

Same, Same but Different written and illustrated by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

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Grade Levels: K to Grade 3

Synopsis: The title of this beautifully illustrated book comes from a popular saying in Nepal that is used to compare cultures. Elliot and Kailash are pen pals from different countries who share their lives through exchanging letters and pictures. In their communication, they discover that they share many more similarities than differences.

Pre-reading activities:

a) Class survey

- Make two class sets of cards (approximately the size of index cards), with each set in a different colour. Red and green work well, as students will be using them to show agreement or disagreement. These can be laminated and used again in the future.
- Provide questions for students to answer that highlight their similarities, yet also include their differences. Students can answer yes or no questions by responding with a raised green card or raised red card.
- Have a class set of two different coloured stickers (yellow and blue—half of each) and stick them in the same place on students. Each student should receive one sticker.
- “Did I put a yellow sticker on you?” can be followed with a general question that students can answer individually, such as, “What is your favourite colour?”
- “How many students have a pet?” can be followed with a general question that students can answer individually, such as, “What kinds of pets do you have?”
- “How many students live with a grown-up?” can be followed with a general question that students can answer individually, such as, “Who are the grown-ups that live with you?”
- “How many of you would like to have a friend?” can be followed with a general question that students can answer individually, such as, “What kind of friend would you like to have?”
- The classroom teacher can add further grade-appropriate questions, keeping in mind that she or he should debrief the main idea of students having large commonalities with small variances as well as visible/invisible differences.
- In discussing visible/invisible differences, teachers can elicit examples of both.

b) Tactile activity

- Show the class a bowl of different kinds of fruit (apple, banana, grapes, pear, orange, etc.) and pass them around.
- Ask the students what is different and what is similar about the fruits.

- Elicit responses (and record on a chart according to grade level) to show the categories that are different (size, shape, colour, taste) and the same (type of food, skin) about the fruits.
- Debrief the activity and tie it in to similarities/differences and students.

Post-reading questions:

a) Understanding the story

- What is a pen pal? Would you like to have a pen pal?
- What is the same about Kailash and Elliot? What is different?
- What do you think the author is telling us?
- Create a class Venn diagram, placing Elliot's and Kailash's activities in the appropriate sections.

b) Transforming your thinking

- Ask students to think about some examples for the following:
 - What is similar about everyone in the class? (we're all in the same class, we're all in the same grade, etc.)
 - What is different about everyone in the class? (we all live in different kinds of houses, we are not all the same age, etc.)
- The teacher can emphasize the large-scale similarities and small-scale differences.
- Has anyone ever thought you were different? In what way? Ask students to think of and relate something you might have in common with that person.

c) Deepening your thinking

- Ask students to brainstorm what they should say if someone made an inappropriate remark about somebody else's culture or skin colour?
- Ask students to brainstorm other ways they can support someone who is being left out or made to feel badly because of their culture or skin colour?
- Ask students to discuss if they think any aspects of Kailash's life would be more difficult than their own? Teachers can use this as a springboard to discuss different lifestyles and consumption around the world using photographs and/or media documents. Ensure students understand the differences but also remember similarities. Get students to brainstorm ways they can make a difference. Teachers may choose to use the story of the Ryan's Well Foundation to illustrate how everyone can make a difference.