and write a paragraph sharing what it is and why you think it is so awesome. Working as a partnership create a joint artwork to illustrate your paragraphs.

- 6) In the story, when the characters say *We are all equal* they might also have chosen to say things such as 'everyone is important' or 'being different is cool'. As a class, brainstorm different ways to share the message that people are all valuable and we should embrace diversity. Make a list of all the words and phrases that you think of. Choose one word or phrase from your list, and use it as the central focus for a poster that celebrates diversity.
- 7) What countries or places are all the different animals in the story from? As a class, research where they can all be found, and mark the different places on a map of the world.
- 8) Which is your favourite animal in the story? Why is this animal your favourite? Draw a picture of your chosen creature, and caption it with your explanation of why it is your favourite.
- 9) What does it mean in the book when it says Beauty is deeper than what you can see? Can you think of something that you think is wonderful and beautiful even though it looks ordinary or unattractive?
- 10) As a class, reread the story and identify the rhyming words on each page. What makes a word rhyme with another? As a class write another verse for the story. Try to make it rhyme and be sure to include the words we are all equal.
- 11) Plant a diversity garden in window-boxes or a collection of pots. Choose seeds, seedlings or cuttings for as many different herbs and brightly coloured flowers as you can. Water your garden daily and when the flowers grow, enjoy all the different colours and scents.
- 12) Act out the story in *We are all equal* at an assembly or for another class.
- 13) All the animal families in the story are different from each other. Everyone in your class will also have a family that is different from everyone else's! Individually draw a picture of your own family, and use everyone's different pictures to create a wall display that celebrates the diversity in your classroom.
- 14) The animals in the story have come from a lot of different countries. Close your eyes, and with them still closed open an atlas to a random page, and place your finger somewhere on your open page. Identify which country your finger is touching, or is closest to. Research online to find out what animals are native to that country. Choose one of the animals you found out about in your research, Draw a picture of your chosen animal, and caption your picture with an interesting fact about that animal.
- 15) Some of the families in the story have children, while others don't. How many children are in your family? Survey your class, and find out how many children are in each family. Use the results of your survey to create a bar graph and a pie chart. You might also want to collect data on how many of the children in each family are boys and how many are girls, and create graphs using this data as well.

- 16) Paint a flower garden using a lot of different coloured paints, and a different brush for each colour. After painting your pictures have a class discussion about what you have done. Could you have painted your picture if you only had one colour of paint to use? Think about how the colours are all just as bright and wonderful as each other, and it is the differences between them that make your pictures so vibrant and interesting.