



ABC



Disability

An alphabet with a difference,
because we are all different



Sarah Rose WITH Alley Pascoe ILLUSTRATED BY Beck Feiner

TEACHERS RESOURCES

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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

In the lead-up to the 2024 Paralympics, kids aged 5+ will want to get their hands on this big-hearted guide to disability, full of words to know and questions to ask about life with disability.

From three-time Paralympian swimmer, medal-winner and disability advocate Sarah Rose, comes a big-hearted guide to disability, full of letters, learnings and laughs from a disabled person to you.

ABC Disability is an A to Z of celebrating what makes each of us unique, featuring bold, brightly coloured artwork by award-winning illustrator Beck Feiner – including the Auslan sign for each letter of the alphabet.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>

DISABILITY

Discussion Point: Invite students to discuss the word ‘disability’. Then read the book to discover a range of disabilities.

Discussion Point: In her introduction, Sarah Rose says: ‘One in five Australians lives with a disability, and the disability community is wide and varied, big and beautiful, bold and bright, and has a great sense of pride.’ Read more about the disability community in Australia and the achievements of some of its members.

Discussion Point: Sarah Rose goes on to say: ‘Sometimes you can see the disabilities people have – such as short stature (me!), cerebral palsy or paraplegia. Then there are the disabilities that can’t be seen, such as low vision and chronic pain, and cognitive disabilities such as ADHD and autism.’ Discuss the differences faced by people with invisible disabilities, as opposed to visible ones.

Discussion Point: What other disabilities are you aware of? Create your own alphabet of disability. [See **Worksheet 1**.]

Discussion Point: How should society make venues accessible to disabled people? We’re all aware of wheelchair access via ramps, but there are many other needs as well.

Discussion Point: What services should disabled people be able to access? (For example, the NDIS is a scheme designed to assist disabled people to live their best possible lives.)

Discussion Point: General attitudes to disability are often considered by disabled people to be stereotypical. For example, disability is sometimes depicted as something to be ‘overcome’ rather than as something which makes the person differently abled. Sarah Rose makes the point that language should reflect this; for example, one should write ‘she uses a wheelchair’, not ‘she is confined to a wheelchair’. Many disabled people live comfortably with their disability. Many celebrate their disability. Read more about disabilities and strategies for allowing disabled people to live on their own terms.

Discussion Point: Engaging with disabled people should be based on respect and kindness. There are several pieces of advice included in this book. For example: be aware of their personal space, and don’t touch them unless they request you to. Don’t speak loudly or slowly simply because you presume they will struggle to understand you. What other mistakes do people make when they encounter someone with a disability?

Activity: Each page contains the Auslan symbol for that letter of the alphabet so students can learn the alphabet as they read the book!

Discussion Point: Discuss the achievements of disabled people who have excelled in a range of disciplines – sport (Paralympians), music, theatre, film, art, science, engineering etc. Examples include: Steven Hawking, theoretical physicist; Helen Keller, writer and disability/political activist; Stevie Wonder, singer/songwriter; Peter Dinklage, film and television actor; Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli, shot put Paralympian; Adam Hills, television compere and disability advocate; Kurt Fearnley, sportsman and disability advocate; Greta Thunberg, environmental activist; Frida Kahlo, artist and political activist; and Franklin D. Roosevelt, a former US President.

DIFFERENCE

Discussion Point: Sarah Rose also says in her introduction that ‘I hope this book is just the start of understanding the world of disabilities, but if you take one thing away after reading it, I would love it to be this: our differences are what make us special, they’re a part of our individual uniqueness and they make the world a better, more interesting place.’ Discuss this statement.

Discussion Point: Why do we often hear people speak about someone else as being ‘different’? Each and every one of us is different to others, aren’t we?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Discussion Point: The structure of this non-fiction text is based on the concept of an alphabet. This allows the author to create a list of disabilities in a logical format. How else might it have been arranged?

Activity: Write a short story exploring a possible scenario that a disabled child might encounter at school.

Activity: Interview a person with a disability, then write an article based on that interview, as an expository text.

Activity: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text.

VISUAL LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

Using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, the visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story, as explored below:

Activity: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. This one depicts a range of children with disabilities enjoying their daily lives. Design another cover carrying the messages conveyed by this book.

Activity: The **endpapers** feature a range of icons that are symbolic of feelings or emotions: rainbow, heart, smiling emoji, smiling sunshine etc. Discuss with students what these images suggest and how they relate to the text in the book.

Discussion Point: The **title page** depicts a female child adding detail to a painting on an easel while using a walking stick. Reimagine this image depicting another child doing something creative while demonstrating a disability.

Activity: The illustrator is a **digital artist** who makes art using the computer as her main tool. She loves bright colours and playing with typography. The **colours** used in this book are bold, bright and vibrant. Encourage students to create images in a similar style. [See also **Worksheet 2.**]

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint or collage a scene to accompany the story they wrote above. Create a classroom mural using all the images.

Activity: Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See **Bibliography.**] [See also **Worksheet 3.**]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Invite a disabled person to speak to the class about their experiences. [For further insights into this activity, teachers may wish to watch a video such as 'Interview with Adam Hills' *Kurt Fearnley's One Plus One* <https://iview.abc.net.au/video/NC2121H008S00>]

2. Encourage students to role-play experiencing the world around them without using a particular sense such as sight or hearing. How does that alter their experience of the environment they find themselves in?

3. Create a classroom mural depicting a range of activities engaged in by disabled people.

4. Create a poster to advertise this book.

5. Create a book trailer to promote this book. [See **Bibliography**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research the topic of disability online.

Activity: Research the authors and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography**.]

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Sarah Rose. Compare this to her other books.
- Research the work of Beck Feiner. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to other books about disability such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.

CONCLUSION

This is a heartfelt, creative non-fiction book about disability. The arrangement as an alphabet makes the content more appealing and easily understood by young readers. It is a powerful text which encourages empathy and understanding.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sarah Rose is a three-time Paralympian swimmer and medal-winner, who represented Australia at multiple Paralympics, World Championships and World Cups. Since retiring from swimming in 2014, she has become a prominent spokesperson on disability, diversity, women's issues and inclusion, and has had extensive experience talking in schools. Sarah also hosts *A Very Rosie Podcast*, where she talks to inspirational guests who have chased their dreams.

Sarah is short statured, with a mighty big heart and spirit. She wants her daughter, Willow, and son, Freddie, to grow up in a world where people with a disability like their mum are seen in the media and part of the broader conversation in Australian life.

Sarah has served on Paralympics Australia's Athlete Commission since its inception. She talks to corporations about the importance of representation in the workforce and is a regular guest on *ABC News*, *ABC Weekend Breakfast* and *The Drum*. More recently, she's shared her voice on *Play School*, singing in a trio with Jemima and Humpty (sincere apologies in advance to all the parents out there).

Alley Pascoe is a writer and editor with a background in magazines and memoirs. She has written for the country's most-read publications, including *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *Stellar*, *Body&Soul*, *Gourmet Traveller* and *marie claire* magazine, where she was formerly the Features Editor. Her books include the bestselling *Heartstrong* with Ellidy Pullin, *Love & Pain* with Ben Gillies and Chris Joannou of Silverchair, and *The Girl in the Green Dress* with Jeni Haynes. *ABC Disability* is Alley's first foray into children's books – and she loved every second of the colourful, creative and collaborative process working with Sarah Rose and Beck Feiner. Alley is based on Larrakia Country in Darwin.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Beck Feiner is a Sydney-based illustrator, designer and author whose artwork, stories and memes shine a spotlight on social issues and promote harmony and diversity. Her bold, vibrant, colourful creative style evolved from many years working as a graphic designer and art director in the advertising industry in Sydney and overseas. She has created many much-loved picture books, including *Aussie Legends Alphabet*, *If I Was Prime Minister*, *Clyde the Greyhound* and *The Polar Bear in Sydney Harbour*.

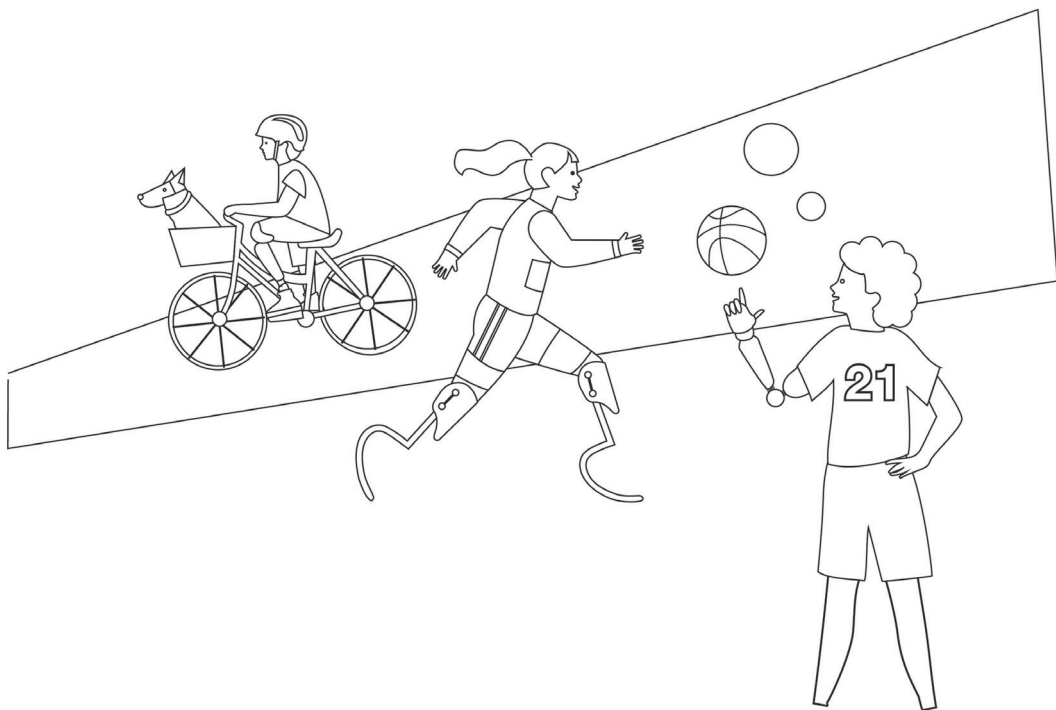
WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. ALPHABET OF DISABILITY

| DISABILITY | FACT |
|----------------------|------|
| AUTISM | |
| B | |
| C | |
| DOWN SYNDROME | |
| E | |
| F | |
| G | |
| HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE | |
| I | |
| J | |
| K | |
| L | |
| M | |
| N | |
| O | |
| P | |
| Q | |
| R | |
| S | |
| TOURETTE SYNDROME | |
| U | |
| V | |
| W | |
| X | |
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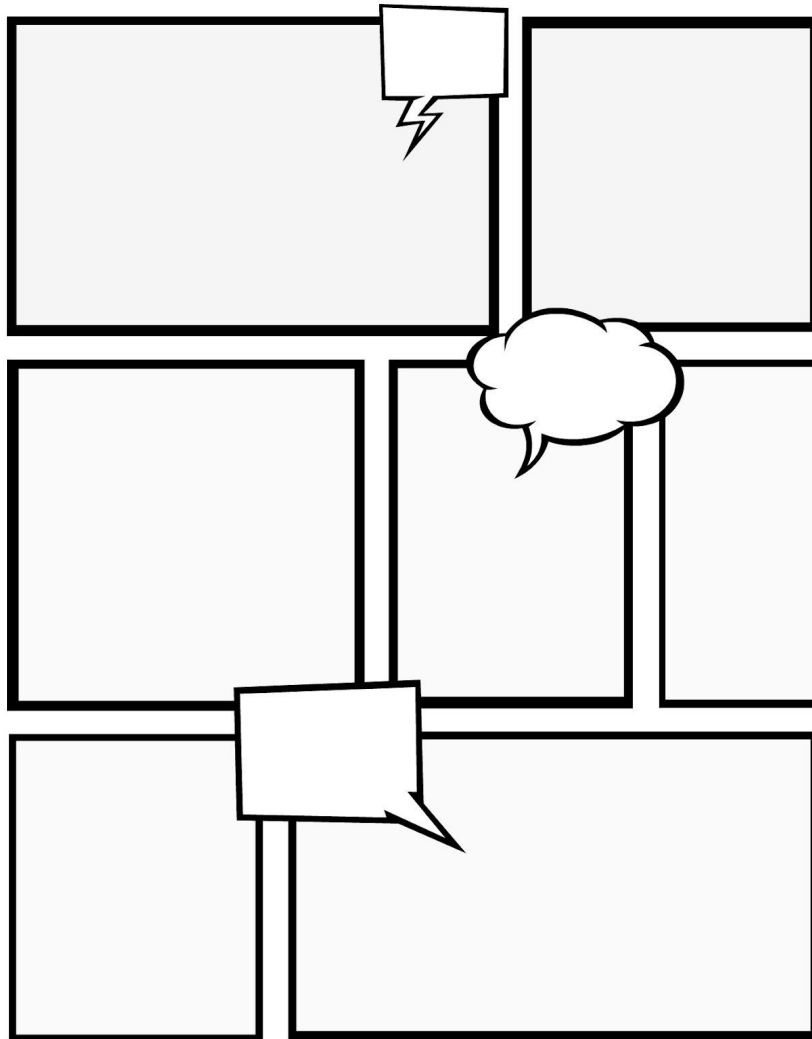
WORKSHEET 2. COLOURING OR COLLAGE ACTIVITY

Draw a landscape or background to the images from the book below, and then colour or collage this picture.



WORKSHEET 3. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at: <<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011, she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland; in 2012, the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia; and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.