



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

The Boy with Flowers
in His Hair



The Boy with Flowers in his Hair

Jarvis
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for
regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

David is the boy with flowers in his hair. He's sweet and gentle, just like his petals. But when David's flowers begin to fall – a single petal at first, then every last blossom – his best friend never leaves his side. And through kindness and creativity, he even finds a way to give David his colour back...

Beautifully illustrated and sensitively told, this story is about being there for someone when they are at their most vulnerable, and brings to life a pure and poignant friendship that children will never forget.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Jarvis studied Graphic Design and previously worked as a record sleeve designer, website designer and an animation director before becoming a children's bookmaker. His books with Walker include *Follow Me, Flo!*, *Tropical Terry*, *Mrs Mole, I'm Home!* and *Alan's Big, Scary Teeth*, which won the V&A Best Illustrated Book. He is all the illustrator of the much-loved "Pick a ..." series written by Patricia Toht, *Pick a Pine Tree* and *Pick a Pumpkin*. Jarvis lives in Manchester with his wife and their dog and cat. Follow him on Twitter as @heyimjarvis, and on Instagram as @booksbyjarvis.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

**These notes
are for:**
• Ages 3-7
• Years F-1

**Key Learning
Areas:**
• English

Example of:
• Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:
• Friendship
• Acceptance
• Differences



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Before Reading

Before reading *The Boy with Flowers in His Hair*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Write your own story using the title *The Boy with Flowers in His Hair*.

Discussion Questions and Activities

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *The Boy with Flowers in His Hair* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, place an image of the cover of *The Boy with Flowers in His Hair* and surround it with words that describe the book. Include words that describe what you liked and what you disliked about the book.

Take turns describing/retelling the story as if you were explaining it to someone who hasn't read it yet. What do you think are the most important parts of the story? Why do you think that?

What is your favourite part of the book? What do you like about that part?

Do you think the boy has real flowers in his hair? Why or why not? A metaphor is 'representative or symbolic of something else': what might the flowers in the book be a metaphor for? Make a list of possible metaphors for the flowers, and reconsider your reading of the book with each different metaphor. Some possible metaphors for the flowers could include:

- Illness
- Disability
- Mental health
- Gender

David feels different to the other students in the class because of the flowers in his hair. Split the class into two groups and have a class discussion – the first group can imagine they are David and they can discuss what fears or anxieties being different might cause; and the second group can imagine they are the other kids at David's school and they can discuss how they could help David feel safe and comfortable.

At first the other students avoid David because they're worried about being scratched by his branches. Do you agree with their behaviour? How does this make David feel?

The narrator is a good friend to David. Have a class discussion of the benefits of making and having friends, and being a good friend. How can you support your friends if they're feeling like David does in the story?

In what ways do the narrator and David's classmates show empathy in *The Boy with Flowers in his Hair*? Why is it important to be kind to others? Find other books in your library about empathy or kindness and make a display.

The narrator describes David as 'sweet and gentle, just like his petals.' Think of one of your friends, and choose two words to describe them. Why did you choose those two words?



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David and the narrator are friends and like to do activities together like making up songs and splashing in puddles. Who are your friends? What activities do you like to do with your friends? Draw a picture of you and your friends doing something you all enjoy and write a few sentences about what is happening in the picture.

Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following:

- How do you think David and/or the narrator are feeling? What clues might there be in the pictures?
- Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
- Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
- Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?
- How do things close up look different to things in the picture that are far away?
- How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

David goes through a range of feelings in the story. Look at each spread and discuss how he might be feeling. Create a mood/feelings chart for the story. Discuss situations when students have felt the same way and why.

Write a short story about another day at school with David and the narrator. What do they see and do? Draw some pictures to illustrate your story.

Some stories have a moral, which means the story is trying to teach the reader a lesson. What is the moral of this story? Is there more than one? Do you know any other stories that have a moral?

Draw a self-portrait – but replace your hair with flowers! Make sure to use lots of colours, and you could even visit your library to learn more about different types of flowers you might like to include.

Find other books illustrated by Jarvis at your library, and compare them to *The Boy with Flowers in his Hair*. How are they similar or different?