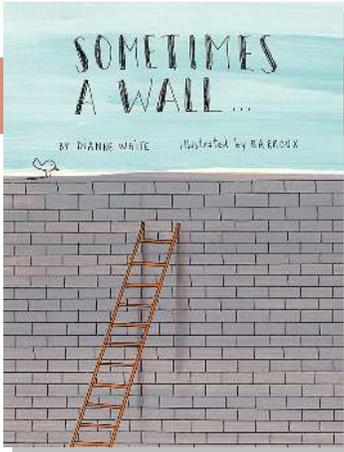




SOMETIMES A WALL . . .

Discussion Guide by Dianne White



Book written by Dianne White
and illustrated by Barroux

ABOUT THE BOOK

An afternoon in the playground introduces different kinds of walls: a brick wall to draw on with chalk, a water wall, and a climbing wall. What follows is a playful yet profound exploration of the many ways walls can divide us or bring us together. When one child is excluded from a game, another builds a castle to leave him out. When the builder declares the castle MINE, other kids feel alienated—but the builder becomes lonely, too, when the others have fun without him. The book ends with the optimism of a new start: friendship, forgiveness, and imagination give the wall new meaning. Told with short, simple lines of playful, rhyming text and loose line illustrations, this book sparks questions with empathy, insight, and charm. It's a timely tool for inquiry-based and social-emotional learning, sharing the important message that walls can unite or divide, depending on the choices we make.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A wall can be many things. It can keep things in or out. It can protect or isolate. What are examples of different kinds of walls you've seen or experienced? What are the different ways a wall can be? In what ways does a wall divide?
2. What do you think were the different sides and points of view in the book?
3. Why do you think the children started acting unkindly toward the boy?
4. Why do you think the boy with the yellow hat wanted the boy in the striped shirt to go away?
5. Why was the boy in the (vertical) striped shirt staring?
6. Was the boy in the yellow hat being unfair? Why or why not?
7. What do you think the boy was thinking when he threw down the yellow hat and put on a crown?
8. Have you ever been like the child wearing the crown? Wanting to be "the king" of the castle? What were you thinking? How did you feel?
9. Have you ever felt left out, like the other child? What were you thinking? How did you feel? (Cont'd on next page)

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CURRICULUM LINKS:

Language Arts: Reading Comprehension; Visual Literacy
Visual Arts: Illustration Techniques; Color
Character Development: Empathy; Kindness; Caring; Respect; Bullying; Exclusion; Consequences; Problem Solving; Cooperation; Teamwork; Making and Keeping Friends; Creative Play; Imagination

READING LEVELS:

Grade: Pre-K–4
Fountas & Pinnell: M
Reading Recovery: 20
Lexile® Measure: NP
Common Core: L.2, RF.2, RL.2, SL.2, W.2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

10. What kinds of feelings do you think the boy with the crown was experiencing when he was alone?
11. What do you think made him decide to ask for a “new start?” Have you ever acted in a way that you later regretted? What did you do to fix the situation?
12. A wall can lead to anything. What did this wall lead to? How did the kids end up working things out?
13. Have you ever been in a situation in which you weren't getting along with someone and there was a “wall” between you – a wall that made it hard to get along? Were you able to resolve your disagreement? How? If you weren't able to resolve the disagreement, can you think of a way you might have handled things differently?
14. Did the problem resolve in a realistic way? What would have happened if the boy had stayed in the castle?
15. As humans, we have the ability to make choices. To be good or bad. Obey or disobey. To be kind or thoughtless. To speak up or be quiet. We make mistakes, but we can also learn and grow. Put yourself in the place of one of the characters. What do you think they are feeling and thinking? What might this character learn from the events of the story?
16. Think of a problem you've had with a friend. A “wall” that came between you. Was there only one, or more than one way to look at the problem? One or more than one way to solve it?

