

EDUCATOR GUIDE Grades 2-3

# Read for a Better World

By Tonya Leslie, PhD



Excerpted from Read for a Better World Educator Guide Grades 2-3

Lerner 

# Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards

The Social Justice Standards are a road map for anti-bias education at every stage of K–12 instruction. Comprised of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes, the Standards provide a common language and organizational structure educators can use to guide curriculum development and make schools more just and equitable.

## IDENTITY

1. Students will develop positive social identities based on their membership in multiple groups in society.
2. Students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups.
3. Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.
4. Students will express pride, confidence and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people.
5. Students will recognize traits of the dominant culture, their home culture and other cultures and understand how they negotiate their own identity in multiple spaces.

## DIVERSITY

6. Students will express comfort with people who are both similar to and different from them and engage respectfully with all people.
7. Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.
8. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
9. Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.
10. Students will examine diversity in social, cultural, political and historical contexts rather than in ways that are superficial or oversimplified.

## JUSTICE

11. Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.
12. Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).
13. Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
14. Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
15. Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.

## ACTION

16. Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.
17. Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice.
18. Students will speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias.
19. Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.
20. Students will plan and carry out collective action against bias and injustice in the world and will evaluate what strategies are most effective.

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Introduction:

# Reading for a Diverse World

We live in a diverse world. We see diversity in the variety of landscapes and ecosystems that exist on our planet. We hear diversity in the range of languages that are spoken around the world. We taste diversity in the mixes of spices that flavor the food we eat during cultural celebrations we share with family and friends. Often, books help us access this diverse world, taking us to places both real and imagined. Books bridge the gap so that we can visit and understand the lives of others, and through that exploration, we get closer to ourselves.

Children learn about the world through their experiences. Through interactions with adults, children understand their place in the world. Research shows that children first learn how to read the world at an early age, through the faces of their caregivers. Children look for connections through eye contact and facial expressions. Then, as children get older, they look for connections through other mediums, including texts.



As children get older, they look to texts to help them understand the larger world around them. They begin to wonder about their origins and their histories as they begin to see themselves within the frame of a larger world. As their curiosity expands, so does their appetite for knowledge. This is why it is important to expose children to a vast array of texts. They need access to both books that reflect their world and books that show them the larger world they exist within. They need to meet characters and worlds that are familiar and unknown as part of their own inquiry process around their lives. Every child needs opportunities to read books that reflect the beauty and the richness of our diverse world.

# Learning for Justice Standards

Consider using the social justice anchor standards from Learning for Justice as a framework for developing your diverse library. These standards have four themes: identity, diversity, justice, and action. For more information, see [www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards](http://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards).



## IDENTITY

Books support the development of positive social identities through exploration and knowledge of self. With each new experience, children have the opportunity to refine their sense of self and recognize that their identity is always changing and developing.



## DIVERSITY

Books expose children to diverse stories, places, and perspectives that promote the development of empathy and respect for people who are both similar to and different from them.



## JUSTICE

Books expose children to stories about people who have fought for justice. We live in a complex world with a difficult history. When children learn that people have always resisted and fought against injustice, they recognize their own ability to treat others with dignity and respect.



## ACTION

Books encourage children to take actions in small ways that make a difference. For example, thinking about how to be a better friend or talking to loved ones in order to record family histories are ways children can practice leveraging their own responsibility for making the world a better place.

# Diversifying Your Library

Research shows that a literacy-rich environment is important and that children who are exposed to books become more motivated and capable readers. In school and at home, access to books is critical, as children who are surrounded by books are more likely to become readers. School-based libraries are especially important for children who have limited access to books in their homes or communities.

Children need access to stories that represent aspects of their lived experience as well as stories that reflect the diversity of the world around them. Though representation in children's books has increased over previous years, there is still a surprising lack of diverse representation in children's texts relative to the diverse student population.

It is essential to consider what books are already in your library so you can offer not just more stories that feature diverse characters, but also feature a variety of stories and text types to ensure children are getting access to different stories and different ways of telling stories. Research suggests that books about diverse groups often have limited content. In these books, the same narrative is told again and again. So, what might seem like a diverse collection is just multiple iterations of the same story. For example, if the books in your collection tell only stories of Black leaders from the Civil Rights era, then you don't have a diverse collection. You just have a lot of books about one moment in history. The idea that only one story can be told about a group's experience reinforces stereotypes.

*The idea that only one story can be told about a group's experience reinforces stereotypes.*







## Auditing Your Current Library

One way to consider the diversity of your library is by doing an audit. First, consider the students your library serves by asking yourself the following questions:

- What are the demographics of my students?
- What are the languages they speak at school and at home?
- What are some of the topics they are interested in?

Then, as you review the books in your collection, ask:

- Who is represented in this story?
- Who is this story about?
- What is this story about?

Consider how race, ethnicity, and gender show up in the books in your library. How many books feature Black characters? How many stories feature a girl as the main character? Once you quantify who shows up in the books you already have, now ask: What shows up? What is the story being told?

## Invisible Identities

Explore the concept of inner and outer identities by helping your students explore their classmates' hopes and dreams.

### What You Need

- ❑ Dry-erase board and markers
- ❑ *Who Is a Scientist?* by Laura Gehl
- ❑ Hopes and Dreams worksheet for each student (p. 37)
- ❑ Writing supplies for students

### Learning Goals

- Understand the different aspects that make up a person's identity
- Identify examples of inner and outer characteristics
- Explore the idea that everyone has dreams, interests, and aspirations that can't be learned just by looking at a person

### Words to Know

**aspiration:** a hope or goal

**characteristic:** a feature or quality of somebody or something

### Key Questions

- What can I learn about someone else's identity based on how they look?
- How can I learn about the invisible parts of someone's identity?
- What can't I know about someone by looking at them?
- How do hopes, dreams, and aspirations contribute to someone's identity?

### Talk about It

Begin by introducing the concepts of identity and of characteristic. Explain that some characteristics are invisible.



## Say It

"Identity is the collection of all the little things that make you who you are. Your identity is made up of different characteristics. This is a bit like the ingredients in a recipe. Each ingredient is important on its own. But when you combine them together, you get something wonderful and unique.

"Your personality, what you believe, and the way you look are all characteristics. Some characteristics are things people can see, like being tall or having curly hair. Other characteristics are invisible. These are things people wouldn't know just by looking at you, like what you care about or what you hope for. For example, you might love animals and hope one day to be a veterinarian.

"Today we are going to learn more about the hopes, dreams, and aspirations that make us each unique!"

## Try It

Have students explore different aspects of identity as a group and in pairs.

1. As a class, study the pictures on pages 10–11, 12–13, 20–21, and 26–27 of *Who Is a Scientist?* by Laura Gami without reading it. Ask students to list characteristics about each person based on looking at the photos. Write students' answers on the board. Remind them that these characteristics can be physical traits or personality traits, such as likes or dislikes.
2. If needed, ask students questions to encourage them to look more closely at the photos. For example, *Munazza is wearing a hijab in both photos. What does this tell you about her?*
3. Now go back and read the descriptions of each person. Ask students to list the characteristics they learned about each person based on the descriptions. Circle any characteristics that are on your original list. Write down any new invisible characteristics.
4. Divide your class into random pairs. Give each student a copy of the Hopes and Dreams worksheet. Encourage students to ask their partner questions to learn about what interests them and what type of job they hope to have when they grow up. Then have students draw portraits of their partners expressing part of their identity.

## Think about It

Come back together as a class. Invite students to share what they learned about their partners. Did anything surprise them?

### SEL Connection

Understanding what sparks a child's interest is key to building connection. Demonstrate to students that you care about their goals and believe in their ability to achieve them. Using positive language throughout this discussion will help support students' belief in themselves and their abilities.

*Notes*

Excerpted from Read for a Better World Educator Guide Grades 2-3

# Hopes and Dreams



My name: \_\_\_\_\_

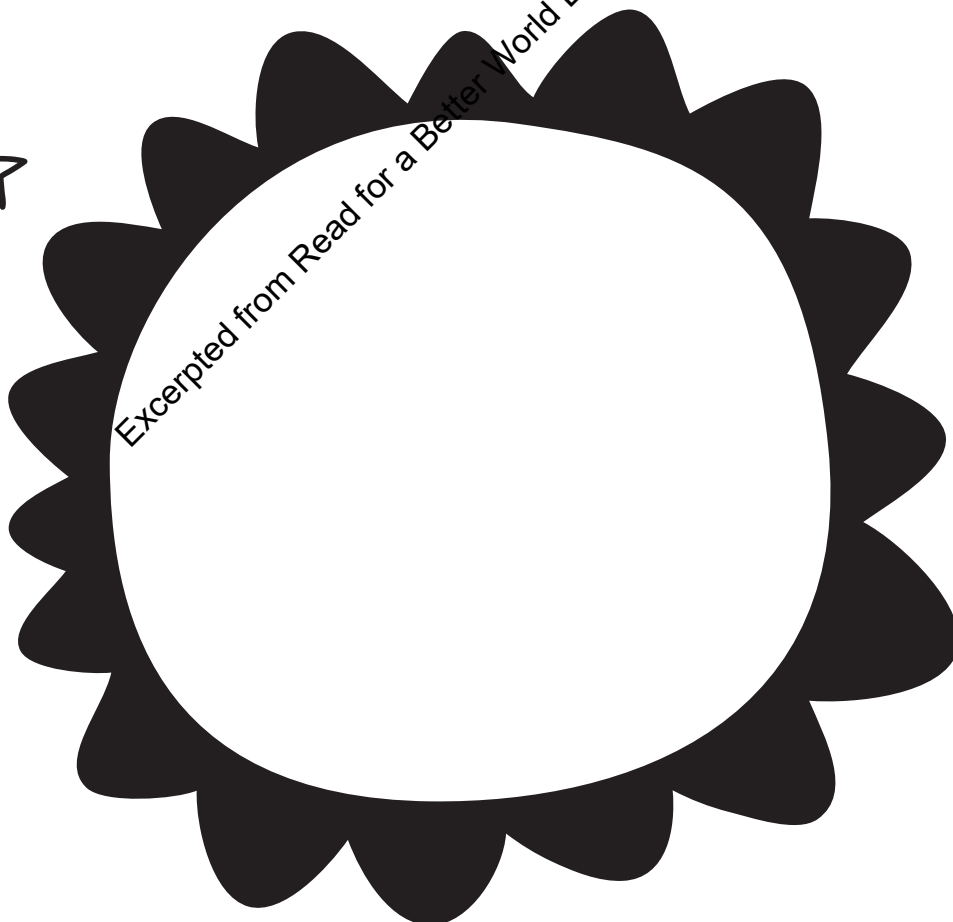
This is \_\_\_\_\_.

They are inspired by \_\_\_\_\_.

They are interested in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

When they grow up, they hope to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



## Two Voices

Students use poetry to explore empathy while learning about Japanese internment camps.

### What You Need

- ❑ *A Scarf for Keiko* by Ann Malaspina
- ❑ "The Best Birthday Present: A Poem for Two Voices" by Gwendolyn Hooks, from *Thanku: Poems of Gratitude*, edited by Miranda Paul
- ❑ Speaking with Two Voices worksheet for each pair of students (p. 97)
- ❑ Paper and writing supplies for students

### Learning Goals

- Introduce students to the history of Japanese internment camps
- Work with a partner to write a two-voices poem from the perspective of each character in a book

### Key Questions

- How does looking at an event from two perspectives change my view of it?
- What can we learn from studying history from two perspectives?
- What role should empathy play when learning about historical events?

### Talk about It

Explain that today you will be talking about Japanese internment camps. Provide context for the rest of your discussion.



### Consider This

Some students may have anxiety about reading work aloud to the class. Be respectful of students' choice to not share their poems.



## Say It

"From 1939 to 1945, much of the world was involved in World War II. On December 7, 1941, Japanese forces bombed US military base Pearl Harbor. Soon after, the US government decided that Japanese Americans could not be trusted. It ordered all Japanese Americans into internment camps."

Read *A Scarf for Keiko* by Ann Malaspina aloud to your class. Discuss the book as a class with the following questions, or ask your own:

- Why did Sam's brother not want him to talk to Keiko? Was this fair or unfair?
- Why do you think Keiko knit Sam a scarf? How do you think this made Sam feel?
- Why do you think Sam knit Keiko a scarf? How do you think this made Keiko feel?
- Why was it unfair that Keiko and her family were forced to go to the internment camp?

## Try It

1. Divide your students into pairs and give each pair the Speaking with Two Voices worksheet. Say that they will be working together with their partners to write a two-voices poem. Explain that a two-voices poem is a poem meant for two people to read out loud. The lines of the poem are divided into two columns. Each column represents a different speaker. Sometimes a poet wants both speakers to say the same thing at the same time. Then the word or phrase appears in both columns. These poems often read like a script or a conversation between two people.
2. Invite two students to read aloud "The Best Birthday Present: A Poem for Two Voices" by Gwendolyn Hooks, from *Thanku: Poems of Gratitude*, edited by Miranda Paul. Show students the page, so they can see how the poem appears visually.
3. Explain that each pair of students is going to write a two-voices poem. One voice will be Keiko's, and the other will be Sam's. As students work, visit each pair to answer questions and offer advice or suggestions as needed.
4. Invite each pair or call on pairs to read their poems aloud to the class.

## Think about It

Reflect on what students learned after writing their poems and listening to their classmates' poetry. Do they feel any differently about their answers from the original discussion questions you asked? How did writing from Keiko's or Sam's point of view affect their answers?

### SEL Connection

Acknowledging the importance of other viewpoints and perspectives is a key component to building empathy. Throughout this activity, encourage students to actively consider Keiko's and Sam's perspectives. Rather than just considering how students might feel if they were in Keiko's or Sam's situation, encourage students to look for clues in the book that hint at how the characters are thinking.

Notes

Excerpted from Read for a Better World Educator Guide Grades K-5





Ask students to think about ways they show someone they are listening. Write their ideas on the dry-erase board. Use the following list as a guide:

- body turned toward theirs
- make eye contact
- lean toward them
- nod head
- make sounds or statements of affirmation, such as “I see”
- ask follow-up questions

Point out to students that we cannot simply give the appearance of listening to someone. We have to pay attention to and think about what they are saying.

### Try It

Have students practice active listening through repetition and follow-up questioning.

1. Divide the students into pairs. Have one student tell about their day so far, from the time they woke up until now. After each statement the speaker makes, the listener should repeat it back in the second person. For example, if the speaker says, “I almost missed the bus because I couldn’t find my math book,” the listener will say, “You almost missed the bus because you couldn’t find your math book.”
2. After a few minutes, tell students to switch roles in their pairs. Repeat step 1 in their new roles.
3. After a few minutes, tell students to switch roles again. This time, the speaker will talk about what they plan to do for the rest of the day, from now until they go to bed. Instead of repeating back each statement, the listener will ask the speaker at least two follow-up questions about things they shared.
4. After a few minutes, go around the room and have each listener share one thing the speaker told them.
5. Have students switch roles one last time before repeating steps 3 and 4.

### Think about It

Reflect as a group on how the exercise went. Ask students to share how they could tell their partner was listening to them. Ask them how it felt to know they were being listened to.

## Notes

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### Helpful Resources

#### **To Sustain the Tough Conversations, Active Listening Must Be the Norm**

[www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/to-sustain-the-tough-conversations-active-listening-must-be-the-norm](http://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/to-sustain-the-tough-conversations-active-listening-must-be-the-norm)

#### **Tips & Activities to Improve Your Child's Active Listening Skills**

[www.oxfordlearning.com/improve-active-listening-skills/](http://www.oxfordlearning.com/improve-active-listening-skills/)