

TEACHER'S NOTES – THE BALLAD OF DEXI LEE

By Lisa Nicol & illustrated by Lucy Culliton



Before reading the book:

Look at the cover.

What do you know about Dexi Lee?

What part of Dexi Lee can't you see?

Why do you think the illustrator chose to put those animals on the cover?

What do they have in common?

Where do you think you might see these animals?

Read the back cover:

What is different about Dexi Lee?
Why are Dexi Lee's hands behind her back?
How do you think Dexi Lee feels about her hands?
Would you like gigantic hands?
What would be hard to do with big hands?
What would be easy to do with big hands.

Activities:

- 1) Make big hands out of cardboard or use a big foam hand.
Ask the children to try on the hands and imagine life as Dexi Lee.
- 2) Read the book to page where Dexi is being consoled by her mother:
How does Dexi feel about her hands?
What words in the story tell you about her feelings?
Have you ever felt like you don't fit?
What do you think Dexi's friends think of her hands?
How might you feel if Dexi was in your class at school?
How could we make Dexi feel welcome in our classroom?
How would we need to help Dexi? How could Dexi help us?

Read to end of book:

How does Dexi feel about her hands at the end of the story?
What has changed?
Why has Dexi changed her mind about her hands?
Which animals helped Dexi?
Are there other animals which could have helped her?
Can you think of other uses for an elephant's trunk? Giraffe's neck? Peacock's tail? Deer's antler?
What do you notice about Dexi's hands throughout the story?
How do they change?
Why do they change?

Other English Activities

Write a poem about having another body part enlarged.
Make a list of games you could play with Dexi Lee. Make a list of games it would be hard to play.
Why did the author choose hands? How would the story change if Dexi had enormous feet? Write a list of advantages and disadvantages of having enormous feet.
Hot seat Dexi - how do you feel at different parts of the book
Thinking clay Dexi in different situations: at the beach, at the supermarket
Write a diary entry by Dexi at the beginning of the story, and after she has gone to the zoo.
Write a diary entry about what you have done today pretending you were Dexi.
How do we use our hands? Hands can be used for love and hate, kindness and cruelty.
What does the phrase helping hand mean? Hand yourself over? To give someone a hand?

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Choose one part of you that makes you special. Write about what makes you unique. How do you the other people in the story feel about Dexi's hands? Conscience alley different opinions and see how Dexi feels at the end.

Dexi's mother makes her feel better about her hands. Who helps you to feel better when you are sad? How do you help others to feel better when they are sad?

HSIE / Science

Invent a creature that has an unusual adaptation. Illustrate and label.

Research other people who have physical difficulties that have helped them in their quests- Beethoven. Stephen Hawkins, Helen Keller, Franklin Roosevelt, King George III Research animal parts and find out how they help the animal

Maths

Design a way to measure each person's hands. Display results in a graph
Survey left and right handers.

Measure your left and right hands. Are they the same size?

Order the class in hand size order.

Write / draw with your other hand - describe how you feel.

Write / draw with boxing gloves on- describe how you feel.

Do you have a picture of your handprint from when you were born? How much have your hands grown?

Creative Arts

Look at hands in different cultures over time - aboriginal art, cave paintings, Harmony Day
Why do ancient cultures use hands in their art? Why is it still a common motive?

Make small puppets of Dexi and another character. Make up a small role play of Dexi in a new situation - buying an ice cream, catching a bus

When Dexi clapped her hands it was as loud as thunder. Try to make different clapping sounds. Can you tell a story with claps?

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