



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

Stacey's Extraordinary Words

Stacey Abrams (Author), Kitt Thomas (Illustrator)

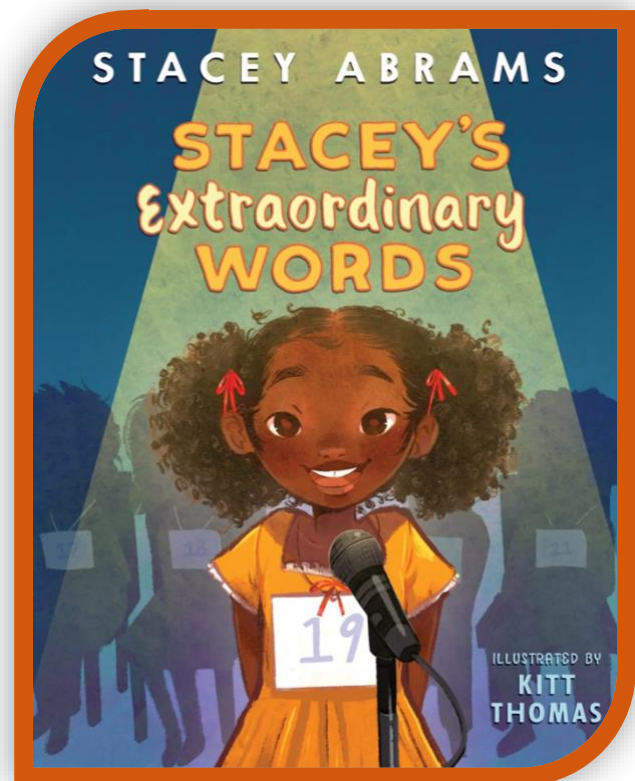
Stacey is a little girl who loves words more than anything. She loves reading them, sounding them out, and finding comfort in them when things are hard. But when her teacher chooses her to compete in the local spelling bee, she isn't as excited as she thought she'd be. What if she messes up? Or worse, if she can't bring herself to speak up, which sometimes happens when she faces bullying at school? Stacey will learn that win or lose, her words are powerful, and sometimes perseverance is the most important word of all.

ISBN: 978-0063209473

Publisher: Balzer + Bray

Year Published: 2021

Age Range: 4-8



Book Themes

Women in History and in Contemporary Life, People, Identity and Culture, Bullying, Perseverance

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of the words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and

point out to students when they appear in the story. For definitions that are differentiated for young children, see ADL's [Education Glossary Terms.](#)]

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|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ■ accent | ■ clumsy | ■ extraordinary | ■ perseverance |
| ■ adored | ■ combinations | ■ grumpy | ■ quirk |
| ■ announcer | ■ complicated | ■ histories | ■ silent |
| ■ anxious | ■ do-over | ■ monotonous | ■ sluggish |
| ■ bully | ■ embarrassed | ■ nervous | ■ torturous |
| ■ clever | ■ evaporated | ■ nominating | ■ unusual |

Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these pre-reading questions:

- What do you see on the cover of the book? What do you think is happening in the illustration?
- What is the title of the book, and what do you think it means?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout reading to check for comprehension and keep the students engaged. Below are some sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers.

- Where does Stacey keep her words? (page 6)
- At the spelling bee, what happens if the contestants make a mistake? (Page 17)
- What kind of candy does Stacey's mom give her? (page 25)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all the following discussion questions:

- What is the book about?
- What thoughts and feelings came up for you as you read the book?
- What does Stacey love about words?
- What words did you learn that you didn't know before?
- How did words help Stacey explain how she was feeling? Do words help you explain how you're feeling? Please say more.
- How does Stacey feel when her teacher tells her she is going to participate in the spelling bee?
- How does Stacey feel about Jake also being at the spelling bee? Why does she feel this way?
- How does Jake use words to bully others? *(If needed, explain that bullying is when a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.)*
- What happens at the spelling bee?
- How does Stacey feel when she comes in second place?
- What does Stacey mean when she says, "... words are a gift that shouldn't be used to hurt people."

- What does Stacey's mom tell her about perseverance?
- What more do you want to know about Stacey Abrams? (Also see Activity #2 below.)
- What is the message of the book?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?

Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

1. Favorite Scene

Elicit students' favorite scenes by asking: *What was your favorite part or scene in the book? Why was it your favorite scene?* Brainstorm the different scenes from the book by having students share (e.g., when Stacey reads under her covers at night; when Stacey's teacher tells her she's going to be in the spelling bee; when Stacey studies for the spelling bee; what happens at the spelling bee). Then, have students select a favorite scene from the book and act it out, either working together as a whole class or in small groups, depending on the scene and the amount of people needed. Ask students to think about what might have happened right before and after that scene and act those parts out as well. If possible, write dialogue for what the main characters and others might say, and/or use the actual dialogue from the book. Students can then act it out for the class, other classes and/or invite parents and families to class to watch it. As an alternative, you can have students draw their favorite scene from the book and write narration or dialogue that goes along with it, which can be different than what's in the book.

2. What is Perseverance?

Re-read page 27 aloud, where Stacey and her mom talk about perseverance. Ask students: What do you think perseverance means? Elicit/explain a definition for **perseverance** as "the act or power to continue to do something in spite of difficulties or barriers." Ask students: *How does this word perseverance apply to Stacey in the book?* Elicit examples. Then explain that Stacey Abrams, who wrote the book, is an author of books including this one, served in the Georgia State House of Representatives for 11 years, ran (and lost) for Governor in 2018. One of Stacey Abrams' most important accomplishments is that she has advocated for voting rights for many years. This means that she works hard to make sure all potential voters are able to vote in elections. Even though people may have the right to vote, they are sometimes unable to vote because of laws that make voting more difficult, especially for certain people. Over the past few years, several states passed laws that limit certain people's ability to vote or make it more difficult for certain people to vote. Share that Stacey Abrams, in her life and career, has shown great perseverance in fighting for people's right to vote.

Have students turn and talk and share with their partner a time they used perseverance or a time they wanted to use perseverance, explaining what happened and how they felt. Reconvene the class and have some students share aloud. Then have students write the word perseverance on a piece of construction paper in the middle of the page. Then ask: *Think about Stacey's and your examples of perseverance. What does perseverance look like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like? Why is it important?* Have students then write or draw on the paper (around the word perseverance) all the words, phrases, feelings, images, symbols and ideas that come to mind when they think about the word. Then have students share their creations with the class. Engage in a discussion while asking: *What do you notice? What do you wonder?*

3. Get to Know Stacey Abrams

Elicit from students that the author of the book is Stacey Abrams. Read the author's note in the back of the book (pages 30-31) and the short author bio on the back cover. Explain that Stacey Abrams wrote this picture book about herself as a child. She is an author of books including this one, served in the Georgia State House of Representatives for 11 years, ran for Governor in 2018 (and lost). One of Stacey Abrams' most important accomplishments is that she has advocated for voting rights for many years (see more information above, #2). Explain to students that they are going to learn more about Stacey Abrams. First, brainstorm questions students have about her, including where she grew up, why she wrote the book, other books she wrote, important moments and milestones in her life, her interests and hobbies, family life, relevant quotes, etc. Have students work in pairs or triads to learn more about Stacey Adams using books and online sources. Their research can culminate in one of the following projects: a picture or portrait of Stacey Abrams with a short bio (for younger children), a letter to Stacey Abrams sharing what her story meant to them, a timeline of her life, an extended bio of her, or imagined diary entries of Stacey Abrams, either as a child or today.

4. Words We Like

Talk with students about how this book is about how Stacey Abrams loves words. Read the book aloud again and in the second reading, invite students to jot down or remember a word(s) that they didn't know that they want to know more about. After reading the book, ask students to share the word they chose and what they think the word means, either because it was explained in the book or because of context clues (Note: If they have no idea what the word means, that's fine too). For some of the words the students select, read the explanation in the back of book (on page 32), how the word is pronounced and what it means. If you have a Word Wall in your classroom, add some or all of these words to the Word Wall. With students, brainstorm a list of other words they like. Explain they might like these words because of the word's meaning, the way the word sounds, or how it makes them feel. Have students find out more about the word they selected, share it with the class and also add it to the Word Wall, if you have one in your classroom.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and educational resources on important girls and women, Women's History Month, bullying prevention and voting rights.

Curriculum Resources

7 Ideas for Teaching Women's History Month, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/7-ideas-for-teaching-womens-history-month.

Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/mone-davis-and-gender-stereotypes.

Moving Beyond Gender Stereotypes in Our Lives, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/moving-beyond-gender-barriers-in-our-lives.

Role Models and Stereotypes: Misty Copeland's Story, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/role-models-and-stereotypes-misty-copelands-story.

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism

A list of ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These strategies can be acted upon individually, organized together as a group and young people can join with a larger effort that is taking place locally or nationally.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies and Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-strategies

Provides a collection of ADL resources on bullying and cyberbullying for educators, administrators, students and families and caregivers.

Teaching about Elections

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-elections

Elections provide great opportunities to teach students about civics, how government works, the electoral process, current events and issues, historical context and campaign politics. This page provides education resources, lesson plans and other election-related pedagogical content to assist you in teaching about elections.

Women's History Month Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/womens-history-month-resources

A list of PreK-12 curriculum and other educational resources for classroom and schools to explore women's achievements and struggles throughout history and acknowledge women's contributions to our society. bring Women's History Month to classrooms and schools.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Bullying Awareness & Prevention, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-2=1&tid\[165\]=165&tid\[166\]=166&tid\[167\]=167&tid\[168\]=168&tid\[169\]=169](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-2=1&tid[165]=165&tid[166]=166&tid[167]=167&tid[168]=168&tid[169]=169)

Gender & Sexism, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-3=1&tid\[171\]=171&tid\[172\]=172&tid\[173\]=173&tid\[174\]=174&tid\[175\]=175](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-3=1&tid[171]=171&tid[172]=172&tid[173]=173&tid[174]=174&tid[175]=175)