

# WHEN WE SAY BLACK LIVES MATTER

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

TEACHERS RESOURCES

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Teachers Resources by Murray Nance

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## INTRODUCTION

*When We Say Black Lives Matter* is a picture book about Black lives, Black love, Black activism, and Black empowerment, written in lyrical text and illustrated by the author. In the illustrations for *When We Say Black Lives Matter*, a Black child's parents explain, from birth to graduation, what the term 'Black Lives Matter' means to them: in protest and song, in joy and in sorrow.

## AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

In Maxine Beneba Clarke's own words: 'I see this picture book as an act of Black love - I was inspired to write and create *When We Say Black Lives Matter*, when thinking about how to explain the concept of Black Lives Matter to the young African diaspora kids in my extended family, living in over eight different countries across the world - including America, Australia, Germany, Barbados and England.

In 2017, I had the privilege of hosting a discussion at a packed town hall in Sydney, Australia, with one of Black Lives Matter's US founder's Patrisse Cullors, and Black Lives Matter Canada organiser Rodney Diverlus. The two were visiting Australia to receive the 2017 Sydney Peace Prize, on behalf of the global Black Lives Matter Movement. The hour-long discussion was inspiring in its breadth, passion and honesty.

I am Australian by birth, and Black Lives Matter on Australian soil starts with the acknowledgement that Australia is stolen Black land, and with a commitment to fighting for justice and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Australia always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land - Black land - sovereignty of which has never been ceded. The cry of Black Lives Matter in Australia draws attention to the mistreatment of First Nations people.'

# THEMES

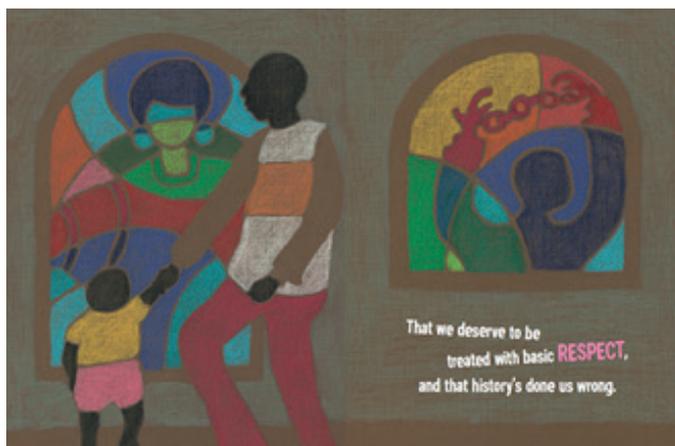
The key themes in *When We Say Black Lives Matter* include equality, respect, and inclusivity.

**DISCUSSION:** Showing care for others

How do we show we care about those we love? What are some different ways that we express ourselves to others? Why do you think this is important? Students should be encouraged to think about these questions, discuss their thoughts in pairs, and then share their ideas with the class.

**DISCUSSION:** Respect

What does 'respect' mean? What are some ways we show we respect others? Why is this important? Show the class pages 5-6. What do you think 'basic respect' means? What is the difference between 'basic respect' and 'respect'?

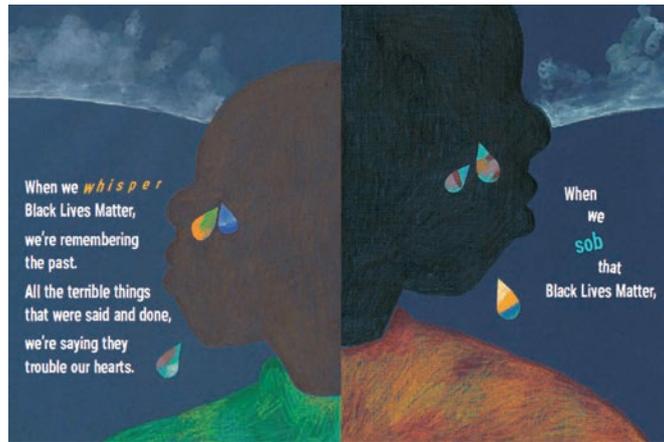


**DISCUSSION:** Discrimination

Show the class pages 5-6. Highlight the line 'that history's done us wrong'. What does this mean? [Historically, people of colour in Australia and around the world have been mistreated because of the colour of their skin. One example of this is the Stolen Generation in Australia.]

**DISCUSSION:** Reconciliation

Show the class pages 13-14. Why might the author whisper 'Black Lives Matter' while remembering the past? Have you ever treated someone poorly or said something to someone you didn't mean? How do you think they felt? How did it make you feel? How did you fix things between the two of you? Did they accept your apology? [Some emotions your students may experience: embarrassment, shame, guilt, remorse, regret, sadness, frustration, relief.]

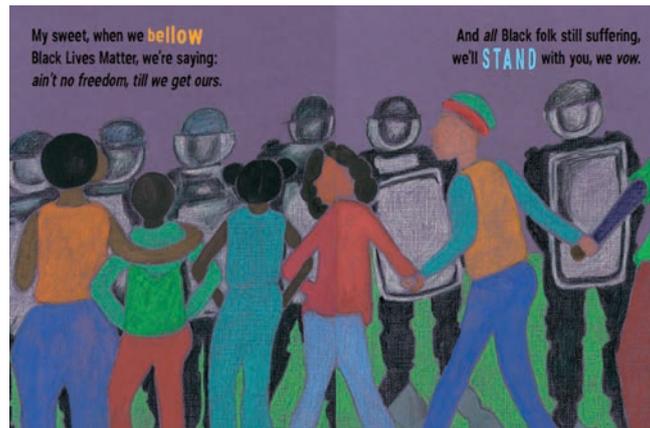


**DISCUSSION:** Protest

Show the class pages 7-8. What is happening in these images? Who is the author talking about with the words 'we're saying walk with us, raise your voice'? Why is it important to 'raise your voice'? What do the words 'tenor', 'baritone', 'alto' and 'soprano' mean? Why do you think a person makes a 'jazz-howl'? What would it sound like?

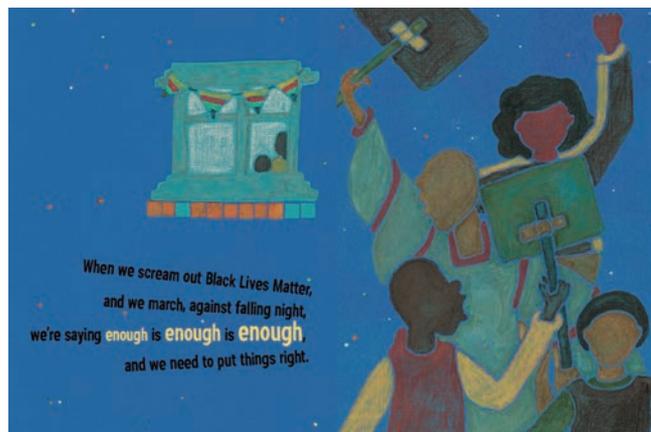


Show the class pages 19–20. What do you notice in these images? Why are the people in the illustration protesting?



**DISCUSSION:** Action

Show the class pages 9–10. What does 'enough is enough' mean? What does it mean to 'put things right'?



**DISCUSSION:** Celebration

Show the class pages 7–8 and 11–12. What is happening in these images? [Celebration, music, marching, dancing.] Why do you think the people are celebrating?



**DISCUSSION:** Danger

Show the class pages 17-18. What do you think is meant by 'monster in the shadows'? [This is a metaphor for a lurking threat. Monsters in many fairy tales and children's stories are dangerous and characters fear them.] What monsters in fairy tales or other stories can you think of? How were they defeated? What monsters in real life is the author referring to? [Racism, discrimination, fear of differences, etc.]



What do you notice in these images compared to other illustrations in the book? There is a lot of empty space on the page. Why do you think the author did this? What do you think it represents?

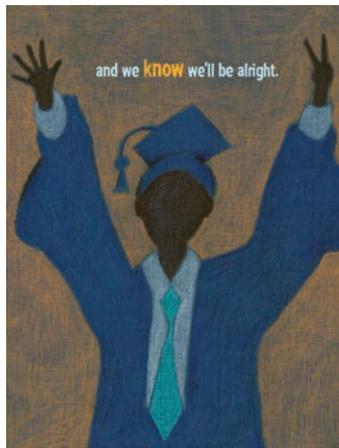
**DISCUSSION:** Poetry

Show the class pages 19-28. Look at the text on each page paying close attention to how they start ('...when we bellow Black Lives Matter', 'when we smile Black Lives Matter', 'when we laugh that Black Lives Matter', 'When we know that Black Lives Matter...'). Why has the author decided to start each line in a similar way? What effect does the repetition have? Which words are emphasised? Why has the author emphasised these words in particular?

Discuss what the author is conveying about the Black Lives Matter movement through these pages. Ask students to make connections to the story from their own experience and knowledge of equality, respect, inclusivity and the Black Lives Matter movement.

**DISCUSSION:** Perseverance

Show the class page 31 (final image). What do you think this image symbolises? Why do you think the author chose to finish the book with this image and what does it signify?



**DISCUSSION:** Colours and symbolism

Look through the book at the illustrations. How has colour been used throughout the book? How are different scenes represented? Are they all the same? Use a colour wheel to aid discussion about colours and colour schemes used including warm, cool and complimentary.

**DISCUSSION:** Juxtaposition

There are two distinct 'moods' in *When We Say Black Lives Matter*: one of protest, frustration and defiance, and another of celebration and exuberance. Compare and contrast these two feelings and discuss how they are linked. Research what 'juxtaposition' means and how it relates to the text.

**ACTIVITY:** Getting to know you

Ask students to complete the 'Getting to know you' activity worksheet. Students walk around the classroom and ask fellow students if they have something in common listed on the sheet then write down their name. The aim is to write down as many *different* names as possible. Afterwards, ask students in pairs to create their own 'Getting to know you' categories using the template.

**ACTIVITY:** Similarities and differences

Use objects around the classroom such as coloured pencils, counters, dice, etc., and classify them as 'the same' or 'different'. Discuss how some objects can have characteristics that are both the same and different. (See 'Sort and Classify' worksheet. Topics for classification could be: old/new, big/small, hard/soft, rough/smooth, light/heavy, etc.)

**ACTIVITY:** Same and different

Ask students to place their recess or lunch on their tables. Ask students to find someone who has an item that is the same as them or items that are different to them. Discuss different ways of classifying objects (e.g. colour, size, taste, fruit/vegetable) and ask students to see if they can find someone with an item that they can classify as both the same and different, depending on the category.

**DISCUSSION:** Friendships

Why do you think it is important to have friends? What do you think a 'healthy friendship' means? What do you have in common with your friends? What are some of your differences? Discuss why differences are important in relationships.

**ACTIVITY:** Connections

Get students to complete the 'Connections' activity on the Racism No Way page [See **Bibliography / Further Reading**] using a world map. (Note: this activity is listed for Year 1 but can easily be adapted for older years). Extension activity: ask students to research their own family history and discuss differences between generations.

**ACTIVITY:** Sorry Day

Watch the BTN Sorry Day clip [See **Bibliography / Further Reading**]. Discuss the importance of the apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What does 'sorry' mean? What does 'reconciliation' mean? Research further about reconciliation and Sorry Day at [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au)

**ACTIVITY:** NAIDOC Week

Students research NAIDOC Week using the resources at [naidoc.org.au](http://naidoc.org.au) (NAIDOC History PDF) [See **Bibliography / Further Reading**].

**ACTIVITY:** Poster design

Students research, design and create a poster with the theme of reconciliation, equality or inclusivity. [Use the resources listed in the **Bibliography / Further Reading** section below]

**ACTIVITY:** Indigenous Australia Map

Provide students with a digital or enlarged version of the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia [See **Bibliography / Further Reading**]. Ask students to find where they live now, have lived in the past or where they have travelled to. What are the names of the Indigenous Nations and/or Torres Strait Islander Groups where you have lived? Make a list.

# CURRICULUM LINKS:

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

### **ACTIVITY:** Vocabulary

Use dictionaries to research the meaning of some of these words: Respect, bellow, suffering, freedom, stalk, defiance, spirits, ancestors, brave, precious, radiant

### **DISCUSSION:** Emphasis

Scan through the book and take note of words that are emphasised (dancing, whisper, sob, RESPECT, smile, enough). Discuss why students think these words are emphasised (note the difference in caps for RESPECT and RADIANT). What impact do these words have? Make a list of all the words emphasised in the book.

### **ACTIVITY:** Alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia

Watch the Khan Academy video **[See Bibliography / Further Reading]** explaining the difference between alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia. After watching, re-read the text and scan for words or passages that could be classified in these categories. (For example, the 'Black-beautiful-brave' alliteration on pages 21-22)

### **ACTIVITY:** Coupling words

In the text, words are paired with a hyphen ('wonderful-strong'). Discuss why these words appear together. In pairs or small groups, brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe classmates. Experiment by joining two words together that best describe you, your partner or someone you know.

### **ACTIVITY:** Writing in first, second and third person

Recap the difference between first, second and third person in writing. Ask students what 'person' they think the book is written in [second person]. Choose a passage (or assign different passages to pairs or small groups) for students to rewrite in first and third person. Share with the class. Discuss the difference the change in person makes to the message (personal, impersonal).

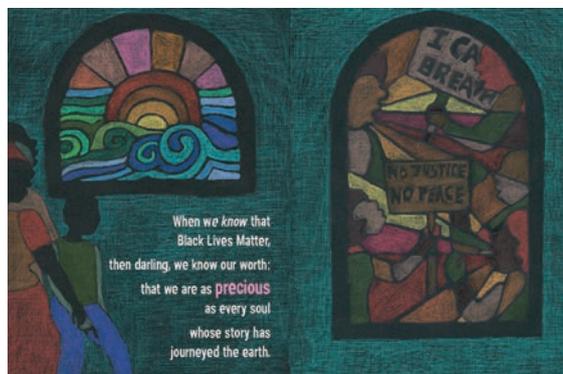
### **ACTIVITY:** The Tortoise and the Hare

Read the Aesop fable The Tortoise and the Hare **[See Bibliography / Further Reading]**. After reading, discuss the moral of the story as well as the characteristics of both the tortoise and the hare, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each. Discuss perceptions that different people have of these characteristics. Broaden the discussion to other traits, (such as size, strength, etc.) and link these to perception.

## VISUAL ART

**ACTIVITY:** Study stained glass artwork.

Collect some examples to compare the glass artwork with the artwork in the book (see pages 27–28, inner cover pages/end papers). Note similarities and differences, such as the outlines around images creating different shapes.

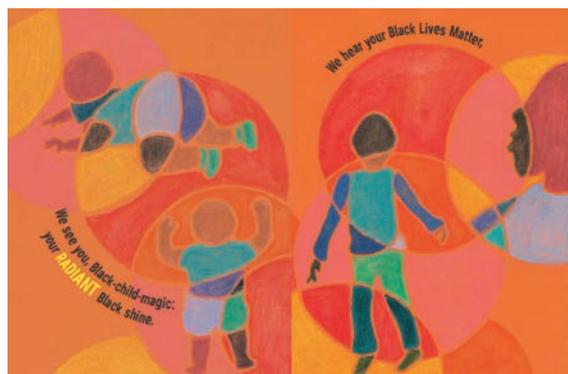


**ACTIVITY:** Create your own stained glass image based on a freeze frame of an important moment in your life. Use cellophane to create your own image or add it to a black cardboard stencil. Other stained glass artwork ideas can be found on Pinterest here [**See Bibliography / Further Reading**].

**ACTIVITY:** Use chalk pastels and black cardboard to create an artwork inspired by the illustrations in *When We Say Black Lives Matter*. Visit this Deep Space Sparkle article [**See Bibliography / Further Reading**] to read tips on using chalk pastels.

**ACTIVITY:** Use baking paper, pencils and found objects such as leaves, coins and other objects with rough or textured surfaces to create rubbings. Use different coloured pencils. Cut out the different textured images and assemble them in a collage form overlaying textures on coloured card.

**ACTIVITY:** Examine pages 29–30. Note how the circles intersect and create new shapes. Use different sized circular objects such as bowls or cups or use compasses to create a pattern of intersecting circles in pencil. Add in silhouette outlines of people and fill in the shapes with different colours.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY / FURTHER READING

<https://racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-prejudice-activities/>

<https://racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-prejudice-activities/year1/connections/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/apology-10th-anniversary/10521928>

<https://reconciliation.org.au>

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali/>

<https://www.naidoc.org.au/resources/teaching-guides>

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/grammar/usage-and-style/style/v/alliteration-assonance-and-onomatopoeia>

<http://read.gov/aesop/025.html>

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/artgirl67/art-lesson-ideas-stained-glass/>

<https://www.deepspacesparkle.com/use-chalk-pastels-artroom/>

<http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/keynotesfulltext.pdf>

<https://www.roads-to-refuge.com.au/>

<https://humanrights.gov.au/education/teachers>

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/download-human-rights-school-classroom>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

**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.

## 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*.

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Find someone who...

...has blue eyes	...wears glasses	...was born in September	...loves to read
...has wavy hair	...knows how to swim	...has been overseas	...watches TV
...has a younger brother	...has a pet cat	...has brown hair	...has a brother or sister at school
...can speak another language	...likes drawing	...is good at spelling	...likes painting
...has black hair	...likes sushi	...loves playing sport	...has a pet dog
...loves to eat fruit	...is left handed	...has an older sister	...has hazel eyes

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Create your own!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Find someone who...


# SORT AND CLASSIFY

