

Vanessa Brantley-Newton



VANESSA BRADLEY-NEWTON is a self-taught illustrator, doll maker, and crafter who studied fashion illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology and later children’s book illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She is author and illustrator of *Grandma’s Purse* and has illustrated numerous children’s books. She lives in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband and daughter. *Just Like Me* is a collection of poetry filled with engaging mini-stories about girls of all kinds: girls who feel happy, sad, scared, powerful; girls who love their bodies and girls who don’t; country girls, city girls; girls who love their mother and girls who wish they had a father. With bright portraits in Vanessa’s signature style of vibrant colors and unique patterns and fabrics, this book invites readers to find themselves and each other within its pages.

Just Like Me

RRS connection to TEKS (PK-1st grade): Please refer to TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading:

- *Comprehension skills*
- *Response skills*
- *Author's purpose and craft*
- *Composition I: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process.*
- *Composition II: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--genres.*
- *Inquiry and research*

Vocabulary:

- poetry
- canvas
- family and community
- palette
- shine my little light
- kindness
- change the world
- warrior, respectfully, humanity
- culture, race, color
- human race
- diversity
- bodegas
- Nae Nae
- Hip-hop beat
- Gullah ways
- explorer
- weird
- negotiator
- bullies
- independence and civil rights
- wisdom
- ancestors
- gumbo
- paper chain

Pre-reading engagement:

- What does an author do? What does an illustrator do? Think about the title of the book? What does it tell us about the book?
- What do you think the book will be about?
- Look at the artwork. What do you see? How does the artwork make you feel?
- Read the author's biography together. What did you learn about Vanessa?
- Ask your librarian to help you find more information about poetry, Nae Nae, or Hip Hop.

While/post reading engagement:

- How do colors make you feel? What's your favorite color? How does this color make you feel?
- What is a warrior? What does a warrior do? Are you a warrior too? Tell us how you use your warrior skills to help others?
- What does human race mean? What does diversity mean? You can also talk about words like culture, race, and color. Share your thoughts with your class or make a drawing to show your ideas.
- What do you love about yourself and your personality?
- What's your favorite season?
- Look for a clip of your favorite music. Share this video with friends and teach them your favorite dance steps.
- Describe the city vs the country. Make a drawing to compare what life is like for people in either region.
- Explorer: Do you like to explore. Choose an explorer and learn more about this person at your library.
- What does the word negotiator mean?
- Bullies! Oh, no! Share ways you can help your friends stay safe from a bully.
- Do you play an instrument? Bring it to class and share what you've learned.
- What are civil rights? List our civil rights and the names of people who helped us gain them.
- Write your own poem: I Am
- Create a paper chain of everyone in your class. Give your community a name and share it with the other 2nd and 3rd grade classes.
- Don't forget to think about questions you would like to ask Vanessa.
- Make a welcome banner for Vanessa! Decorate it with photos and drawings of you!

Useful links:

- Author's website: <https://www.vanessabrantleynewton.com/welcome>
- Publisher's website: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2024703/vanessa-brantley-newton>
- TEDx: https://www.ted.com/talks/vanessa_brantley_newton_diversity_designed_by_adversity
- Times video: <https://www.nytimes.com/video/books/100000004950929/live-illustration-with-vanessa-brantley.html>
- Whimsical sketchbook: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUBJoYy_DkQ