

EACH KINDNESS

By Jacqueline Woodson

Chloe and her friends won't associate with the new girl, Maya. Maya is different. She wears used clothes and plays with old-fashioned toys. Every time Maya tries to play with Chloe and her friends, they reject her. Eventually, Maya plays alone, and then stops coming to school altogether.



WITS LEADS Connection: Look and Listen, Explore Points of View, Seek Help

Questions and Activities



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Read the first two pages of the book. Stop at the end of page 4 when the principal of the school introduces Maya to the class.

1. What do you think Maya is feeling? *Shy, possibly afraid.*
2. What do you see in the picture that shows how Maya is feeling? *Maya's head is down and she is staring at the floor. She is not smiling or looking at any other people in the room.*
3. Have you ever been in a new situation or met new groups of people for the first time? How did you feel?



QUESTIONS DURING THE READING

1. Page 5: How did the students respond to the teacher's request to say good morning to Maya? *Most of them were silent.*
2. Why were the students silent? *They may have been unsure of who they were staring at. They may have made a judgment about Maya based on her appearance instead of seeing beyond her appearance.*
3. How do you think Maya felt when most children remained silent? *She may have felt more afraid, rejected and sad.*
4. Page 6: Why does Chloe behave this way? (moving her belongings further away from Maya and not returning a smile). *Perhaps because Maya is new and she appears to be different.*
5. With each passing week what does Maya face with the students in her class? *They ignore Maya, refuse to play with her, tease her about her used clothes and her lunch and make up cruel nick names such as "Never New."*
6. Why did the students do this? *They chose not to see Maya. They decided to dislike her based on what they looked at – her old clothes, and her old toys.*
7. If you were Maya how would you feel? *Alone, hurt rejected, afraid to go to school.*
6. What could Maya do if she was feeling alone, rejected and hurt? *She could seek help from the teacher or the principal.*



WITS LEADS Objective: Look and Listen

We look at things and people, without really seeing them – without understanding them. To look at something is to gaze your eyes upon something and just know it's there. To see something you need to look past the obvious appearance in order to pay attention and truly understand.

1. Who is Maya? When Maya was introduced to the class what did the students first look at? *They looked at a girl with old and ragged clothes and broken spring shoes not suitable for winter.*
2. If you saw beyond Maya's appearance how would you describe her. What clues does the text reveal about Maya's personality and inner self? *Maya was friendly, imaginative, she enjoyed playing games and she was eager to share.*
3. What did Chloe and her friends choose to look at? *They looked at Maya's old fashion toys, her old clothes, and her strange food.*
4. What did Chloe and her friends not see? *They did not see a kind, energetic girl who liked to play with others.*
5. Pages 11-16 Describe what you see in the illustrations on these pages. What are the students doing? How does Maya react?
The Children:
The children choose not to connect with Maya. Page 11, they don't even look at Maya. Page 13 they stare at Maya with suspicion. Page 14, 15, the students stand away from Maya with mean looks on their faces.
Maya:
Page 11, Maya looks hopeful while sitting at her desk. Page 13, she looks afraid while she is eating her lunch. Page 14, Maya looks very sad and even angry as she walks away from the two girls. Page 16, she looks lonely and afraid but by facing the girls she still shows that she wants to be friends with them.
6. Why didn't anyone in the class choose to be kind to Maya? *They followed Chloe's and their peer's behaviour and chose to exclude and even tease Maya.*
7. Kindness is like tiny waves "each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple into the world." Chloe was unable to think of even a tiny kindness she had done. What small act of kindness could Chloe have shown during the story? *Chloe could have smiled at Maya, she could have played with Maya, she could have complimented Maya on her fancy dress.*
8. How does Chloe feel when Maya moves away and does not return to school? *Chloe feels regret, sadness, guilt, longing, loss.*

WITS LEADS Objective: Seek Help

Sometimes it's hard to know when to seek help. You don't need to be in danger or in trouble. If you feel lonely or excluded you can seek help from a trusted adult who may help you make friends when it is hard to do this on your own.

9. Who could Maya seek out to ask for help? *Maya could have asked for help from her parents, from her teacher and/or from the principal.*

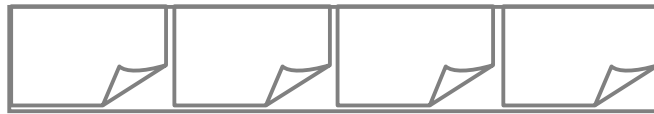
10. What can we learn from Chloe? *You don't have unlimited chances to be kind to others. When you have a chance to be kind – don't wait. When you are unkind to others you end up feeling hurt in the end.*
11. What can we learn from Maya? *It is okay to seek help if you feel left out or if you are being teased.*
12. What if Chloe were to see Maya again. How could she respond to Maya if she was given another chance to be with her? *Smile, listen, ask Maya questions about her game, invite her to join a group of friends.*



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Looking vs. Seeing

- Distribute the *Looking vs. Seeing* handout to students. Discuss the meaning of the quote at the top of the handout "It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see." Direct students to read the parts of the story depicted on the bottom part of the strip. Discuss Maya's characteristics that the children looked at and discuss Maya's potential qualities that they missed seeing. Students are to cut out the rectangle and fold it lengthways in half. Then they are to cut along the dotted lines that separate each paragraph so that each paragraph can be flipped to reveal the paper underneath. On the blank paper under the paragraph students are to write descriptions of what the children did not see in each of the situations described from the book. After the activity is completed post the strips on a bulletin board with the quote "It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see."


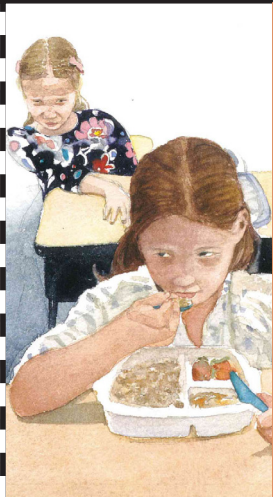



- Create a poster of ideas about ways in which students can show kindness to new people that they meet. Categorize the acts of kindness according to what can be seen and what can be heard.
- Kindness is Catching
Create a kindness board or kindness box in the class. Each time a student experiences an act of kindness (in giving or receiving) they write or draw their kindness on a small index card and post it on the board or insert it in the box. Review the acts of kindness described by the students. Reflect on the "ripple effects" of the kind act and celebrate the kindness expressed by the students.
- Ask students to write a story about when they were in a new situation. How did they feel? What did they wish other people might have done to help them feel more comfortable.

It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see.

Cut along outside solid black line and black dash lines.
Fold along the center blue dotted line.

Henry David Thoreau

<p>We all stared at her. Her coat was open and the clothes beneath it looked old and ragged. Her shoes were spring shoes, not meant for the snow. A strap on one of them was broken.</p> 	<p>Weeks passed. Every day we whispered about Maya, laughing at her clothes, her shoes, her strange food she brought for lunch.</p> 	<p>Some days, Maya held out her hand to show us what she had brought to school - a deck of cards, pick up sticks, a small tattered doll. Whenever she asked us to play we said no.</p> 	<p>One day, Maya came to school wearing a pretty dress and fancy shoes. But the shoes and dress looked like they'd belonged to another girl before Maya. <i>I have a new name for her, Kendra</i> whispered. <i>Never new. Everything she has came from a second hand store. We all laughed.</i></p> 