

An illustration of a soccer field with children playing. In the top left, a girl in a pink hoodie sits on a wooden bench. In the top right, two girls in purple jackets are running. In the bottom half, three boys in yellow, green, and red jerseys are running. The field is green with white lines, and the background shows a green field and a grey sky.

THE SAME GAME

by Renata Hopkins
illustrated by Daron Parton

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Published 2019 by the Ministry of Education,
PO Box 1666, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
www.education.govt.nz

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Publishing services: Lift Education E Tū

ISBN 978 1 77669 682 6 (print)
ISBN 978 1 77669 683 3 (online)

Replacement copies may be ordered from Ministry of Education Customer Services,
online at www.thechair.co.nz
by email: orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz
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www.ssol.tki.org.nz

Ministry of Education



On Tuesday morning, Lani and Lucy arrived at school wearing the exact-same hoodie – and the exact-same plait.

“We’re twins,” said Lucy. “See!” She jumped up and down, and Lani jumped, too. This gave Lani an idea.

“Let’s not just *look* the same,” she said. “Let’s *act* the same.”

Lani scratched her nose, so Lucy scratched hers. Lani grinned. Lucy grinned back.

At morning break, Lani and Lucy marched across the playground in perfect time –

left, right, left.

When Lani stopped,

Lucy stopped.



When Lani hopped on one foot, Lucy hopped, too. Being the same made Lani feel bigger and stronger. It was like there were two of her instead of just one.



At the drinking fountain, they passed Dean and Tyson.

“What are you doing?” asked Tyson.

“We’re playing the same game,” said Lucy. She hadn’t thought of the name until just then, but it was perfect.

“Can we play?” asked Dean.

Lani was about to say yes, but Lucy got there first.

“No,” Lucy said. “You can only play the same game if you’re the same as us, and you’re not.” She waggled the end of her plait. “See? Same hair, same clothes. Our names even start with the same letter.”

Dean looked disappointed, which made Lani feel mean. But she was enjoying the same game, so when Lucy bounced away like a kangaroo, Lani bounced away, too.



At lunchtime, Lucy and Lani were eating their yoghurts at the exact-same speed when they saw Dean, Tyson, and Aarav walking across the playground like robots. They were stepping together, turning together, and stopping together.

“Hey! They’re copying,” Lucy said. “They’re playing the same game.” She left her half-eaten yoghurt and went after them.

By the time Lani caught up, Lucy and Dean were arguing.

“We’re not playing *your* same game,” said Dean. “Ours is about being a robot with a missing tooth. See.” Dean, Tyson, and Aarav opened their mouths to show gummy gaps. Then Dean turned back into a stiff-armed robot and lurched away.





By the end of lunchtime, half the junior syndicate was playing the same game. There was a group for blonde hair, a group for blue socks, and a group for anyone with freckles. Seeing so many kids playing her game made Lani feel proud ... until she noticed Zoe.

Zoe was sitting alone on a bench. She didn't have a purple hoodie or a long brown plait. She wasn't a boy with a missing tooth or a girl with blonde hair. She didn't have blue socks or freckles.

"Let's ask Zoe to play," Lani suggested.

Lucy frowned. "But she's not the same as us."

Lani didn't know what to say. How could she disagree with Lucy when they were being the same? She was relieved when the bell rang.





Just after lunch, two big kids from year 8 came in. Lani had seen them on playground duty, wearing their bright yellow vests. They went over to Mrs Khan and talked quietly. Lani couldn't hear what they were saying, but Mrs Khan's face looked serious. After a moment, she stood up and clapped her hands.

“Whakarongo. Listening ears, Tōtara whānau,” Mrs Khan said. “We'll finish our books later. Right now, Kāhu and Jasmine are taking you outside for a game.”

“We saw lots of you playing a game at lunchtime. It's called the same game, is that right?” Kāhu asked. The class smiled and nodded.

“We're going to change the rules this time,” Jasmine said. “We'll explain outside. Haere mai!”





In the playground, everyone got into their groups from lunchtime.

Jasmine shook her head. “Make a circle, everyone. Remember, we’re changing the rules,” she said. “This isn’t the *same* same game.” Jasmine explained that she and Kāhu would call out different questions. “If the thing we call out is true about you, run into the middle, OK? Starting with ... who’s wearing a plaster?”

Everyone looked. Then all the kids with a plaster raced into the middle.

“See?” said Jasmine. “I bet you didn’t notice that before. Sometimes you have to look closer to spot things that are the same.”

“OK – new group,” called Kāhu. “Who has four kids in their family?” Most of the plaster kids ran out, but Anapela and Josh stayed in. Tyson, Zynah, Sione, and Zoe joined them. Zoe looked happy to be in a group.

“That’s interesting,” said Kāhu. “You can’t always see what’s the same.”



The questions kept coming.

Whose favourite colour was orange?



Who had a cat?

Who had two cats?



Talofa
Kia ora

Who could speak more than one language?

It was fun seeing the groups swap and change. The game was full of surprises.

THE SAME GAME: TEACHER NOTES

Finally, Jasmine called out the last question. “Who is not a giraffe?”

Lucy grabbed Lani’s hand, and Lani took Zoe’s.

This time, everyone ran giggling into the middle.



This is a book for “reading to” students. The first time you read this story to students, focus on enjoyment and understanding. In later readings, go deeper into the perspectives of the characters and the themes of diversity, inclusion, and empathy.

The Same Game is intended to help foster the curriculum principles of diversity and inclusion by supporting students to recognise and appreciate their similarities and differences. Set in the familiar world of school, it will stimulate connections to students’ own experiences. It may even motivate them to take action to create a culture of belonging in their community.

The New Zealand Curriculum: Principles

Cultural diversity

The curriculum reflects New Zealand’s cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people.

Inclusion

The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students’ identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed.

Read <i>The Same Game</i>	Talk about it	Take action for diversity and inclusion
<p>Read the story to the students, beginning with a brief introduction. <i>This story is about two girls who make up a new game. Let’s find out what happens.</i></p> <p>Read the story in an expressive way. Without interrupting the flow, use think-alouds to prompt connections and foster empathy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I wonder what will happen ...</i> • <i>What will Lani do ...?</i> • <i>Poor Zoe. I know how that feels.</i> • <i>I wonder what the big kids are talking about with the teacher.</i> • <i>That’s interesting. What are Kāhu and Jasmine planning?</i> <p>Encourage the students to make personal connections by sharing stories of similar experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This story makes me think about ... What does it make you think about?</i> <p>Foster empathy by listing the characters’ names and asking the students to think about how the characters feel and how their feelings change. Write the feeling words under the relevant characters’ names. Prompts could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do you think the boys felt about their new game?</i> • <i>You said something like this happened to you. Can you tell us how that felt?</i> • <i>I wonder why Lani didn’t stand up to Lucy. How do you think she was feeling?</i> 	<p>Discuss the story’s message, drawing on the connections the students have made and their sense of empathy with the characters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What did you think of Jasmine and Kāhu’s version of the same game? What do you think they wanted the children to learn?</i> • <i>Was that a good message?</i> • <i>Is this the only way people can feel left out at school? What are some other ways people can feel left out?</i> <p>Discuss the concept of manaakitanga. Explain that manaakitanga means being kind and caring for others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are some ways people in our school show manaakitanga to each other?</i> • <i>What could we do to make sure everybody in our class knows they belong and that we care about them?</i> • <i>How could we make sure no one feels left out?</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the students try both versions of the same game, then talk about how it felt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which did you most enjoy?</i> • <i>Can you think of games we play that we could change so everyone can take part?</i> • <i>Maybe we could make up a new game where everyone has to participate for it to work out?</i> 2. Have the students create freeze-frame images, using their bodies and facial expressions to capture moments from the story. They could take turns as actors, directors, and photographers. Have the students take photos of the freeze-frames then ask them to write captions describing what they did and what the photos show. Or explore how to move from one still image to another, creating a story that could be performed for others. 3. Create a role play with a changed ending. What might have happened if Lucy had let the boys join the game at morning break? 4. Create a big mural showing the kinds of things that happen in a school where everybody feels like they belong. Present the mural at assembly. 5. Support the students to take action on one of their ideas for creating a culture of belonging and manaakitanga.

Where to go for more information

The cultural diversity and inclusion sections of Curriculum Online draw together research, digital resources, and examples to support schools as they consider these closely linked principles. See especially the *Cultural diversity spotlight* and the guide on *Developing an inclusive classroom culture*.

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Principles/Cultural-diversity>

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Spotlights/Cultural-diversity>

<https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Principles/Inclusion>

<https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/developing-an-inclusive-classroom-culture>



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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New Zealand Government

ISBN 978-1-77669-682-6



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