

Teacher & Librarian Resource Guide

For Lucy's Umbrella

by Sara Madden and Illustrated by Hayley Helsten

Target Grades: K–6 | Themes: Self-acceptance, Diversity, Nature, Observation, Beauty in Difference

Lexile/Reading Level: Lower Elementary (adjustable for discussion use across grades)

About the Book: *Lucy's Umbrella* follows a young girl named Lucy who lives with vitiligo—a condition that causes the loss of skin pigment in patches. But Lucy doesn't hide from the world. Instead, she finds joy in the unique patterns on her skin and the natural world around her. As Lucy walks through nature, she celebrates what makes her and the world beautifully unique.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and celebrate differences in themselves and others
- Develop observational skills through nature-based exploration
- Practice self-expression and empathy
- Recognize patterns and symmetry in nature and life
- Engage in meaningful conversations about diversity, inclusion, and self-worth

Discussion Questions (K–6 Adaptable)

1. What do you think Lucy sees when she looks at her skin?
2. How does Lucy's walk in nature help her feel proud of who she is?
3. What patterns do you notice around you every day?
4. Why is it important to recognize beauty in differences?
5. Have you ever felt different in a way that made you feel special? How?
6. How do you think Lucy would describe her umbrella? What does it symbolize?

Classroom Activities

1. “Pattern Portraits” Art Project

Have each student draw or paint a portrait of themselves showing patterns on their skin, clothing, or in their background that express who they are. Incorporate leaves, swirls, waves, dots, or personal symbols—just like Lucy notices in nature.

Objective: Promote identity, art expression, and observation skills.

2. “Nature Walk Pattern Hunt”

Take students on a walk (or show a slideshow of nature). Ask them to record or draw patterns they notice: bark on trees, spots on insects, ripples in water, etc.

Extension: Create a classroom collage of nature patterns.

3. “What Makes Me, Me” Writing Prompt

Students write or dictate a short paragraph or poem describing something unique about themselves—physical, emotional, or cultural—and why it’s beautiful.

Optional Sharing: Let students read aloud or turn their work into a classroom “Lucy’s Umbrella” display.

Curriculum Tie-Ins

Subject	Connection
ELA	Reading, Comprehension, self-expression, poetry
Science	Observation of patterns in nature, biology (skin diversity, pigmentation)
Art	Mixed-media pattern making, self-portraiture
SEL (Social Emotional Learning)	Empathy, identity, inclusion, positive self-image

Accolades & Awards

Amazon #1 Bestseller – Children's Inspirational & Personal Growth, Disease, Diversity

2022 Global Book Award Gold Winner – Children/Growing Up

2019 Huffington Post Top 20 Books on Diversity for Children

Contact the Author and Illustrator

Interested in a free virtual classroom visit, Q&A, or printable activity sheets?

Reach out to Sara Madden and Hayley Helsten at:

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