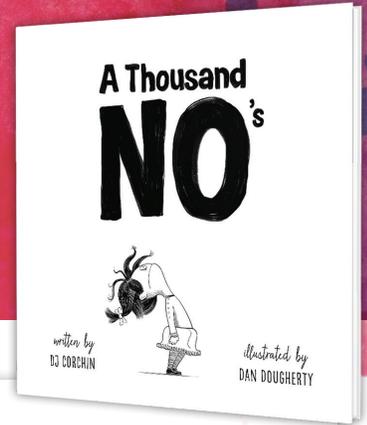


# An Educator's Guide for A Thousand NO's

By DJ Corchin and  
illustrated by Dan Dougherty



## An Educator's Guide for *A Thousand NO's*, written by DJ Corchin and illustrated by Dan Dougherty

A Common Core State Standards Aligned Activity Guide for Grades Kindergarten, 1, and 2

*Note: The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for grades kindergarten, 1 and 2, but standards for other grades may also apply.*

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

### About the Book

*This empowering picture book teaches readers that even great ideas sometimes get a NO—but that NO can actually help great ideas become the best ideas!*

There was a little girl who had a great idea. She had the most amazing, superb, best idea ever! NO? Wait, what do you mean NO? NO again?

What is she supposed to do with all these NO's? NO after NO after NO come the little girl's way, twisting and squishing her idea. But by persevering, collaborating, and using a little imagination, all those NO's become the building blocks for the biggest YES ever!

*A Thousand NO's* is a story about perseverance and innovation. It shows what amazing things can happen if we work with others and don't give up, and it teaches kids not to let expectations of how things should be get in the way of what could be.

### About the Author



Author **DJ Corchin** is the author and illustrator of many award-winning children's books. He visits groups and schools all over the country to discuss his stories and how people can find a path through their own creative universe. He loves to connect people through humorous stories about communication, kindness, and social-emotional awareness. His books are known for being fun and thoughtful discussion starters for both kids and adults in this crazy, complex human world. Visit him at [djcorchin.com](http://djcorchin.com).

### About the Illustrator



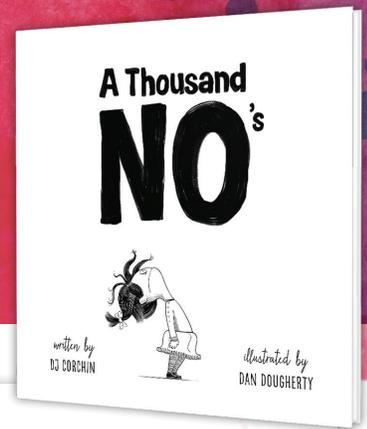
Photo by: Glenn Carpenter

Illustrator **Dan Dougherty** is the writer and illustrator behind several creator-owned comics and children's books. Dan's career in comics began in 2003, and since then, he has written and/or illustrated more than fifty published works, from horror to children's books. When Dan isn't making comics, he teaches how to make them at the International School of Comics in Chicago. Visit him at [beardcomics.com](http://beardcomics.com).



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## Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

Do a picture walk of *A Thousand NO's*, examining the first few spreads as a class. What kind of story do students think this will be? Does it look serious or funny? What words are part of the pictures?

Discuss what an idea is. Why are ideas important? Once you have an idea, how do you turn it into something real? What sorts of ideas have changed our country? Our world?

Have students ever heard the word "perseverance" before? What does it mean? As a class, come up with examples of what it means to persevere.

Discuss the words "Yes" and "No" with students. How do these words make them feel? Why?

## Vocabulary

While you read the book, have students raise their hands if they hear a word or phrase that is unfamiliar to them or that they do not understand. When they identify a word, discuss how students can use context and the illustrations in the story to figure out the meaning of unknown words. To help students make real-life connections to these words, discuss other words that could be used instead.

RL K.4

L K.4, K.5, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 2.5

## Post-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

### Questions We Always Ask

Get students in the habit of thinking about the following questions as they read any book:

Who is the author? Who is the illustrator?

What kind of book is this: informational or fictional?

Who are the characters?

Where does the story take place?

What are the major events?

Can you retell the story?

What is the "big idea" of the story?

RL K.1, K.2, K.3, K.5, K.7, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.7

### Literal vs. Figurative

An idea is not an object that people can hold in their hands, but this book shows it that way. Review the text together and identify how the story illustrates the girl's idea, the way people respond to it, and how her idea changes shape as a result. Does turning ideas and "No's" into things you can hold in your hand make the message easier to understand?

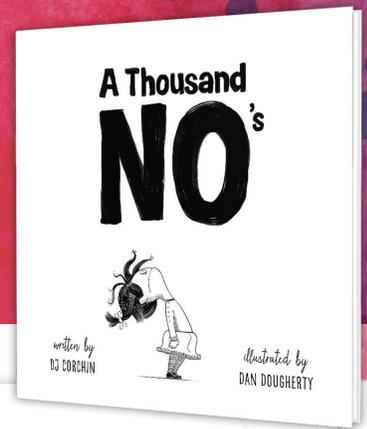
RL K.1, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2



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## Pictures and Words

In this book, the girl has an idea. During the story, people react to her idea by saying "No." As she gets more "No's," the idea gets too big for her to handle on her own. When she gets help, she and her team turn all the "No's" into one big "Yes" of an idea. How do the text and illustrations work together to convey information about the characters, setting, and events of the story?

RL K.1, 1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2

## Challenges and Changes

The girl begins the story with an idea that she wants to share with others. How does she react when she gets her first "No"? Does she want to ask for help? By the end of the story, she has a whole team who have helped her create the idea instead of it being just her own. What challenges does she encounter? How do they make her change? Make sure students identify the specific parts of the story where these changes occur.

RL K.1, K.3, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.7

SL K.1, 1.1, 2.1

## What's the Big Idea?

Break students into pairs to retell *A Thousand NO's* to one another. Have them talk about the following questions: What is the story about? What is the main message or big idea of the book? Come together as a class for further discussion. What message is the author trying to convey to the reader?

RL K.1, K.2, K.7, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

## Story Shuffle

Working as a class, review the story and list or draw the major events of *A Thousand NO's* on sheets of paper. Review the beginning, middle, and end of the book with the class. Do the events have to happen in this order? Try rearranging the events. Does the story still make sense? Why or why not?

RL K.1, K.3, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.5, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2

## Uses of Color

Break students into small groups and have them review the illustrations in the book. How do the illustrations change from the beginning of the story to the end? When does color first appear in the book? How does that make the mood of the story change? What do the colorful "No's" symbolize? What do students think the big, colorful "Yes" at the end represents?

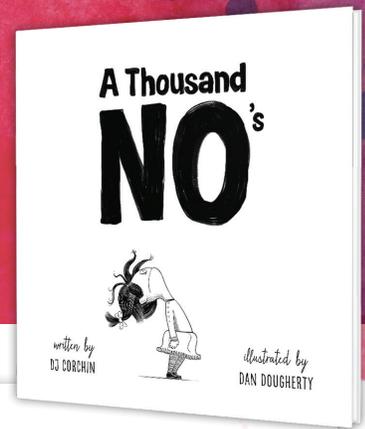
RL K.1, K.3, K.7, 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.7

SL K.1, K.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2



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## No Is Not the End

In the real world, people don't just say "No" to ideas; they give more reasons. Sometimes it is very hard to remember that getting told "No" is not the end and is not the worst thing in the world. As a class, brainstorm some real-life scenarios of an idea and the "No's" students might encounter. Have volunteers role-play these scenarios for the class and discuss how the idea was changed for the better.

SL K.1, 1.1, 2.1

## Getting to Yes

By the end of the story, the "No's" are transformed into colorful, fun images and are assembled to form a huge "Yes." Have each student design their own colorful, creative "No." Outline a large "Yes" on the wall and have students cut out and fill the outline with the "No's" they have created. Keep it displayed as a reminder that with work, every "No" makes the "Yes" more possible.

SL K.5, 1.5, 2.5

## A Picture Is Worth a Thousand No's

Look at pages 36–37. At this point in the story, the text reads "There were just so many NO's. She needed more and more people to help." The illustrations show kids moving "No's" in all sorts of ways—with wheelbarrows, bicycles, cranes, and more. Have students draw their own page showing themselves pitching in to help move a "No" toward "Yes!" What sort of equipment or animal or other help would they use to shift that "No"? Have students write a sentence or two to go along with their illustration. When they are done, insert the new pages into the appropriate spot in the book to continue the story...and help the idea continue to grow!

SL K.5, 1.5, 2.5

## Reader's Theater

*A Thousand NO's* is a perfect book for the class to perform. Select a different group of students to act out and read each spread. Have them practice reading their section aloud several times to develop their fluency and oral reading skills. With the help of an adult, perhaps an art teacher, have students create props and scenery to bring the story to life. Did reading aloud and acting out the story change their understanding of it?

RL 1.6, 2.6

RF K.4, 1.4, 2.4

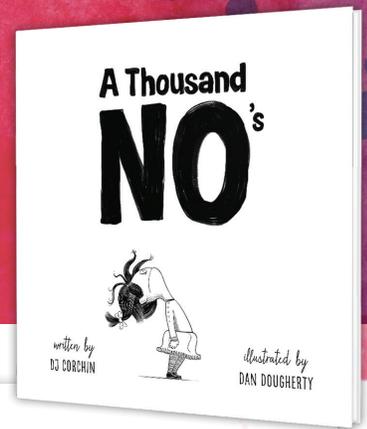
SL K.1, K.5, 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.5

Visit the Common Core State Standards website to read about the individual standards listed in this guide: [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy](http://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).



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## FOR REFERENCE:

### Common Core State Standards Used

### Reading Standards for Literature KINDERGARTEN (RL)

#### Key Ideas and Details

- K.1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- K.2. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
- K.3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

#### Craft and Structure

- K.4. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
- K.5. Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).
- K.6. With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- K.7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

### Reading Standards: Foundational Skills KINDERGARTEN (RF)

#### Fluency

- K.4. Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

### Speaking and Listening Standards KINDERGARTEN (SL)

#### Comprehension and Collaboration

- K.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
- K.2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

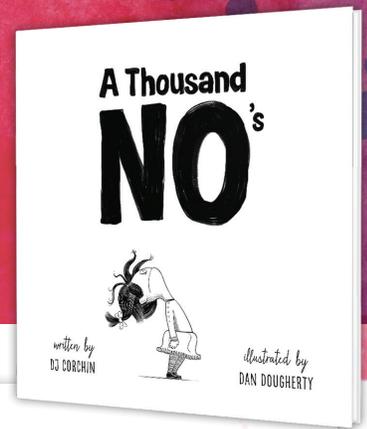
#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- K.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.



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## Language Standards KINDERGARTEN (L)

### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- K.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
- Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing “duck” is a bird and learning the verb “to duck”).
  - Use the most frequently occurring inflections and affixes (e.g., -ed, -s, re-, un-, pre-, -ful, -less) as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word.
- K.5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
  - Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).
  - Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).
  - Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., “walk,” “march,” “strut,” “prance”) by acting out the meanings.

## Reading Standards for Literature Grade 1 (RL)

### Key Ideas and Details

- 1.1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- 1.2. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- 1.3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story using key details.

### Craft and Structure

- 1.5. Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
- 1.6. Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 1.7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

## Reading Standards: Foundational Skills Grade 1 (RF)

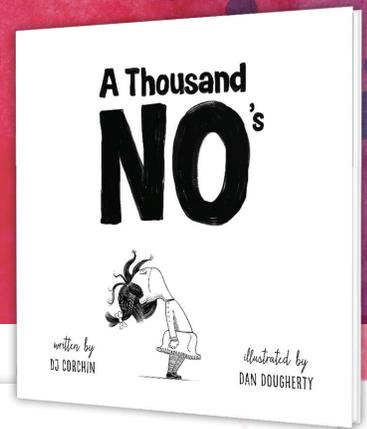
### Fluency

- 1.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
  - Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
  - Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.



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## Speaking and Listening Standards Grade 1 (SL)

### Comprehension and Collaboration

- 1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
  - c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
- 1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- 1.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

## Language Standards Grade 1 (L)

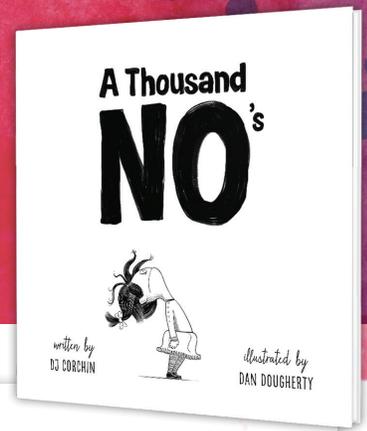
### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 1.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
  - a. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - b. Use frequently occurring affixes as a clue to the meaning of a word.
  - c. Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., look) and their inflectional forms (e.g., "looks," "looked," "looking").
- 1.5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
  - b. Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a duck is a bird that swims; a tiger is a large cat with stripes).
  - c. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at home that are cozy).
  - d. Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., "look," "peek," "glance," "stare," "glare," "scowl") and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., "large," "gigantic") by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.



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## Reading Standards for Literature Grade 2 (RL)

### Key Ideas and Details

- 2.1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- 2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- 2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

### Craft and Structure

- 2.5. Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- 2.6. Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 2.7. Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

## Reading Standards: Foundational Skills Grade 2 (RF)

### Fluency

- 2.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
  - a. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
  - b. Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
  - c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

## Speaking and Listening Standards Grade 2 (SL)

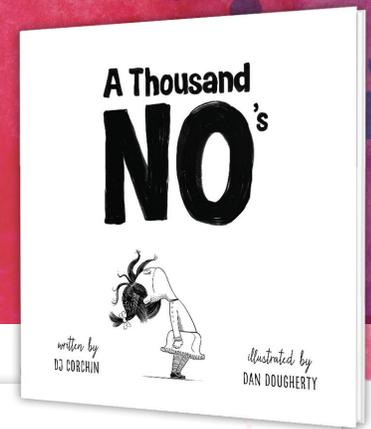
### Comprehension and Collaboration

- 2.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - b. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
  - c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
- 2.2. Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.



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## Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

2.5. Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

## Language Standards Grade 2 (L)

### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

- 2.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., "happy"/"unhappy", "tell"/"retell").
  - Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., "addition," "additional").
  - Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (e.g., "birdhouse," "lighthouse," "housefly"; "bookshelf," "notebook," "bookmark").
  - Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.
- 2.5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are spicy or juicy).
  - Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs (e.g., "toss," "throw," "hurl") and closely related adjectives (e.g., "thin," "slender," "skinny," "scrawny").

