

A lesson with the story *Being Wendy*

Big Ideas:

Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.

Everyone has a unique story to share.

Through listening and speaking, we connect with others and share our world.

Curiosity and wonder lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and the world around us.

Curricular Competencies:

Use a variety of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading, listening, or viewing to deepen understanding of text.

Apply a variety of thinking skills to gain meaning from texts.

Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create **texts** for a variety of purposes and audiences.



Learning Targets: I can explore what makes me, me: my personality characteristics, interests, strengths and stretches.

Driving Questions: What makes you, you? How would you describe your personality? What are your interests? Your strengths? Your stretches?

Establishing a Need to know: Share the video clip *Ed Sheeran: Embrace Who You Are* (1:35)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCgTmrh7vZI>

Partner Turn and Listen: What did you notice in the short clip? What do you wonder? What can we learn from Ed Sheeran's words?

Thinking and communicating: *What shape is your personality?*

Invite students to draw one of these four shapes on a sticky note: a square, a circle, a triangle, or a squiggly line. Then, sort students by the shape they selected and give them a list of their descriptors to consider and share in a small group. (Find list of descriptors on the next page).

See if they agree that the shape they've selected describes them! Then invite them discuss things like this: In what ways does your personality match the description? How is it different? What other shapes have descriptors that match who they are? Is it possible to be a triangle AND a square, for example? How did it make you feel being 'put in a box?'; being sorted into personality trait groups without knowing?

Give students copies of all the descriptors and invite them to highlight the characteristics they identify with.

Squares:

Are loyal
Are hard workers
Very structured
Organized
Detail-oriented
Dependable
Make lists and check them off
Wise and rational
Tend to procrastinate – they need all the details
Have a reason for everything – can be stubborn
Often resistant to change
Prefer to work alone – don't care for teams

Circles:

Are talkative
Love to have fun
Always giving advice
Want everyone to get along
Good at detecting body language
Are often indecisive
Work to be liked
Highly influenced by others
Like to talk about feelings/emotions
Get “dumped on” by squares & triangles
Willing to change if “everyone else wants”
Love teams – prefer to work with people

Triangles:

Are leaders – will get ahead the fastest
Good in a crisis
Able to focus on important tasks
Get to the point – want the bottom line
Confident
Outspoken – can be sarcastic
Enjoy power
Respected by peers
Competitive – want to win
Love to debate and argue (and argue!)
Intolerant of others' mistakes
Like to have their own way
Implement change FAST – often too fast
Want to lead the team

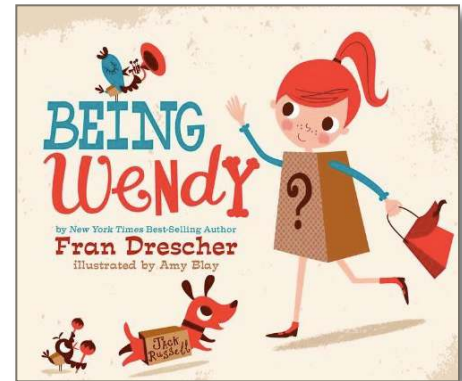
Squiggles:

Are optimistic
Emotional
Creative – great visionary
Innovative – love new ideas
Often act without thinking
High energy
Impatient
Spontaneous and flexible
Enjoy being unique
Many projects at once – may not finish any
Unstructured – can be disorganized
Thrive on change
Get bored easily
Get the team motivated and energized

Shared Read: *Being Wendy* by Fran Drescher

Before reading: Establish a purpose for listening/viewing. Based on the title and the cover, invite predictions.

“In this delightful picture book, we meet Wendy, a girl who lives in an odd town where everyone has to wear a box. These boxes are labeled with what each person does. The teacher wears a TEACHER box. The baker wears a BAKER box. Even the doctor wears a DOCTOR box! These boxes are worn for life and Wendy has to choose hers soon. How will she ever decide on just one box? She's interested in so many things! Wendy's moxie makes her break out of her box . . . And she sets the whole town on end when she does!”



During Reading: Talk about the story as it unfolds. Invite children to make connections, visualize, ask questions, and make inferences.

After reading- Partner Turn and Listen: The author describes that Wendy was afraid to say out loud that she felt different from everyone else. Why do you think she was afraid? Is it a bad thing to be different from others? How do you treat people who are different from *you*? The author stated, “Wendy tried to take her dad’s advice, but the more she thought about it, the more she hated thinking inside the box.” Have you ever heard the expression, “thinking inside/outside the box”? What does it mean? How does it apply here?

Co-Constructing Ideas: Invite students to help brainstorm about Wendy and her identity using a two column chart with *How Wendy sees herself* and *How others see Wendy* (Students can also look to and include ideas from the *What Shape is your personality?* descriptors.)

Closure: African writer Chimamanda Adichie explains how we often assign identity to others: we tell single stories that create stereotypes, which then become the only stories that are told and believed to be true.



Share the YouTube clip (3:36): *The Danger of a Single Story*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODzwb90b5qE>

After viewing the clip, turn and talk in response to the above question,

“What is the danger of a single story?”

Discussion: Why might how others see you affect your identity? Why isn’t your identity only how you see yourself?

Next Steps:

Writing idea: Students can use the frame *How I see myself* and *How others see me* to create two written representations... two paragraphs, one for each...

ART idea - Thinking inside/outside the box (actually...a brown paper lunch bag!): Wendy knew she wanted to wear lots of different boxes because she had so many interests. What makes you, you? How would you describe your personality? What are your interests? Your strengths? Your stretches?

Students will use the generic head and shoulders outline to design a portrait. Then, using a brown paper lunch bag, students will decorate the bag with their interests/talents (writing their interests/talents on the bag 'graffiti' style) OR students can put their *How others see me* ideas on the outside of the bag and *How I see myself* on the inside of the bag.

