



TEACHER'S GUIDE



About the Book

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Readability: Grades 2-5 (ages 7-10) * Used to address self-esteem in upper elementary & middle school students*

The Message in The Mirror was written to inspire children to uncover the beauty inside. It teaches children about self-esteem through a vividly illustrated story.

Aria is a smart, talented and pretty young girl who struggles with bullying and low self esteem. Since she only believes that other people are pretty or popular, she constantly seeks validation of her worth. That is until one day something happens that helps her realize the Message in the Mirror; a message that was there all along.

Standards

Reading Focus - Readers are asked to identify details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly or when drawing inferences from the text:

- (RL.3.1-5.1)- ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- (RL.3.3-4.2)- to describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- (RL.3.2-5.2) -determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text

Social Emotional (SEL) Focus - Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others:

- #1 - Name the emotions felt by characters in stories.
- #2 - Describe a time you felt the same way a story character felt.
- #3 - Describe emotions associated with personal experiences.
- #4 - Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- #5 - Recognize personal qualities.

Book Themes

• Self-Image/Self-Esteem • Friendship • Bullying • Education

Key Words

• divine • hazy • taunted • tolerated • solemn • unique

Note to Teacher

Throughout the guide you will see these boxes with suggestions on how to incorporate this into your daily lessons.



These discussion questions & activities provide options for a lesson that will be meaningful for your students!

Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- Who do you see on the cover of the book? What is that person doing?
- What do you think the book might be about?
- What questions do you have that you hope to answer by reading the book?

While reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these questions:

- (Predicting) What do you think will happen next? Why?
- (Inferring) What emotions is the character feeling? How do you know?
- (Connecting) What would you have done if you were the character?
- (Visualizing) If you were in the story, what would you hear, taste, smell or feel?
- (Questioning) Is there anything you're wondering about right now?
- (Determining Importance) What's the big idea in what you've read today?

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these questions to address the standards noted above:

- What was your first impression of Aria and how did it change throughout the novel?
- What genre is this book?
- What is the theme of the story?
- What problems did Aria encounter at school? How did those problems affect her?
- What is meant by the phrase, "even though they got in trouble, it did little for Aria whose feelings had already been bruised?" What was the author trying to help readers understand from this sentence?
- How did the story make me feel?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?

Extension Activities

Activity #1 (RL.3.1-5.1)- In the Message in the Mirror, Aria changes from the beginning to the end. Her transformation is similar to a caterpillar changing to a butterfly. Identify each part of her change using examples from the text.

SEL Connection → #1 - Name the emotions felt by characters in stories.

Have students figure out how Aria's emotions have changed throughout the story and have them try to figure out what caused the emotions she was feeling.

Activity #2 (RL.3.3-4.2)- By the end of the story, Aria walks away with more confidence and a winning smile. Imagine you are Aria from the end of the book, what advice would you give to someone being bullied or struggling with low self-esteem? Write a letter, text or email to someone keeping in mind that you are Aria.

SEL Connection → #2 - Describe a time you felt the same way a story character felt.

Allow students to share a time where they felt the same way as Aria did throughout the story. Also allow them to share what helped them get through that experience. They could do this in writing or verbally, and could also be done within whole class community building time, small reading groups time, or turn and talk time depending on how the book is used within class.

Activity #3 (RL.3.3-4.2)- If you have never heard it before, words have power. Select and listen to 2 of the songs from the list provided. Carefully analyze the words and identify the message it is trying to teach girls. Pick the one that you feel speaks to you the most and tell why.

SEL Connection → #3 - Describe emotions associated with personal experiences.

Have students talk about what emotions the songs made them feel. Ask, “Were there specific experiences that you thought of during the song?”

Activity #4 (RL.3.2-5.2)- This book addresses several different themes. If you had to create a theme for the story and list it as #hashtag, what would you say? Write your theme as a sentence or hashtag below, and explain why you think it fits!

SEL Connection → #4 - Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

Have students persuade their classmates about why their theme hashtag or sentence fits the best with the story.

Activity #5 (Writing Cursive Practice)- Practice writing words of affirmation in cursive. On the last line, write an I AM... statement of your own.

SEL Connection → #5 - Recognize personal qualities.

Within a community circle, each student would have the opportunity to share their “I am” statement about themselves. You could also have them add on one positive thing about the person opposite them in the ring if you want to extend the activity.

Activity #6 (Math Matching) - What did Aria see when she looked in the mirror? She saw what was true, but more importantly what she believed. Match the correct mirror to what Aria was thinking.

SEL Connection → #4 - Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

Have students explain what they liked or disliked about the book using details from the book and giving specific examples. You could also add an extension where the students write their opinion in a letter format to send to the author.

Activity #1

Transformation using Text Examples

In the Message in the Mirror, Aria changes from the beginning to the end. Her transformation is similar to a caterpillar changing to a butterfly. Identify each part of her change using examples from the text.









Letter Writing from Aria

Imagine you are Aria from the end of the book, what advice would you give to someone being bullied or struggling with low self-esteem?

Date

(Name of the person you writing the letter to)

(Closing for your letter - examples in the box to the right)

(Your name)

**Yours truly,
Sincerely,
Respectfully,
Your friend,
Best regards,**

Letter Writing from Aria

Imagine you are Aria from the end of the book, what advice would you give to someone being bullied or struggling with low self-esteem?

Write a letter, text or email to someone keeping in mind that you are Aria.

[illegible]

Activity #3

(RL.3.1-5.1)

🎧 Mirrored Messages Through Music 🎧

Step 1 → Select and listen to 2 of the songs below (check off the ones you have listened to).

- q Beautiful Flower - <https://youtu.be/NXulnbGJXY8>
- q Square Pegs - https://youtu.be/P8_MF8y9RPM
- q Scars To Your Beautiful - <https://youtu.be/Em7vc8NWUNY>
- q Who Says - <https://youtu.be/BzE1mX4Px0I>

Step 2 → Carefully analyze the words and identify the message it is trying to teach girls.

Step 3 → Pick the one that you feel speaks to you the most and tell why.



Activity #4

(RL.3.2-5.2)

Finding the Theme #TheMessageInTheMirror

The theme of a story is the main lesson or message that an author wants the reader to learn. Themes are usually noted with a sentence or just a few words. They are similar to social media hashtags.

Ex: #workhard, #nevergiveup, #girlsrock, #smile

This book addresses several different themes. If you had to create a theme for the story and list it as #hashtag, what would you say? Write your theme as a sentence or hashtag below, and explain why you think it fits!

THEME (sentence or hashtag!)

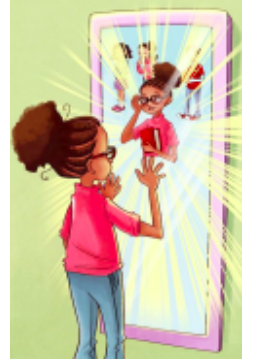
EXPLANATION (why it fits!)

[illegible]

Activity #5

I am Statements in Cursive

One way to build your confidence and self-esteem is to speak positive words to yourself daily. The more you say them, the more you will believe them.



Practice writing these words of affirmation in cursive.

On the last line, write an I AM... statement of your own.

I am smart.

I am enough.

I am loved.

I am brave.

Activity #6

Mirror Matching for Aria

What did Aria see when she looked in the mirror? She saw what was true, but more importantly what she believed. Match the correct mirror to what Aria was thinking.



$20-6$
or
 7×2



$8+2+0$
or
 $100/10$



$10-8+1$
or
 $15/5$



$18-12$
or
 3×2