



Classroom Guide for
MY TEACHER CAN TEACH
... ANYONE!
by **W. Nikola-Lisa**
with **Felipe Galindo**

Reading Level

Reading Level: Grades 1-2*

Interest Level: Grades PREK-2

Guided Reading Level: I

(Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula)

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 2.7/0.5

Themes:

Teaching, School and Learning, Occupations/Careers, Alphabet

Synopsis

In this unusual alphabet book, a young boy boasts about his new teacher who is “so good, she can teach . . . anyone.” Told in rhyme, the book runs through a list of occupations telling how this teacher can instruct everyone, starting with an astronaut all the way through to a zillionaire. Bold, bright illustrations show children role-playing a variety of jobs found in fields mentioned, such as medicine, sports, the arts, government, and everyday services. The boy’s enthusiasm for learning conveys an uplifting message for students and teachers alike.

Background

The inspiration for this book came to the author when he visited an elementary school class. The teacher and students were all eager to show him the writing and pictures they had done as a result of reading another of his books, called *Can You Top That?* Says Nikola-Lisa, “As the teacher and students shared their work, I could just see the love and respect these children had for their teacher. Bingo! That was the beginning of this story.” He says this book is “a celebration of both teachers and kids, but also a tribute to all the teachers in the world who have devoted themselves to public service, because that’s what teaching is.”

Teacher Tip

MY TEACHER CAN TEACH . . . *ANYONE!* is an excellent choice for a back-to-school book that engages students and develops enthusiasm and respect.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

Before reading the book, you may wish to have students discuss one or more of the following questions as a motivation for reading.

1. What are some good ways to learn new things?
2. What do you expect to learn in school this year?
3. Why is school a good place to learn? Where else can you learn things?
4. Who are the people that teach you?
5. What are some things you could teach someone else?

Exploring the Book

Display the book and read aloud the title. Ask students if they think the title sounds like someone is bragging. Why, or why not?

Talk about the front cover illustration. Ask students why there are so many things on the table. What do you think the teacher is teaching?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Have students read to find out what is happening on the cover and why the boy might brag about his teacher.

VOCABULARY

Write each of the occupation words from the book on the chalkboard. Then assign one word to each student to look up in a dictionary. Have students make cards for their words. Each card should include the name of the occupation, the definition, and an illustration of someone doing the job. Display the cards on a bulletin board so students can refer to them as they read the book.

Astronaut	Heavyweight	Opera singer	Umpire
Ballet dancer	Illustrator	President	Veterinarian
Carpenter	Janitor	Quarterback	Woodworker
Dentist	Kayaker	Rodeo clown	Xylophonist
Engineer	Logger	Sailor	Yodeler
Firefighter	Mechanic	Trucker	Zillionaire
Governor	Novelist		

Many of the words in the book are homographs. Explain that a homograph is a word that is spelled the same as another word, but has a different meaning and sometimes a different pronunciation. Using the following words, create a chart to fill in with the class. (See sample below for the first word.)

float	land	nail	punch	top
draw	stroke	hose	note	cast
ball	fall	jig	rig	out

Word	Meaning in Book	Another Meaning
float	move easily in air	a vehicle that carries an exhibit in a parade

READING AND RESPONDING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation. Encourage students to refer to back to verses and illustrations in the book to support their responses.

1. Who is speaking (telling the story) in this book? How do you know?
2. How does the speaker feel about the teacher? How do you know this?
3. How do the illustrations add to the story?
4. Why does the name of the occupation in each sentence begin with a capital letter?
5. Why does the author use the alphabet to tell what the teacher can do?
6. How likely is it that one person could teach all these things? Why does the boy exaggerate?
7. What do you think the students will really learn in school?
8. What is the message of this book?

Literature Circles*

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to those in the Discussion Questions section of this guide.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for the lines that tell what different workers do.
- The **Illustrator** might make alternate pictures in different styles or media for some of the occupations.
- The **Connector** might find other books set in a school.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of the group's reading and discussion points for each meeting.
- The **Investigator** might look for other books on careers and occupations, or other unique alphabet books.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *Getting Started with Literature Circles* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups* by Harvey

Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *Literature Circles Resource Guide* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

Use the following questions or similar ones to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to what they have read. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, oral discussion, or drawings.

1. Which kind of work mentioned in the book do you think would be the most fun to learn? Why do you think so?
2. How would you compare your feelings about learning to those of the boy in the book?
3. What are some things you learned from this book?
4. What does your teacher help you learn? What is your favorite subject?

Other Writing Activities

You may wish to have students participate in one or more of the following writing activities. Set aside time for students to share and discuss their work.

1. This story is told in rhyme. Choose three pairs of rhyming words from the book and write them on a piece of paper. Then add at least three more rhyming words to each pair. The words should all be made-up nonsense words—not real words. Then write definitions for the nonsense words.
2. Think of something you know how to do. Then write instructions telling how to do it.
3. Write a list of questions you can use to interview your teacher about his or her job. Write your teacher's answers.
4. The boy in the book exaggerates when he says his teacher can teach so many things. Write a story in which you exaggerate about something.

ELL (ESL) Teaching Strategies

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners or who are learning to speak English as a second language.

1. Use the alphabetical list of occupations in the book to initiate other alphabet activities for beginning English speakers.
2. Offer frequent praise and support for English language learners as they read the book. Make key words as concrete as possible by pointing to objects in the illustrations or the classroom.
3. Have students work with strong English readers to act out different pages of the book. (See the drama activity below.)

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

To help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas, introduce some of the following activities.

Social Studies

This book provides a good opportunity to pair nonfiction with fiction. Collect appropriate nonfiction titles about various kinds of occupations and workers. Place these on a table along with MY TEACHER CAN TEACH . . . *ANYONE!* and encourage students to read further to learn more about some of the jobs mentioned in the book.

Drama

Have students work in teams to dramatize different pages of the book. Without telling the class which page they have chosen, students can act out the occupation. The audience must guess the job that each group is portraying.

Language Arts

- Write these rhyming pairs of words from the book on the chalkboard. Then challenge students to add other rhyming words to each group. Encourage students to use the rhyming words in original poems.

space / grace	hole / pole	lunch / punch	top/ mop
stroke / oak	hose / prose	note / vote	ball / fall
jig / rig	out / snout	trap / snap	mile / style

- Draw attention to how some words in the book are used as verbs, but can also be nouns. Have students use each of the italicized words in the left column below as a noun in a sentence.

Used as a Verb	Used as a Noun
"how to <i>land</i> with grace"	
"how to <i>nail</i> a roof"	
"how to <i>slide</i> the pole"	
"how to <i>host</i> a lunch"	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

W. Nikola-Lisa has written more than twenty books for children. Other titles of his published by LEE & LOW BOOKS include *Summer Sun Risin'*, *How We Are Smart, Bein' with You This Way*, and *America: My Land, Your Land, Our Land*. The author, who grew up in southern Texas, says that one source of ideas for his books is his childhood in a rural environment. "But sometimes I just see things," adds Nikola-Lisa. "I look around and something grabs my attention." Nikola-Lisa began teaching in elementary schools in the late 1970s. He went on to get his doctorate and is now a professor of education at National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois. He spends a great deal of time visiting classrooms and doing readings, often with puppets and music. Nikola-Lisa resides in Chicago with his wife.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Felipe Galindo is an artist, illustrator, cartoonist, and animator whose work has appeared in numerous publications and exhibits around the world. His work is featured in many public and private collections. Galindo has been the recipient of many awards including the Media Arts Award from the New York Council of the Arts and the Best Animation Award from the Cambridge Latino Film Festival. He was born in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and is a graduate of the National University of Mexico's School of Visual Arts. Galindo and his wife live in New York City.

My Teacher Can Teach... Anyone! was praised by *Kirkus Reviews* as "an inspiring introduction to the new school year." *School Library Journal* says "the message is sure to be appreciated by educators, and the illustrations charmingly portray the special relationship between the teacher and her students." And *Booklist* proclaimed that the book is "a fun peek at careers that are just right for young children."

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *My Teacher Can Teach... Anyone!* at:
leeandlow.com/books/86/hc/my_teacher_can_teachanyone

BookTalk with W. Nikola-Lisa

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/nikola.mhtml>

Article by W. Nikola-Lisa on the creation of *My Teacher Can Teach... Anyone!*

<http://www.leeandlow.com/images/nikola.pdf>

Also by W. Nikola-Lisa

Summer Sun Risin'

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/114/hc/summer_sun_risin

How We Are Smart

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/64/hc/how_we_are_smart

Bein' with You This Way

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/19/hc/bein_with_you_this_way

Bein' with You This Way in Spanish:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/139/hc/la_alegria_de_ser_tu_y_yo

America: My Land, Your Land, Our Land

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/11/hc/america_my_land_your_land_our_land

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