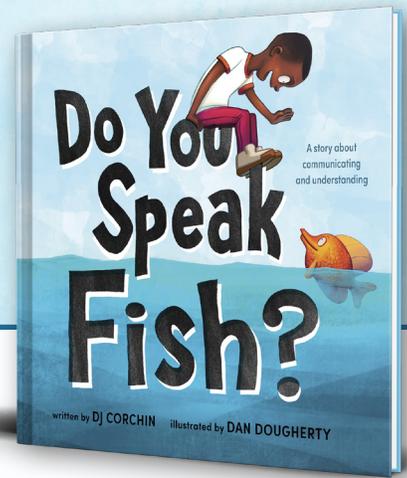


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR **Do You Speak Fish?**

written by DJ CORCHIN illustrated by DAN DOUGHERTY



Discussion & Activity Guide for Grades K, 1, 2 and 3

ABOUT THE BOOK

When a boy comes across a fish and says hello, the fish does not respond. The boy is shocked. What a rude fish! But soon he realizes that it isn't up to the fish to speak Kid. Rather, if he wants to communicate, it's up to the boy to take the time to learn how to speak Fish. Celebrate the connections we have to those different from us with *Do You Speak Fish?*



Photo © DJ Corchin

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DJ CORCHIN is an award-winning children's book author and illustrator. He uses his unique humor and wit to focus on socially conscious messages involving kindness, communication, and emotional awareness. He is the author of the *I Feel...* series, *A Thousand No's*, and many other titles. He currently lives and works in Chicago, IL. www.djcorchin.com



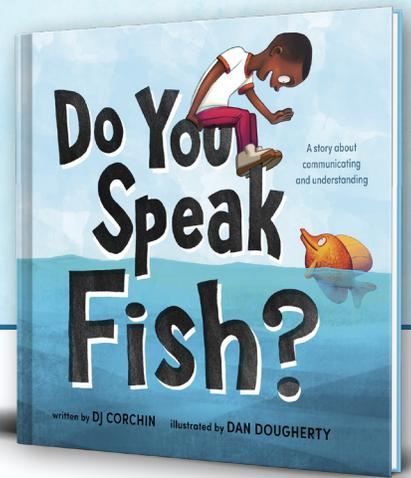
Photo © Glenn Carpenter

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

DAN DOUGHERTY is an award-winning writer and illustrator of comics and children's books. Dan's career began in 2003, and since then he has written or illustrated over one hundred published works ranging from horror to children's books. He worked with DJ Corchin previously on *A Thousand No's*. www.beardocomics.com

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PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Look at the title of this book. Can you think of another word that could be substituted for Fish?

What languages do students know how to speak? How did they learn?

Ask students to imagine they are visiting a place where no one speaks the same language they do. What would it be like? How would it feel for no one to be able to understand them? What problems do students think they might encounter? Have any students been in this situation in their real life?

As a class, look at the cover and the pictures in this book. What do students think this book will be about? What kind of book will it be? Fiction or nonfiction? Funny or serious?

Vocabulary

While you are reading the book, have students raise their hands if they hear an unfamiliar word. Guide students in deriving the meaning from context. Once you have finished reading the story, discuss these unfamiliar words again. Do students remember what the word meant? Can they make up a new sentence using the word? Can students think of other words that have a similar meaning?

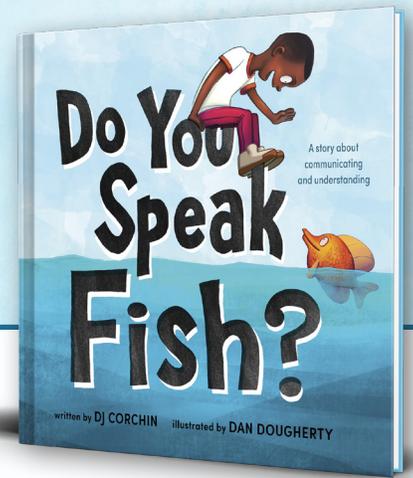
POST-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Question and Answer

1. What different animals does the boy meet?
2. What does the boy do when he meets a new animal?
3. How do the animals react when the boy first tries to talk to them?
4. Who teaches the boy to speak Fish?
5. How did the tree learn to speak Kid?
6. What plant does the tree say can't talk?

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7. What animal is the first to speak to the boy in Kid?
8. The bee says it learned Kid from the fish. Why did the fish say it learned to speak Kid?
9. What did the boy really say when he first tried to speak Lion?
10. What language does the book say the new friends talk when they gather to share stories?

Look at the Big Ideas

As a class, discuss what themes students can find in *Do You Speak Fish?* What big ideas can they take away from this story? Break students into groups to follow how one of these themes is explored in the story. Have each group explain their findings to the class.

Getting to the Root of the Issue

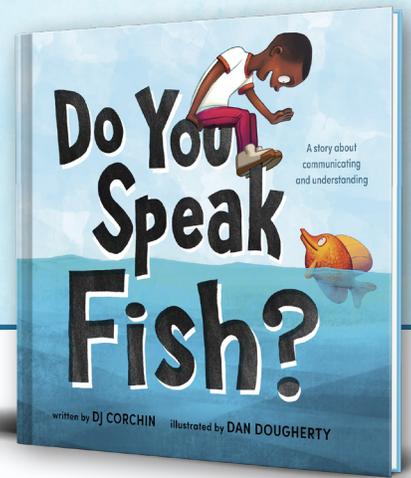
As a class, review the scenes where the boy first tries to talk to the animals. What does the boy think about the animals and their lack of response, and how does the reader know what he feels? What do the animals do when the boy gets angry? How do students think the animals feel when the boy is yelling at them? The pivotal scene occurs when the boy meets the tree. What does the tree explain to the boy that the boy didn't understand before? Discuss the term "empathy" with students. Why is it important to think about how others feel? How would it have helped the boy if he had tried to understand what the animals were feeling before he learned to speak their languages?

For Every Action There Is a Reaction

Discuss with the class how picture books use words and illustrations to tell the action of the story and convey the way the characters are feeling. Break students into small groups, assigning each group one of the interactions between the boy and an animal for closer study. Have students prepare a presentation that explains how the characters react to each other when they first meet, how their feelings change, and how the author and illustrator tell the reader what the characters are feeling. After you have reviewed the whole book, come together as a class to discuss. If students had been in the same

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position as the characters, would they have felt the same way? Does looking at the story from the other point of view help students understand the “big ideas” of this book?

Communicating vs. Talking

Through the first half of the book, the boy talks to the animals but they don't understand him. When he learns their languages, they finally can communicate. Have students ever had trouble communicating with someone, whether due to a language barrier or any other reason? How did it make them feel when they couldn't get their point across? How did they fix the situation? What is the difference between talking and communicating?

Different Means of Communication

One of the pivotal moments in *Do You Speak Fish?* comes when the tree explains to the boy that the animals don't speak Kid, and proceeds to teach the boy their languages. What if the tree had not been able to teach the boy the languages of the animals? With his new understanding of the situation, how could the boy have responded to the animals? What are other ways he could have communicated with them and become friends?

What a Character

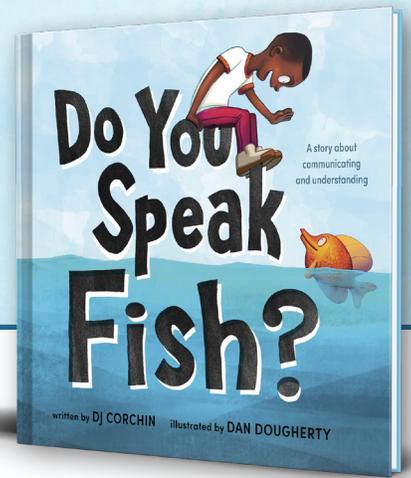
In a picture book, we learn about the characters from both the text and pictures. Based on the things the boy does and says, make a list of his main character traits. Did students learn more from the text, or from the illustrations? Have students take the lead in making similar charts for the other characters.

Mighty Roar

When the animals speak, the words are in a different style than the regular text. It is only fair they should sound different when read aloud! As a class, discuss how the languages of the different animals would sound. Read the book again and have volunteers make the noises in Fish, Lion, and Bee. How does Lion language sound when the lion roars at the boy? How does the lion react when the boy is trying to greet him? Why did he react this way and how do students know?

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***Do You Speak Fish?* Classroom Edition**

In the course of the story, the boy meets a fish, a lion, and a bee. Have students draw a new encounter with a new animal in the spirit of the original story. As usual, have the boy try to talk to the animal, and get angry when it doesn't answer him. How does this new animal respond when the boy gets angry? Is it an armadillo, who rolls up in a ball? Or a rhinoceros, who charges? What happens when the boy learns the new animal's language and goes back to say hello? With adult help as needed, have students write text to accompany their new illustrations. Collect these new scenes and compile them to create a "classroom edition" of *Do You Speak Fish?* For extra credit, share your classroom edition with the author and illustrator!

The End of the Matter

By the end of the story, all the animals, the boy, and the tree like to sit around and tell stories in the different languages they know. Read the last pages of the book, focusing particular attention on the final sentence: "They always worked to understand each other...and their world got a whole lot bigger." Why did they work to understand each other? How did that make their world get bigger? How can students apply this lesson to their own lives?

