

TEACHERS RESOURCES



Maxine Beneba Clarke



Illustrated by  
Isobel Knowles

# WIDE BIG WORLD

WRITTEN BY MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE AND

ILLUSTRATED BY ISOBEL KNOWLES

## INTRODUCTION

*Wide Big World* is a picture book from award-winning writer Maxine Beneba Clarke and illustrator/ animator Isobel Knowles. The story follows Izzy and Belle, two children at the same school. Initially, Izzy is confronted by Belle's skin because it is a different colour to her own. Belle, her teacher and her friends show Izzy that "difference is everywhere" and is part of what makes the world a special place. This leads them to make many discoveries about how beautiful those differences can be.

*Wide Big World* also raises interesting discussion points around how a child might see the world around them and use descriptive language to communicate the things that they see.

The book is illustrated with artwork from Isobel Knowles, who has used collage to create the world of the story from paper and fabrics.



# AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION FROM MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

*Wide Big World* is the picture book I wish my young self, and kids in my lower primary school classes at school, had to read. It's a lively conversation about how difference is nothing to be afraid of. When Izzy is confronted by something very different from what she knows, Belle's skin colour, everyone does their bit to show her how gloriously big and wide the world is. *Wide Big World* is both an early intervention into schoolyard bullying, and a warm hug for all the Belles in all the schoolyards of the world who have never been told that their own special uniqueness is a valuable part of what makes the world such a vivid and beautiful place.

## THEMES

*Wide Big World* explores the central themes of difference and diversity. Difference and diversity may relate to a several areas of the curriculum.

### DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY

Activity: Use a large world map to plot the different places students and their families come from. Pin photos of students to the map and use string to link them to your school.

**DISCUSSION:** Why are differences in people important? What would happen if everyone looked the same? What would happen if everyone had the same interests? Think about your family – does everyone enjoy the same things?

### ACTIVITY: SAME/DIFFERENT

Use objects around the classroom such as coloured pencils, counters, or dice, and classify them as "the same" or "different". Discuss how some objects can have characteristics that are both the same and different.

Refer to the **Sort and classify** worksheet. Topics for classification could include old/new, big/small, hard/soft, rough/smooth, or light/heavy.

### ACTIVITY: SAME/DIFFERENT

Walk around your school or local neighbourhood and identify landmarks or objects that could be classified as the same but different. For example, you might see two buildings that are both built with bricks but one is old and one is new. Encourage your students to justify their reasoning with “because” when discussing characteristics of objects. *“I think these items are the same because... but they are also different because...”*

### DISCUSSION: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Ask students to share stories about themselves growing up, such as their favourite memory. Why is it important to listen to other people? How does listening to stories help us get to know other people?

### ACTIVITY: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Ask students to bring in an object from home that means something to them. Students sit in a circle and explain why their object is important to them. Students can ask questions about the object and its background.

### ACTIVITY: GETTING TO KNOW YOU.

Discuss the **Getting to know you** worksheet grid. For this activity, students walk around the room and ask each other questions. Depending on the ability of your students, you may need to do this as a whole class activity, one question at a time. After the activity, students discuss what they learned about each other.

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## CURRICULUM TOPICS:

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY:

**DISCUSSION:** In *Wide Big World* adjectives are used to describe different people, features and objects. Re-read the book and ask students to point out these words when they appear.

**ACTIVITY:** Make a list of all the adjectives that are used in the book. Classify them into groups such as size, colour, or texture.

**DISCUSSION:** On pages that use adjectives to describe different items, ask students to use different adjectives to describe things around the classroom. Go for a walk in the playground and ask students to use 2 or 3 adjectives to describe something they see. Students could use adjectives

from categories such as size, colour, shape, texture or use their 5 senses to help them find words.

**ACTIVITY:** *Wide Big World* uses strings of adjectives (adjectival phrases) to describe everyday things: “*Belle’s eyes are stormy-sea-green.*”, “*The sun’s red-hot-brilliant.*”, “*The rain’s cool and clean.*”

Choose 3 different things for students to describe. These could be things such as a landmark at school, something prominent in the classroom or something in the playground environment. As a class, come up with different ways to describe these items and write them down. Students could choose their favourite description to record on the **Amazing adjectives** worksheet.

**ACTIVITY:** Build a word list of adjectives from the book (most of these are emphasised with a different colour text). Ask students to add on other adjectives that are similar, grouping words together.

**ACTIVITY:** Brainstorm alternative adjectives that could be used to describe the items described in the book (“*Belle’s eyes are stormy-sea-green.*”, “*The sun’s red-hot-brilliant.*”). Re-write these passages with alternative groups of adjectives that the students have come up with.

[Option – pair this activity with an art activity below where students describe the item they’ve painted or created using collage.]

**ACTIVITY:** Make a list of words and phrases from *Wide Big World* that use alliteration (“*stormy-sea-green*”, “*cool and clean*”). This can be adjusted to rhyming words depending on ability of the class.

**ACTIVITY:** Go through the adjectives in the book and look at the syllables in each word. Clap the syllables or place a hand underneath your jaw to “feel” how many syllables a word has.

## **CREATIVE ARTS:**

**DISCUSSION:** How do you think the illustrator created the images in the book? What clues in the pictures tell you they used this method?

**ACTIVITY:** Create a paper collage re-creation of the students’ favourite scene from *Wide Big World*. Discuss the layers of paper. Which paper is at the back? Which paper goes on top? Use techniques similar to those used in the book such as carefully ripping or cutting paper into shapes and using different types of paper.

**ACTIVITY:** Tear small pieces of coloured paper (e.g. tissue paper) to glue and layer onto coloured paper in a particular shape, such as a fish, a house or a tree.

**ACTIVITY:** Make your own paper. Ask students to bring in old newspaper and use a shredder to cut it into small strips to use when making your new paper. Watch videos such as <https://youtu.be/18VLIKA5QV0> or Google “homemade paper instructions”.

**ACTIVITY:** Use paints to create a colour wheel. Discuss warm and cool colours. Revisit the book and scan for warm and cool colours used throughout the book (e.g. warm colours used in the “red-hot-brilliant” sun page). Discuss why students think the illustrator used these colours.

**ACTIVITY:** Experiment with using watercolours. What happens to the colour when you use a wet brush? What happens if you use more water? What happens when you mix colours on the page? Which colours should you mix? What happens when you mix all the colours together?

**ACTIVITY:** Use watercolours to paint a warm or cool backdrop on A4 paper, similar to the sun on pages 14–15, using light colours in the middle moving to darker around the edge. Use black or dark-coloured paper to cut out a silhouette of an image, such as a person or an object such as a tree. Paste the image over the water colour background. Discuss the contrast.

**ACTIVITY:** Walk around the school and collect different found objects from the playground such as leaves or twigs. In small groups, classify these. Create a 3D collage using these objects, layering them in a similar way to *Wide Big World*. Discuss which elements will go on top, which elements will go towards the back. Glue these to the page (you may need to use a strong glue such as PVA) or photograph your final artwork and return your found objects.

# CONCLUSION

Maxine Beneba Clarke and Isobel Knowles have crafted a stunning book full of rich visuals and clever adjectives to illustrate how diverse the world around us really is.

## WORKSHEETS:

- [Sort and classify worksheet](http://bit.ly/2PYq6BI)  
<http://bit.ly/2PYq6BI>
- [Getting to know you worksheet](http://bit.ly/2Q0rKCT)  
<http://bit.ly/2Q0rKCT>
- [Amazing adjectives worksheet](http://bit.ly/2PXqyjK)  
<http://bit.ly/2PXqyjK>



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

## Maxine Beneba Clarke Biography

**Maxine Beneba Clarke** is a widely published Australian writer of Afro-Caribbean descent. Maxine's short fiction, non-fiction and poetry have been published in numerous publications including *Overland*, *The Age*, *Meanjin*, *The Saturday Paper* and *The Big Issue*. Her critically acclaimed short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* won the ABIA for Literary Fiction Book of the Year 2015 and the 2015 Indie Book Award for Debut Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Matt Richell Award for New Writing at the 2015 ABIA's and the 2015 Stella Prize. She was also named as one of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Best Young Novelists for 2015. Maxine has published three poetry collections including *Carrying the World*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry 2017 and was shortlisted for the Colin Roderick Award. *The Hate Race*, a memoir about growing up black in Australia won the NSW Premier's Literary Award Multicultural NSW Award 2017 and was shortlisted for an ABIA, an Indie Award, the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and Stella Prize. *The Patchwork Bike*, Maxine's first picture book with Van T. Rudd was a CBCA Honour Book for 2017.

## Isobel Knowles Biography

<https://www.hachette.com.au/maxine-beneba-clarke/>  
<https://www.hachette.com.au/maxine-beneba-clarke-isobel-knowles/wide-big-world>

**Isobel Knowles** is an award-winning artist and animator. Her multidisciplinary practice spans short film, interactive installation, cross-platform performance, music, painting, photography and illustration. Her most recent achievements include winning the 2010 Premier of QLD's National New Media Art Award, being given an Award of Distinction at the 2012 Ars Electronica Festival and publishing a children's book with Thames & Hudson.

[From her [website](#)]

- <http://www.isobelknowles.com/>
- [https://www.instagram.com/p/BenH2\\_ZnJn5/?taken-by=isobelknowles](https://www.instagram.com/p/BenH2_ZnJn5/?taken-by=isobelknowles)
- [https://www.instagram.com/p/Be6rq8\\_HwZD/?taken-by=isobelknowles](https://www.instagram.com/p/Be6rq8_HwZD/?taken-by=isobelknowles)
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/BgXR0jTFIFL/?taken-by=isobelknowles>

# BLACKLINE MASTERS

## BLM 1 – SAME VS DIFFERENT ACTIVITY

Fill out the form below about your favourite things and compare it with your classmates.

What do you have in **common** with your classmates?

What do you like that's **different** from your classmates?

|                               |                             |                                |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Favourite food                | Favourite dessert           | Favourite book                 |
| Favourite musician or band    | Favourite subject at school | Favourite movie                |
| Favourite colour              | Favourite sport             | Favourite TV show              |
| Favourite fruit               | Favourite vegetable         | Favourite season               |
| Favourite holiday destination | Favourite pastime or hobby  | Hero or someone you look up to |

## BLM 2 – ONOMATOPOEIA AND ALLITERATION ACTIVITY

Onomatopoeia are words that mimic sounds, such as crash or pop.

Alliteration is when you use words that start with the same letter or sound, such as horrible histories or Peppa Pig.

Use the onomatopoeic words below to make up your own words that might go with them. Start your words with the same letter or sound. For example: splishety splash

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Squeak

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Zoom

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Crackle

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Whisper

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Clang

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Puff

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Thump

8. \_\_\_\_\_ Crunch

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Squelch

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Buzz

# BIBLIOGRAPHY / FURTHER READING

- <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/racism-in-australia-maxine-beneba-clarke-writes-from-experience/news-story/5b41d0a574d0982a370f1d2445211849>
- <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2016/08/04/4513422.htm>
- <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/refugees-reveal-prejudices-on-foreign-soil-20140612-39ywc.html>
- [http://china.embassy.gov.au/files/bjng/Beneba%20Clarke\\_extract.pdf](http://china.embassy.gov.au/files/bjng/Beneba%20Clarke_extract.pdf) (the story the patchwork bike is based on)
- <http://www.booksandpublishing.com.au/articles/2016/07/11/59294/the-patchwork-bike-maxine-beneba-clarke-illus-by-van-t-rudd-lothian/>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Murray Nance is a primary school teacher in Sydney, Australia. He has completed a Bachelor of Music (Honours) and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Western Sydney. He is passionate about literacy, the creative arts, technology, soundtracks, and is a fan of *Doctor Who*.