

TEACHERS' NOTES

I SEE RED

Written by Maggie Hutchings and illustrated by Sarah Zweck

Notes prepared by Belinda Bolliger

I SEE RED



thames
&hudson

Thames & Hudson Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. For our head office in Naarm (Melbourne), we respectfully acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations. We recognise the continuing connection to culture and story passed down through generations of Indigenous Australians that unite people, environment and ways of seeing. We pay respects to elders past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waterways and community. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Blurb

Two siblings have a fight and it's a BIG one! Will things ever be the same again?

From a bestselling author and award-winning illustrator comes this relatable picture book about not seeing eye-to-eye.

Synopsis

I See Red is a funny, sweet and relatable picture book about two siblings who have a very BIG fight. What begins as a disagreement over crayons quickly grows into shouting, stomping and hurt feelings. Through expressive language and energetic illustrations, the story captures the overwhelming emotions children can experience when they are angry. But even the biggest feelings don't last forever. As the brother and sister calm down, they start to think about all the love and happy times they share, and they reconnect during bathtime. This warm and lovely picture book explores conflict, forgiveness and family love.



Themes



SIBLINGS

FAMILY AND LOVE



COLOURS AND EMOTIONS

'BIG' FEELINGS



CREATIVITY

CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION





Writing style

The author uses simple but expressive language that perfectly captures childhood emotions. Short sentences, repeated phrases and verbs such as 'stomped', 'stormed', 'snatched' and 'snivelled' create movement and feeling. The first-person narrative invites readers directly into the family relationship, helping children recognise their own experiences of anger, frustration, sadness and love.

Illustration style

The illustrations are energetic and expressive and perfectly reflect the emotions of the children and the mother. Scribbles, crayon drawings, movement lines and colour mirror the emotional highs and lows. Colour is used symbolically to help young readers connect emotions with visual imagery. The illustrations incorporate childlike artwork and artwork actually drawn by children throughout, reinforcing the themes of creativity and emotional expression. The highly expressive faces, body language and colour all work together to create moods and feelings. The softer, calmer images towards the end of the story beautifully reflect the siblings' reconnection and love.

About the author

Maggie Hutchings is a bestselling author of picture book stories with heart and humour. Her work has been published in several territories worldwide. Her picture book *Your Birthday Was the Best!* (illustrated by Felicita Sala) was a CBCA Honour Book, a White Raven Book and was shortlisted for the Russell Prize for Humour Writing. Maggie worked as a family counsellor and mediator for many years and now spends her time writing from her home on the northern coast of New South Wales.

Author motivation

I See Red is a sibling story about conflicts and how they play out in the real world! Conflict seems to be on the front pages at all levels. There are many books about 'How to be' but not many about the reality, which is that conflict is normal but can be worked through. No one is kind all the time, and that is not a failure – it's normal! Like all of my books, this one is inspired by listening and watching and chatting to real kids. I think all kids will see themselves in this book.



About the illustrator

Sarah Zweck is an award-winning Melbourne-based illustrator who enjoys making a glorious mess in her studio using traditional media. She graduated from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom with a BA (hons) in fashion design and had the privilege of working as a children's wear designer in London before embarking on a career in illustration. In 2022, Sarah's family moved to Melbourne, which she now calls home.

Illustrator motivation

It's a story older than time – siblings argue! I'm one of four, so you can only imagine the stories I hold. I can still remember the visceral anger I felt when my siblings upset me. I used to share a room with my younger sister and was so annoyed by her following me and my friends around that I drew a line across our bedroom floor. On her side was the en suite, so I really cut my nose off to spite my face! My sister and I are now best friends and speak almost daily.

Arguments between siblings are normal and very important for children to navigate. I hope this story not only encourages these conversations but also allows a moment in time when the child and adult reader can laugh about their previous behaviour and potentially learn from it. *I See Red* teaches little ones that sibling dynamics can be hard to navigate, but love really does win!





Australian curriculum links (Foundation–Year 2)

English

- Listen to and respond to texts and share feelings and opinions about characters and events
- Identify how illustrations contribute to meaning in stories
- Discuss personal experiences that relate to texts
- Create imaginative and informative responses using drawing, speaking and writing
- Discuss characters' feelings, actions and relationships
- Identify language that describes emotions and actions
- Identify how authors and illustrators portray emotions and relationships

Personal and Social Capability

- Recognising emotions in themselves and others
- Developing empathy
- Learning strategies for managing strong emotions
- Building positive relationships
- Resolving conflict respectfully

The Arts: Visual Arts

- Experiment with colour, line and shape to communicate ideas and feelings
- Explore how artists use visual elements to express emotion
- Create artworks inspired by personal experiences and emotions

The Arts: Music

- Explore how music can represent feelings, ideas and stories
- Respond to music through movement and drawing
- Identify how tempo, volume and rhythm can create different moods and emotions
- Use music as inspiration for imaginative and creative responses

Health and Physical Education

- Identify emotions and how they affect behaviour
- Practise strategies for calming down and resolving conflict
- Explore respectful relationships and caring behaviours within families and friendships

NOTES

Before reading the text

Looking at the cover

- Before reading the story, your teacher will cover the title so that you can only see the cover illustration.
 - What do you notice in the picture? How do you think the characters are feeling? What might the story be about?
- Now reveal the title of the book, *I See Red*.
 - Does it change your ideas about the story?
- What does the expression 'I see red' mean?
- As a class, brainstorm what the colour red can mean. Think of emotions as well as objects (for example, hearts, blood, anger, love and so on).
- What colour do you think of when you feel angry? What about when you feel happy? Calm? Excited?



During and after reading

Vocabulary

- Are there any words in the story that are new to you? Use a dictionary to find the meanings of each new word as you go along. Create a class list of new vocabulary.

I see red (and yellow and blue and green...)

- The story uses colours to represent feelings. Why do you think the author chose red for anger?
- Different colours can make us feel different emotions. What feelings do you connect with colours such as blue, yellow, green, purple, black or orange? Why?
- Do colours always mean the same thing to everyone? For example, can red sometimes represent love or celebration instead of anger? Create a class chart matching colours with emotions. Compare everyone's ideas. Are there colours that mean different things to different people?
- Can colours feel big or small the way feelings can? Which colours might feel loud, quiet, heavy or light?
- Choose a feeling and create an abstract work of art using colours, lines and shapes to show that emotion (for example, swirling black lines for frustration). Can you give your artwork a label? For example, if you drew the emotion 'calm' you might label your artwork 'Blue feels peaceful'.
- Keep a colour diary: for one day, keep track of your emotions using colours instead of words. For example, you might colour part of your day yellow because you feel happy or grey because you feel tired or black because you feel gloomy. At the end of the day, discuss your colour story with a partner.
- Colourful language: We often use colours in expressions about feelings. Discuss phrases such as 'tickled pink', 'feeling blue', 'green with envy'. What do these expressions mean? Can you think of any others?
- Create a self-portrait using colours that represent how you are feeling today.



BIG feelings

- Throughout the story, the children experience very BIG feelings. What do you think the author means by 'BIG feelings'?
- What caused the argument to start with? Was it something important? Have you ever had a fight over something small that became much bigger?
- Have you ever had an argument or disagreement with a sibling or a good friend? What was it about? How did you resolve it? Did anyone help you sort things out? Write a few short sentences about the fight or share the experience with a classmate.
- How do the author and the illustrator show that the children in the story are experiencing BIG feelings?
- Look at the illustration on pages 8–9 where the little girl sees red. How would you describe the little girl's feelings? How do the arrows and dotted lines on this spread create a sense of anger and chaos? What else do you notice about the illustrations on these pages?
- How do both the author and the illustrator calm things down on the next page?



- As a class, discuss the meaning of the phrase 'body language'.
- Throughout the story, the illustrator shows the children's feelings through body language. Look at the illustration of the sister on page 11, where the sister is marching away with her nose in the air. What does this pose mean?
- Now, as a class, strike a pose to show a big feeling. For example, your teacher might call out, 'Happy!' Use your body (no words or sounds!) to show you are happy. Next might be 'sad'. Change your body to show that you are sad, and so on.



- The story uses expressive words such as 'stomped', 'stormed', 'slammed', 'snarled', 'snivelled'. Read the words aloud together, then:
 - act out each word
 - make facial expressions to match
 - think of other 'big feeling' words

Characters

- The illustrator cleverly gives the sister and brother very distinct personalities. As a class, brainstorm adjectives (describing words) for each character.
- Now, in pairs, write a character profile for the sister and the brother.
- Finish these sentences in your own words:
'The big sister is _____.'
'The little brother is _____.'



Illustrations

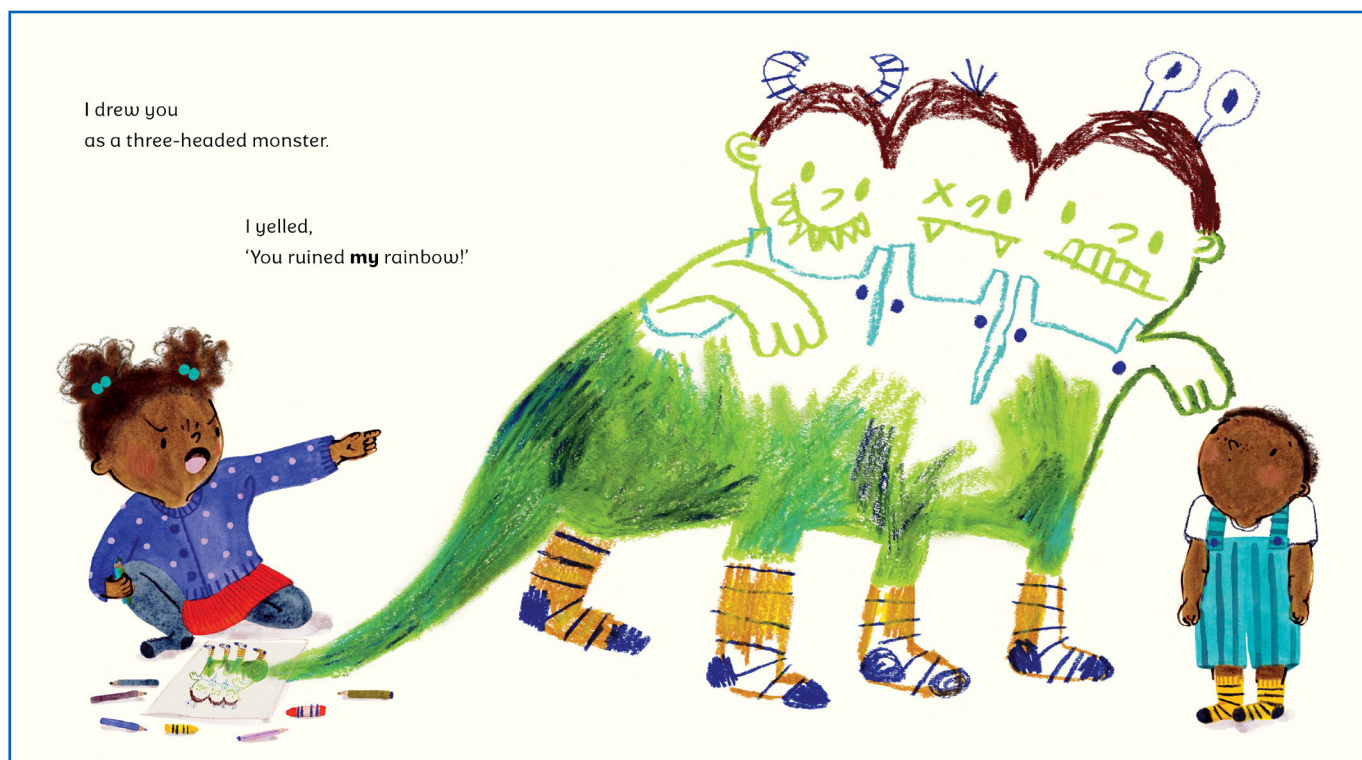
- As well as colour, the illustrator uses a range of visual devices throughout the book to show emotions, movement and action. Look closely at:
 - Scribbly lines
 - Bold pencil marks
 - Messy crayon strokes
 - Exaggerated facial expressions
 - Movement lines
 - The children's own drawings throughout the story
 - The size and placement of the illustrations on the page.
- Which pages feel loud or chaotic? Why?
- Which pages feel calmer? Why?
- What do the scribbles and rough lines help us understand about the children's feelings?
- How do the illustrations change as the siblings start to calm down?
- Which illustration do you think best shows a BIG feeling?
- Choose one spread from the story and describe how the illustrator has created mood and emotion. What visual clues help you understand how the characters are feeling?
- What is on the front and back endpapers in the book? How do the endpapers add to the story and illustrations?
- How is type used throughout the book? Look at capital letters, bold words and sentences and line breaks.



Brothers, sisters and friends

I drew you as a three-headed monster. I yelled, 'You ruined my rainbow!'

- Even though the brother and the sister in the story are angry, they still care about each other. What kind of things do the siblings do for each other? Why do people who love each other still argue sometimes?
- How do the children begin to calm down?
- What helps them to reconnect?



Me versus you

- The story is told from the big sister's perspective. However, we can also see how the little brother feels. How do the illustrations help us understand his emotions?
- Do you think the little brother would tell the story differently? Why? Have you ever had a disagreement where both people felt they were right?
- Discuss the idea that every story and every argument can have more than one side.
- Choose one scene from the story and retell it from the little brother's point of view. How might he describe what happened and how he was feeling?

I saw love

I drew a new picture of you. And when you drew me ... I saw love.

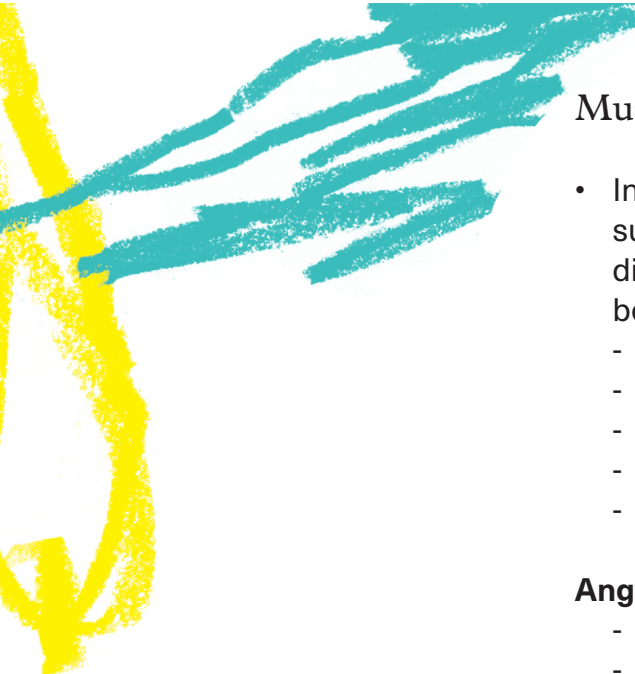


- What new picture does the big sister draw near the end of the story? What does this picture tell us about how her feelings have changed?
- Think about your brother, sister or a good friend. What is something kind or special they do for you that makes you feel loved or cared for? Create a picture that shows your appreciation for that person. You might like to draw them in an imaginative way, just as the children do in the story. For example, if your big brother helps you bake, you could draw him as a heart-shaped cupcake.
- What does the little brother draw? How does it show love? What other things can a rainbow mean? What other things symbolise love?

MONSTER feelings

- The big sister draws her sibling as a three-headed monster. Draw what anger might look like as a creature or a monster. Give it a funny name. Describe it using adjectives. What might help this monster calm down?
- Imagine you are a grumpy monster having a very bad day!
Using your body only:
 - stomp around the room
 - cross your arms
 - scrunch up your face
 - throw your hands in the air
 - move like you are feeling frustrated or upset
- Now add sounds and movement:
 - growls
 - sighs
 - grumbles
 - stomping feet
 - dramatic monster groans (it's a very, very bad day!)
- Slowly:
 - take deep breaths
 - relax your shoulders
 - loosen your hands and shake your body so all the grumbly emotions float away
 - sit quietly and stretch gently
- How did your body feel when you were acting angry?
How did it feel when you calmed down?
- What are some good ways to manage BIG feelings?
- What helps you feel calm when you are upset?
- As a class, brainstorm some calming strategies for times you are feeling angry, anxious or stressed. Draw a box and put the words and strategies into the box to create a 'Be Calm Toolbox'. For example, deep breathing, hugging yourself or a toy, counting slowly, talking to someone.





Music moves me

- In *I See Red*, the sister and brother experience BIG feelings such as anger, frustration, sadness and love. Listen to different pieces of music (there are some suggestions below) as a class and discuss:
 - How does this music make you feel?
 - Does it sound angry, calm, excited or peaceful?
 - What colours would match this music?
 - What lines or shapes would you draw while listening?
 - Does the music remind you of a part of the story?

Angry or energetic music

- 'Flight of the Bumblebee' by Rimsky-Korsakov
 - 'Mars' (from *The Planets*) by Gustav Holst
 - Fast drumming or percussion music
 - Dramatic movie soundtrack music
- As you listen:
 - Make large scribbly lines with crayons or pencils. Draw what anger or frustration might feel like.
 - Move your body to the rhythm. Express your feelings!

Calm or peaceful music

- 'Clair de Lune' by Claude Debussy
 - 'Gymnopédie No. 1' by Erik Satie
 - Gentle piano or nature music
 - Soft lullabies or instrumental music
- As you listen:
 - Create soft lines, swirls or rainbow colours.
 - Draw peaceful scenes or kind moments.
 - Move your body softly and gently.
- 

Sing a rainbow

- There are many songs about feelings, emotions and colours. Below are a few suggestions of songs that tie in with themes in the book. Listen to some of these and then take a class vote to choose your favourite to learn and perform for another class or at a school assembly.
 - 'What A Wonderful World', Louis Armstrong (colour imagery and themes of kindness and connection)
 - 'I Can Sing a Rainbow', Cilla Black (all about colours and rainbows)
 - 'You've Got a Friend in Me', Randy Newman, *Toy Story* (perfect for discussions around relationships after disagreements)
 - 'Try a Little Kindness', Glen Campbell
 - 'Count On Me', Bruno Mars

Final reflections

- How did the story change from beginning to end?
- Why is forgiveness important?
- How do the sister and brother feel at the end?
- How do you think Mum feels at the end?

