

\$6.99 • ISSUE 162 • JAN/FEB 2024

# TEACH

EDUCATION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

**TAMING  
THE CHAOS:**  
10 TIPS FOR CLASSROOM  
MANAGEMENT



**BOOKSTUFF  
WOMEN  
IN SPORTS**

# Making real-world connections through global learning

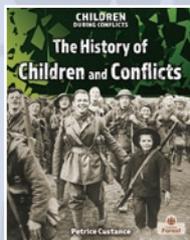
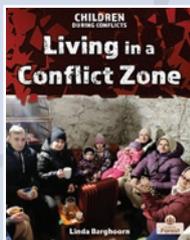
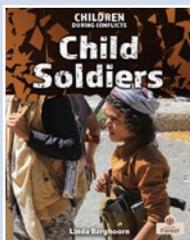
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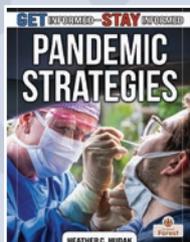
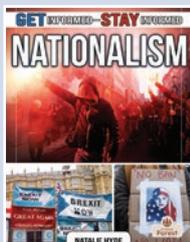
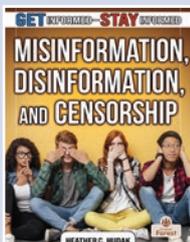
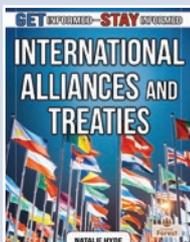
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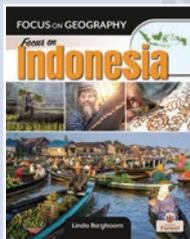
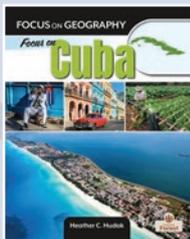
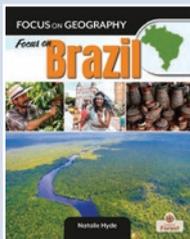
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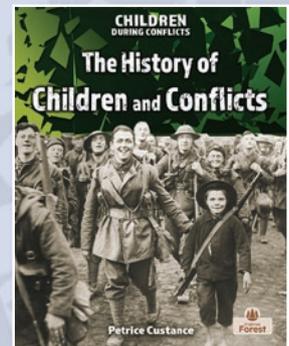
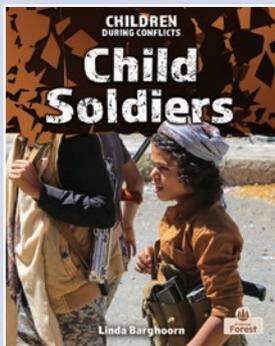
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# NOTES

Another year is upon us, and with it, the opportunity to bring new strategies and innovative approaches into the classroom. In this issue we're pleased to present a variety of uplifting articles to help you start 2024 off on the right foot.

Check out Adam Stone's latest article, "Taming the Chaos," where he shares class management strategies from a variety of educators and experts. Whether by celebrating positive behaviour or collaborating with students when developing a list of class rules, there are plenty of useful tips and tricks you'll surely want to incorporate in your own classroom.

Help students do their best this year by making sure they can see their best. In her article, "Myopia in the Classroom," Deidre Olsen takes a fresh look at eye care by exploring the causes and treatments of myopia (near-sightedness) in children. She also offers several proactive measures that teachers can take to assist students at risk of developing myopia, including supporting routine eye exams and championing eye health in the classroom. Vision is crucial for learning, and there's no better way to begin the new year than by encouraging healthy eye habits at school.

This issue's Classroom Perspectives piece presents an inspiring story that is sure to warm your heart during the upcoming cold winter months. Middle school social studies teacher Jeffrey Webb writes about using profiles of alumni to motivate his current students. Webb's school is located

in southern West Virginia, an area strongly affected by the opioid crisis. Many of the kids were coming to school discouraged, with no hope of a bright future ahead, but Webb's idea of sharing success stories from previous students helped to change those opinions.

If you're looking for even more motivational tales, don't miss our Bookstuff column. This one is all about women in sports. In preparation for the upcoming Summer Olympics, we wanted to showcase books that highlight female athletes—both real and fictional. Kick off the new year with these exciting and impactful reads.

Didn't get enough chocolate over the holidays? Keep the festive spirit going with fun, winter-friendly field trips to chocolate factories! Check out the Field Trips column for a list of five delectable chocolate tours across Canada and the United States.

Lastly, this issue's Curricula focuses on the theme of sustainability. This ready-to-go lesson plan is designed to teach middle-grade students about where their consumer goods come from, along with the impacts of fast fashion. There's no time like the present for all of us to begin making more sustainable purchasing choices, and it is our hope that this lesson plan can be a good starting point for students and teachers alike.

See you next time.

**KELSEY MCCALLUM**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR



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# TAMING THE CHAOS:

## 10 TIPS FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

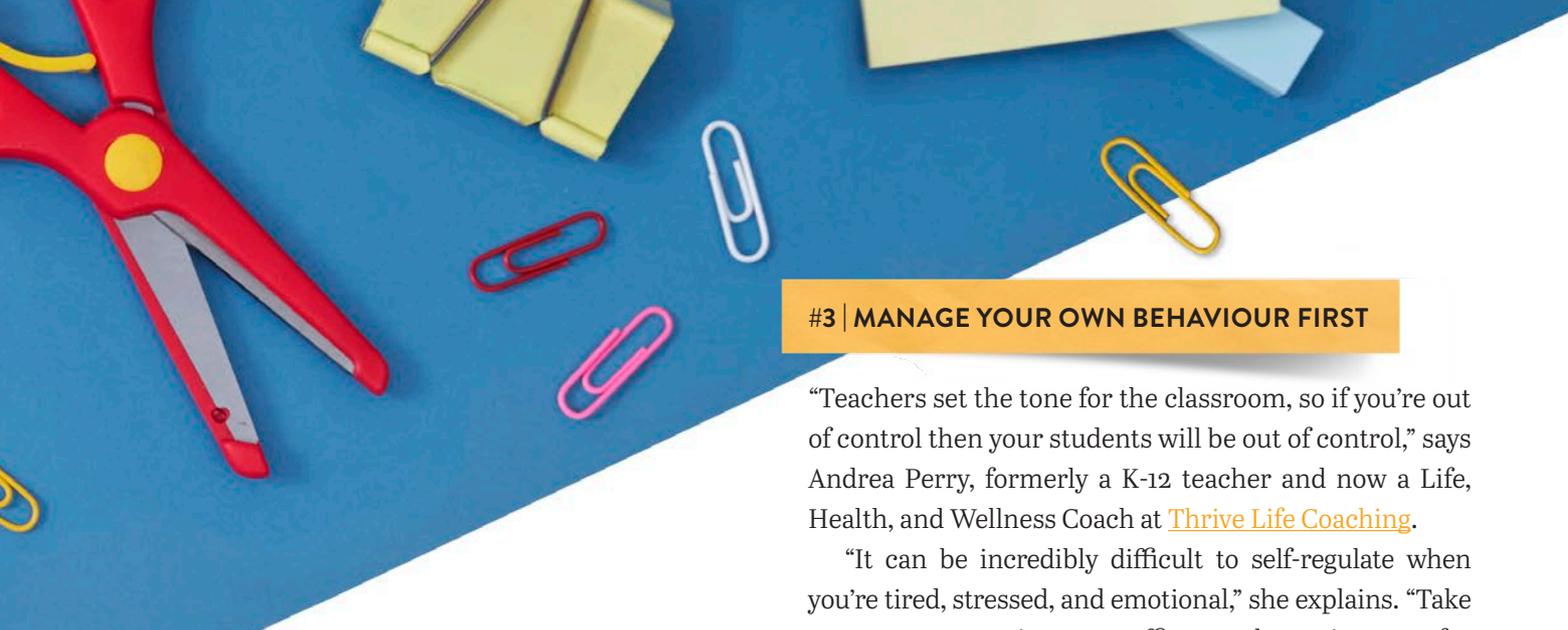
By Adam Stone

At McClintock Middle School in Charlotte, NC, eighth-grade English Language Arts teacher Eric Gaestel knows first-hand the importance of classroom management, and just how hard it can be to achieve.

“The purpose of us being in the classroom together is to create an environment where everybody has a fair chance of learning the material. If you have students who are being disruptive to that plan, you’re doing a disservice to everyone in the room,” he says.

And yet, disruptions happen all the time. “You have people getting up and walking around to do random tasks: ‘I have to throw this out,’ or, ‘My pencil broke.’ All these little interruptions add up,” Gaestel notes. Bigger disruptions make it worse: students talking, quarreling, or distracting one another.

To continue the learning momentum, teachers need a wide variety of classroom management tools and techniques.



### #1 | BE CONSISTENT

It's hard for a teacher to apply the rules of the classroom consistently all the time. "You'll have a bad day and say: 'OK, starting tomorrow, nobody's allowed out of their seats anymore'—because you're frustrated," says Gaestel. "A few days later, somebody gets up and you don't say anything. Now it's not a rule anymore." In order to manage the learning space effectively, teachers need to strive for consistency. Even then, kids will push the boundaries, and teachers will need to hold firm.

### #2 | OFFER OPTIONS

Sometimes disruption can occur when the kids feel constrained—they're individuals and, naturally, don't appreciate being told to always operate in a certain way.

"Give students choices," says Eliza Engstrom, MEd, MSpEd, kindergarten head teacher at [Children's Academy](#) in New York. "Children are constantly being told what to do and how to do things. By simply giving choices, students will gain a sense of worth and confidence, which will lead to greater success in the classroom."

Examples of choice can be as basic as letting them pick "what materials to use, whom to work with, where to work," says Chris Sweigart, a creator at [Limened](#), whose evidence-based practice guides help educators to address a range of challenges faced by students. "Basic choices like these improve the likelihood that students will comply with directions, stay actively engaged and on-task, and engage in appropriate behaviour."

### #3 | MANAGE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOUR FIRST

"Teachers set the tone for the classroom, so if you're out of control then your students will be out of control," says Andrea Perry, formerly a K-12 teacher and now a Life, Health, and Wellness Coach at [Thrive Life Coaching](#).

"It can be incredibly difficult to self-regulate when you're tired, stressed, and emotional," she explains. "Take a moment to step into your office or other quiet space for a quick breather, listen to calming music during your prep period, or use another tool that you find works for you to reset. If you can't do this because you're in the middle of class, try taking a few slow, deep breaths before speaking if you can, or even turn on some quiet classical music to bring calm to yourself and your students as they're working independently on a task."

### #4 | ELEVATE THE POSITIVE

"So often when we think of behaviour management we think of punishment, documentation, demerits. But what if we chose to focus more on celebrating the positive behaviours we see?" Perry asks.

"I [try to] share something positive that I notice about a student... and I send a quick email to their parents [or] guardians about it as well," she explains. "It not only increases positive communication with the student and their family, but as a teacher it also shifts my mindset in a way that focuses on the good, instead of nitpicking the less desirable behaviours."

### #5 | BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

"Personalized learning and strong emotional connections can positively impact a child's educational journey," says Mandy Davis, a former school principal, the author of *A Matter of Principal*, as well as the founder of [Homebuilt Education](#).

## #8 | LOOP IN THE PARENTS

“In my [personal] experience, fostering a strong school-home connection is key to managing classroom behaviour,” says Dr. Kara Stern, who is the head of education solutions at the company [SchoolStatus](#), and a former teacher, middle school principal, and head of school.

“Regular communication with parents not only allows teachers to share insights, discuss strategies, and work together to create a positive learning environment, but also builds a foundation of trust,” she says. “When parents trust educators in the room, they are more likely to actively support teachers’ goals and initiatives, creating a collaborative and harmonious partnership that enhances the overall classroom experience for students.”

## #9 | COLLABORATE ON THE RULES

At the Birch Wathen Lenox School, an independent K-12 school in Manhattan, eighth-grade English teacher and assistant director of the middle school, James Walter says that it makes sense to have students take an active role in setting up the rules they will be expected to follow in the classroom throughout the year.

“Actively involve students when establishing classroom norms at the beginning of the year,” he recommends. Teachers should give them “the opportunity to share what they need to make their classroom a safe and productive learning environment. Revisiting these norms with your students throughout the year will help foster a strong classroom community.”

## #10 | BUILD ROUTINES FOR COMMON DISRUPTIONS

Gaestel has noticed that some interruptions are more common than others. Someone’s always breaking a pencil point; papers constantly need to be handed out and collected. To keep things flowing smoothly, he has routines in place for these events.

“If your pencil breaks, I don’t need to know about it. You can walk up to one of the pencil stations and trade in your broken pencil for a newly sharpened one,” he says.

With this in mind, teachers should “invest time in getting to know your students individually,” she advises. “Understanding their backgrounds, interests, and learning styles can significantly improve classroom dynamics. This personalized approach aids in pre-emptively addressing behavioural issues and fostering a positive learning environment.”

## #6 | BE CLEAR ABOUT THE RULES

A school psychologist in private practice, Nancy Taylor of [Taylor Educational Advocacy](#) encourages teachers to post classroom rules and model them consistently. “Clear expectations are beneficial for students,” she says.

“Posting a short and positively-worded list of rules will set expectations, and allow you a reference to refer to when students are not following them,” she explains. “It is also important to model what you expect of your students. If you have a rule to listen when others are talking, students are more likely to follow the rule when they see you following it consistently as well.”

## #7 | TREAT STUDENTS WITH RESPECT...

...regardless of how they may treat you. “When I started working as a school psychologist, I was surprised to see how disrespectfully some teachers treated their students,” Taylor says. “These teachers had more behavioural issues and blamed their students for the problems.”

As educators, “we have a responsibility to lead and be supportive,” she notes. “Respect is a great way to set a positive tone and reduce behaviours before they start. I was always treated well when I worked in a school for children with behaviour issues. Why? You guessed it: I treated all of my students with respect, regardless of the troubles they had with their academics or emotional regulation.”



“[For] things like passing out papers or collecting papers: I have very specific routines on how we do that. And I take the whole class to the bathroom. We line up against our lockers, we’re silent in the hallways, we go right towards the restroom. They know they have three minutes and then I’m going to be timing them. And if you don’t have to use the restroom, you still come with us.”



In the big picture, variety can also serve as an everyday fix to many common behavioural issues. Maybe it’s just unrealistic to ask young people to sit quietly at their desks for so many hours at a time.

“No one likes doing the same thing all day every day,” says Chase Nordengren, PhD, the principal research lead for Effective Instructional Strategies at [NWEA](#), a not-for-profit organization that is committed to helping school districts throughout the United States improve learning for all students. He is also the author of *Step into Student Goal Setting: A Path to Growth, Motivation, and Agency*.

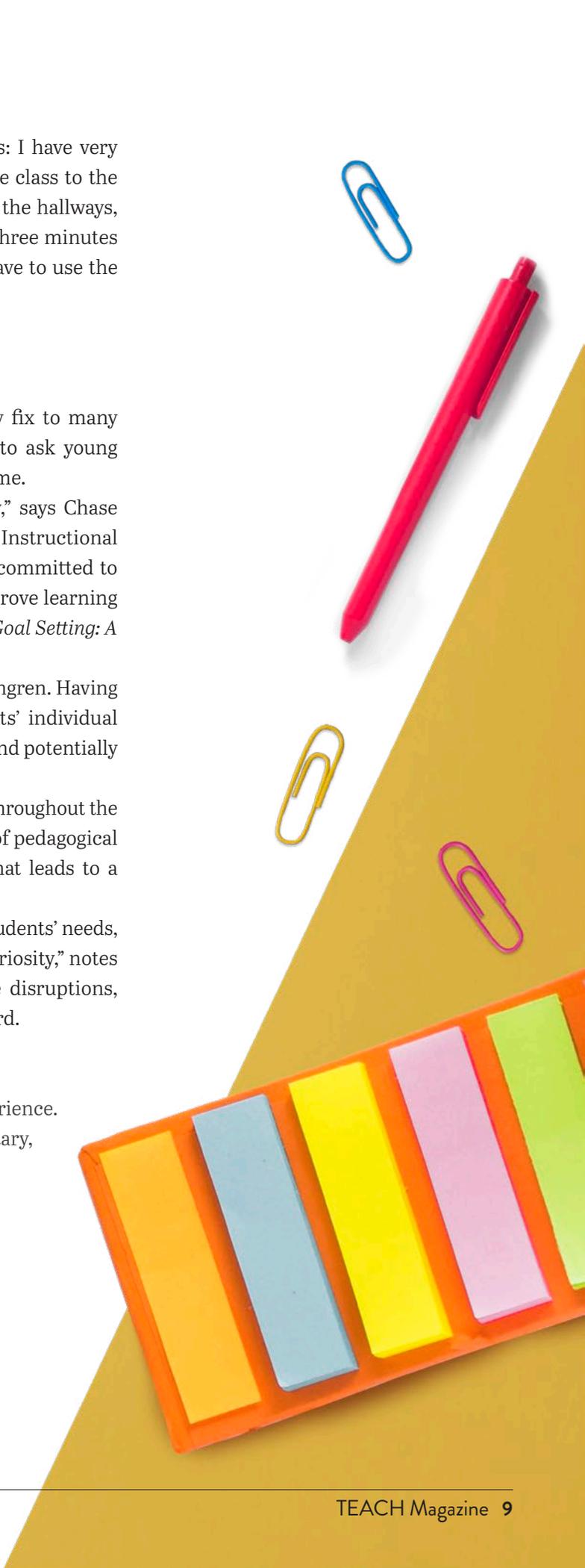
“Find individual and small-group activities,” says Nordengren. Having a wide variety of activities “not only helps meet students’ individual needs, but also gives them a chance to activate a different and potentially more engaging context in which to learn.”

Walter, too, emphasizes the need to mix things up a bit throughout the day, to keep kids engaged and attentive. “Utilize a variety of pedagogical strategies to help students learn and engage in a way that leads to a greater understanding of the material,” he advises.

By looking for the teaching styles that meet individual students’ needs, an educator can “ensure a high level of engagement and curiosity,” notes Walter. That engagement in turn can help to minimize disruptions, enabling the teacher to keep the whole class moving forward.

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**ADAM STONE** is a seasoned journalist with 20+ years’ experience. He covers education, technology, government and the military, along with diverse other topics.



# CHOCOLATE TOURS

Have you ever wanted to give your students a real-life *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* adventure? Well, now you can, but without the danger of being pranked by sneaky Oompa-Loompas! Chocolate factory tours offer unique—and delicious—ways to learn about the process of making chocolate and the origins of cacao beans. Not only will you and your students have the opportunity to indulge in some yummy samples, you'll also gain an appreciation for the hard work that goes into creating every savory piece of chocolate. Here are several chocolate factory tours that can help your class discover the magic behind this irresistible treat.

## CFX: THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY EXPERIENCE

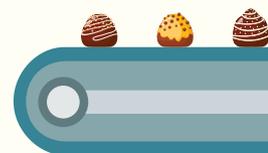
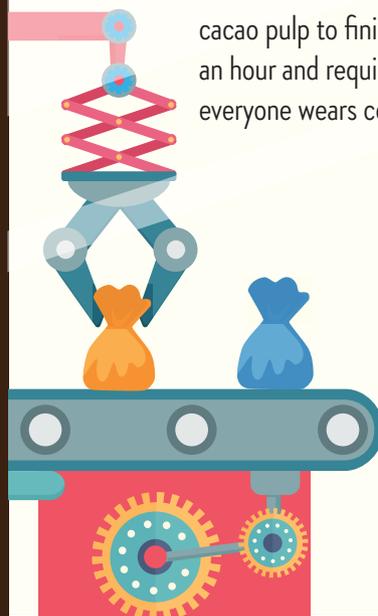
St. Davids, ON

Tours of this artisanal chocolate factory delve into its history and the chocolate moulding process, while also giving insights into panning and packaging procedures. Best of all, tour groups can witness chocolate making in action through a viewing window that looks onto the production floor. On the way out, make sure to stop by the Chocolate Bar for a taste of real melted chocolate, and definitely snap some photos at the selfie wall as well! This tour lasts approximately 30 minutes and includes the opportunity to sample some of CFX's most popular products. It is wheelchair accessible and suitable for all ages.

## DANDELION CHOCOLATE

San Francisco, CA

Take a tour of Dandelion Chocolate's historic brick factory and discover the fascinating world of chocolate making. From sourcing to production, learn about every step of the process while indulging in the rich aroma of freshly roasted cacao beans. You and your students will observe skilled chocolate makers at work and sample everything from fresh cacao pulp to finished chocolates. The tour lasts an hour and requires some walking, so make sure everyone wears comfy shoes!



## CHOCOLATERIE ÉRICO

Quebec City, QC

Érico's Chocolate Museum offers free self-guided tours that take you on a journey through the history of chocolate—from ancient Mayan civilizations to modern day. Visitors can explore the museum's fascinating collection of 200+ artifacts from Mexico, the Caribbean islands, and Europe, and learn about the cacao plant along the way. Don't miss the incredible chocolate creations on display and, if you're lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of the chocolatiers at work through a window that looks into the kitchen. This cute shop is a must-visit spot that's sure to keep the younger students engaged and entertained, without being too overwhelming.

## GOODNOW FARMS CHOCOLATE

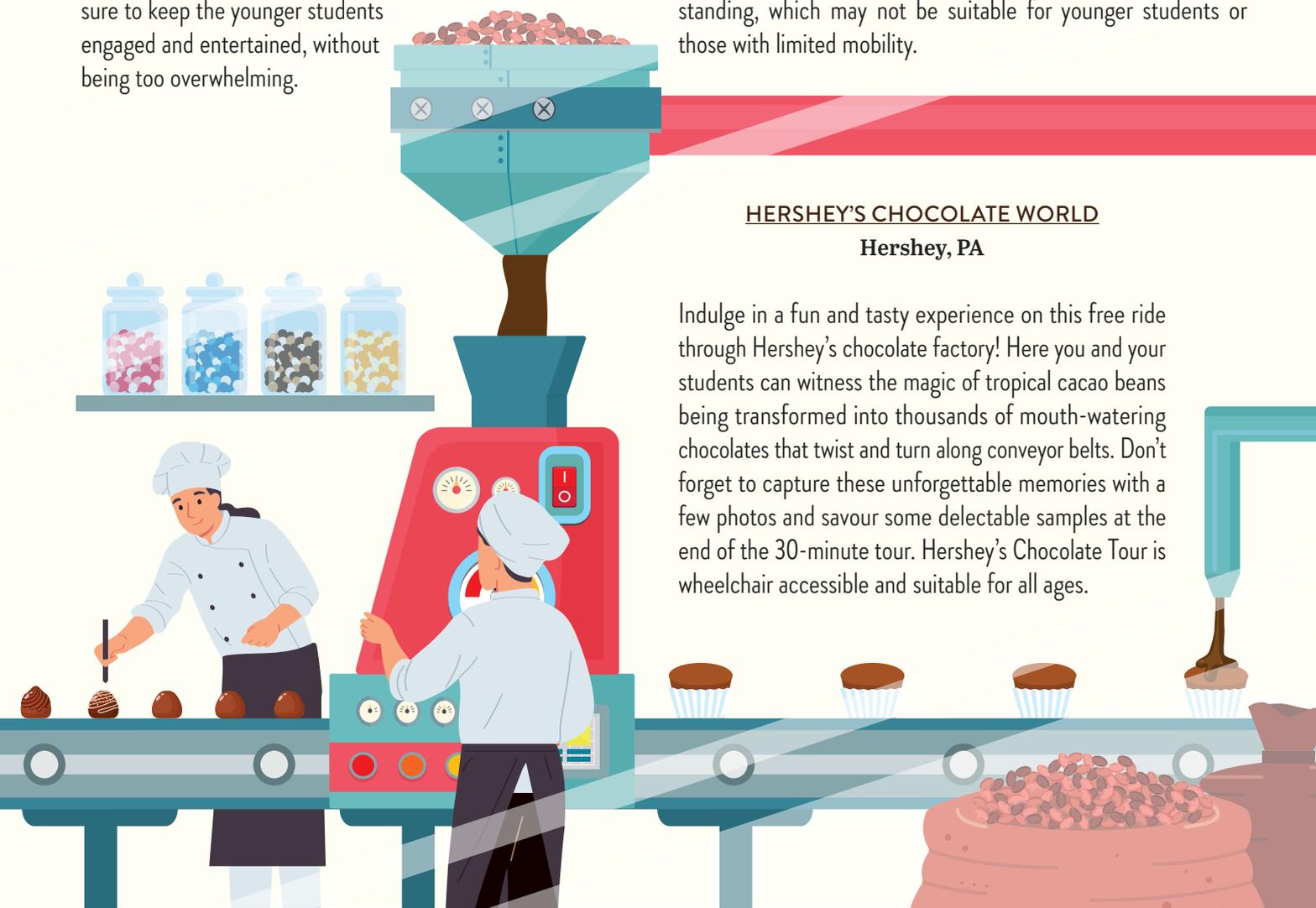
Sudbury, MA

Chocolate connoisseurs should definitely check out this award-winning, single-origin chocolate factory. Goodnow Farms runs tours where visitors can learn all about the chocolate making process, from roasting and grinding cacao beans to moulding and pressing chocolate. You'll even get to taste different beans and sample delicious, finished chocolates in the farm's 225-year-old barn. As an added bonus, visitors will walk away with a complimentary chocolate bar that's only available on the tour! Note that this factory visit does involve a significant amount of walking and standing, which may not be suitable for younger students or those with limited mobility.

## HERSHEY'S CHOCOLATE WORLD

Hershey, PA

Indulge in a fun and tasty experience on this free ride through Hershey's chocolate factory! Here you and your students can witness the magic of tropical cacao beans being transformed into thousands of mouth-watering chocolates that twist and turn along conveyor belts. Don't forget to capture these unforgettable memories with a few photos and savour some delectable samples at the end of the 30-minute tour. Hershey's Chocolate Tour is wheelchair accessible and suitable for all ages.



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**BY DEIDRE OLSEN**



**T**he future might be one in which every student wears glasses. In recent decades, the prevalence of myopia in children and teenagers has skyrocketed, becoming a pressing global health issue. The situation is so dire that, in Singapore, 83% of young adults have been diagnosed with the condition, which has led to the country being called “[the myopia capital of the world.](#)”

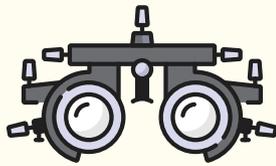
People with myopia—also known as near-sightedness or short-sightedness—can clearly see objects up close but find distant objects blurry. It is estimated that by 2050, [nearly half of the world](#) will have the condition. In North America, the prevalence of myopia has [soared](#) from 28% in 2000 to 42% in 2020.

In the past, this alarming trend was largely attributed to genetics. However, experts now agree that the significant amount of time children and teenagers spend inside and on screens is the [leading cause](#) behind this phenomenon.

These behaviours can have adverse vision outcomes on young children whose eyes are still developing. When their eyes focus on near objects instead of distant objects, this causes their eyeballs to elongate, and eventually leads to the development of near-sightedness, which can affect all areas of their lives.

“For children with uncorrected myopia, this means they may be missing out on a lot of learning, hindering their educational experience,” says Naomi Barber, Director of Optometry at [Specsavers](#). “Vision is critical for education, development, social confidence, fitness, overall well-being, and participation in all that school life has to offer.”

Thankfully, there are several proactive measures that can be taken in a school context to improve education for kids struggling with myopia.



## CAUSES AND PREVENTION

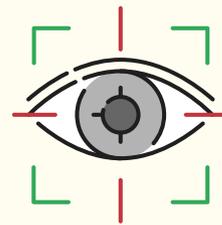
There are a number of factors that contribute to the onset of myopia. For young people, this can include a lack of outdoor exposure and increased [“near work”](#)—activities done at an arm’s length from the eyes. This is the central challenge associated with using computers, smartphones, and tablets.

Dr. Langis Michaud is an optometrist and the Director of the School of Optometry at the University of Montreal. He says that it isn’t necessarily the devices we use but how we use them that has such significant impacts on our vision.

“We look at them way closer than a book. We also look at them with no pause,” he explains. To lessen the impact on our eyes, he suggests switching phones to [dark mode](#), explaining that, “black letters on a white page are more

demanding for the visual system than white letters on a black screen. Lighting also plays a role, as looking at a screen in a dark environment is harmful for the eyes.” In addition to these factors, Dr. Michaud says nutrition and physical activity can help to combat the onset of myopia.

As vision is so vital for learning and growth, it is essential that parents and educators can look out for indications of myopia at home and in the classroom. In doing so, they can identify early warning signs and help prevent long-term conditions from developing; people with myopia can face a host of [lifetime risks](#), such as glaucoma, cataracts, retinal detachment, and vision loss.



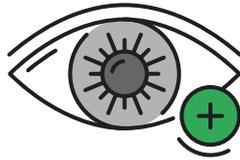
## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

For teachers and parents who want to champion eye health in the classroom and at home, there are a number of myopia signs and symptoms to look out for. If kids seem to have difficulty reading the board, this could be an early indicator of them struggling to see information presented from a distance.

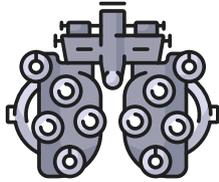
If you notice that a student is squinting, asking to sit closer to the front of the classroom, rubbing their eyes, or complaining of headaches or strained eyes, these could be symptoms of near-sightedness. As well, don’t overlook kids who copy homework from other students, are easily distracted, or lack focus when it comes to reading and concentrating on in-class assignments.

In physical education, children and teenagers might face difficulties catching a ball or hitting a target from a distance. If their siblings struggle with myopia, this is also important to consider, as they are likely to face a similar outcome.

By understanding these various signs and symptoms, educators can help students identify myopia early on and get them the help they need.



## TREATMENT PLANS



### EYE EXAMS

When it comes to diagnosing eye conditions and promoting healthy vision, eye exams are essential, especially for children who might not know their vision is impaired. “It’s vital [that] young people aged from six months to early 20s have regular eye exams to make sure myopia and other eye conditions can be prevented, detected, and managed,” says Barber.

As kids grow up, their eyes develop at a rapid rate. As a result, their eye health status quickly changes too. Given this, it is important to have regular eye exams, especially before a child starts school. While at an educational institution, they might receive sight tests and vision screenings; however, these shouldn’t be the sole indicators of vision and eye health.

“Optometrists conduct comprehensive assessments, looking at the level of vision a child has, comparing vision between eyes, monitoring the way their eyes work together, and examining the interior of the eye to check for the risk of any eye conditions,” Barber explains.

With routine checkups, parents and educators can tackle the risk of onset myopia, along with several other eye conditions. Then, if a young person is diagnosed with any of these conditions, steps can be taken to mitigate the associated progression.



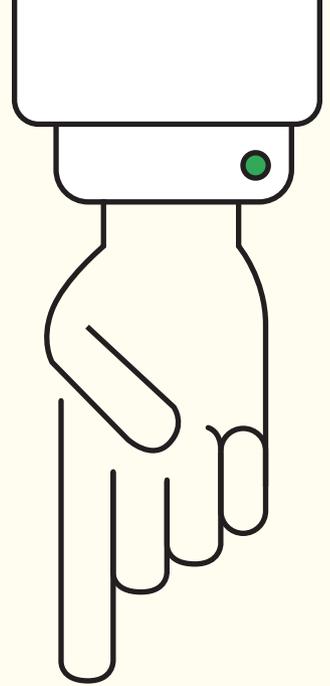
### GLASSES, CONTACTS, AND EYE DROPS

When myopia is diagnosed, optometrists can provide children and teenagers with a treatment plan to correct vision and slow down progression. Treatment plans can include a combination of glasses, contact lenses, and sometimes eye drops. In some cases, refractive surgery may be required.

“Given that myopia progresses mainly during childhood, there is a key window to intervene with preventative strategies when the eye is more susceptible to growth and subsequent vision changes,” says Barber. “This can reduce the risk of a patient developing sight-threatening conditions in adulthood due to the structural changes of the eye.”

Dr. Michaud recommends contact lenses that are worn overnight to temporarily reshape the cornea, allowing for clear vision during the day without correction. Additionally, there are contacts that have the potential to slow the progression of myopia and are specifically designed for children ages 7-12 years old. One such brand he suggests is [ACUVUE Abiliti](#).

With an optometrist, parents can find the right treatment plan that addresses their child’s specific needs and lifestyle.



## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT EYE HEALTH

In the classroom, teachers can promote vision literacy and encourage healthy eye habits. This is especially important as children learn predominantly through visual content at a distance. Educators can also shift away from screen time and spend more time outdoors with students. (While doing so, teachers should encourage kids to wear sunglasses when in the sun so that their eyes are protected against UV rays.)

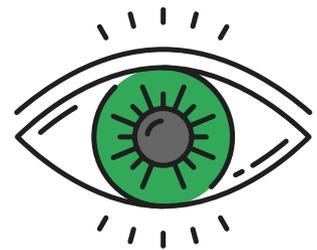
If young people have a treatment plan, teachers can ensure they wear their glasses or contact lenses as recommended. If a teacher notices that students are struggling to see, they can check in with parents.

“The best way people can raise awareness around the importance of eye health is to have regular comprehensive eye exams and encourage your family and friends to do the same,” says Barber. “Parents often have many appointments to coordinate for their children, so a gentle reminder, particularly for at-risk children, can go a long way to protecting their vision and, by virtue of this, their ability to learn as they grow.”

As rates of myopia continue to soar around the world, this eye condition will increasingly impact the learning and development of young people. Equipped with knowledge and awareness about this pressing concern, educators can play an active role in promoting a safe and healthy learning environment.

---

**DEIDRE OLSEN** is a Canadian, award-nominated writer based in Berlin.



## LOW-COST OPTIONS FOR VISION CARE

Obtaining vision care can be costly. In Canada, many provinces and territories offer [publicly-funded health care plans](#) that have coverage for qualifying children. In the United States, the National Eye Institute [lists](#) organizations and programs that offer free or low-cost eye care for both children and adults.



# ALUMNI SUCCESS STORIES: INSPIRING HOPE DURING THE OPIOID CRISIS

BY JEFFREY WEBB

I am a teacher at DuPont Middle School in southern West Virginia, a region defined by stereotypes and hit hard by America's [opioid epidemic](#). The course I teach, eighth-grade social studies, focuses specifically on our state's history. It is designed to analyze the past and future of West Virginia, and to instill in students a sense of pride about their home. However, every year students come into class believing there is little to be proud of when it comes to West Virginia. "Nothing but crackheads," some of them say, not realizing that heroin and prescription pills—not crack cocaine—are the reason behind our state's drug problem.

Many of my students grow up thinking the only way to survive West Virginia is to leave, leading to a [mass exodus](#) of our youngest and brightest. Meanwhile, others have internalized the "nothing but crackheads" stereotype, leading to apathy about school, discipline referrals, truancy, and, in some cases, even drug use. The students come to class feeling hopeless, believing they are trapped by their circumstances and doomed to a life of poverty and addiction. Why bother trying if the future is already decided? These attitudes may partly explain the state's [low number of college graduates](#) and high number of overdose deaths—"deaths of despair," as they're coming to be known. I wanted to challenge this narrative, and I knew that to do so, I had to help my students see past that despair.

## THE ALUMNI SURVEY

Despite the stereotypes, DuPont has several notable alumni, including novelists, sportswriters, as well as two former NFL players whose pictures hang on the wall of our gymnasium, along with some other athletes from the school. Towards the end of the previous school year, our staff played a trivia game that asked us to name the individuals whose photos were on display. This got me thinking about all the other students who have graduated from DuPont over the years. I realized there were probably plenty of alumni with stories that could inspire my students. I just had to find a way to gather those stories.

I thought for a while about how I could reach former students, then, over the summer, I came up with the idea of using a survey that I proceeded to develop through Google Forms. The survey asked alumni to list the years they attended DuPont, as well as to describe some of their favorite memories from school, what they did after graduation, and what advice they had for today's students. Along with the questions, I explained that the replies would be shared with current students, in the hope of helping them to see "beyond the stereotypes used so often to define people from our area and recognize the diversity, perseverance, and successes within our DuPont family."

The survey link was posted on the school's Facebook page. I also asked a local alum to share it with his followers on social media, knowing he had a large following that he kept updated about the school. I thought it would be great to get a hundred replies. Instead, within two months of posting the survey, nearly four hundred alumni had responded.

Among the respondents were teachers, principals, nurses, and soldiers. There were also engineers, realtors, and photographers. Some were business owners who described how they started their own hair salon or floral shop. One alum developed a medical software company and grew it from 7 employees to 150; another founded a non-profit and built a school and community center in Uganda. Two alumni worked for NASA, including one who worked on the launches of all 135 shuttle missions. Most respondents had graduated sometime in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. The oldest respondent graduated in 1949, making her around 92 years old!

All the alumni wrote about their successes and the things they were proudest of, be that professional accomplishments, accolades they received, or families they raised. While I read through the responses, it became clear that not all of them took the same path. Some wrote about attending college right out of high school, while others never attended at all. Some waited ten or fifteen years before enrolling in weekend or evening classes, and described the joy they felt upon obtaining a degree; some started on one career path only to make a change to something else. Many of the alumni wrote about the challenges they faced along the way—growing up in poverty, getting laid off, struggling with mental illness, coping with the death of a loved one. While these were stories of struggle and adversity, they were also stories of people who faced those challenges and persevered.

This project originated due to the prevalence of drug use in our community and, although none of the survey respondents self-disclosed drug use themselves, several did talk about working as counselors and advocates for mental health, including in areas focused on addiction. Still, I thought it was important for students to hear success stories from the recovery community, in order to better combat the stigmatization of drug use. I decided to invite a guest speaker to our school: Cheryl Laws, the founder and CEO of [Pollen8](#), a local non-profit that helps women in recovery get back on their feet. She shared with our students how trauma can lead to addiction and also explained pathways for treatment. Perhaps the most sobering moment of her talk was when she asked students to raise their hands if they knew someone suffering from addiction. Almost every hand went up.

## LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

I printed off the responses and placed a different one in each student's locker before the first day of school. When students opened their lockers at the beginning of the year, they found these stories inside, along with directions to bring them to class that day.

"These are the stories of people who walked these halls before you," I told my students. "People who maybe had the same locker you have now, who sat in the same seats you are sitting in now. I hope you can learn from their stories and be inspired."

I divided my students into groups and tasked them with reading and discussing the stories. Each group then shared some interesting details with the entire class. Afterwards, I handed out worksheets to help students analyze their stories, and asked them to write what they learned from the alumni that could be applied to their own lives. Here are some of the things my students said:

- Cherish your memories and your friendships.
- Don't let anyone else tell you who you are.
- It's okay to try and to fail. The real failure is in not trying at all.
- You don't have to go to college to be successful.
- You may go through a lot of jobs before you find the one for you.

To give my students a visual reminder of these lessons, I took a globe and punched a tack in every state and country where an alum had lived. Most of the United States is covered with tacks. Many countries in Europe and Asia are also full of them, including some as far away from West Virginia as you can imagine—Nepal, Australia, East Timor. I placed the globe at the front of my classroom, so students could run their hands over it and feel just how far DuPont alumni have gone.

A few months later, as we drew near the end of the first semester and motivation waned, we revisited some of our alumni stories for a boost of morale. I asked my students how these stories impacted the way they viewed the world around them.

"For a while, I thought people from this community didn't go very far in the future," one student replied. "My opinion has changed, though, because some people from West Virginia can actually be very successful and hard-working too."

Another put it even more succinctly: "I learned what's possible."

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**JEFFREY WEBB** is a writer and an English and social studies teacher from West Virginia.

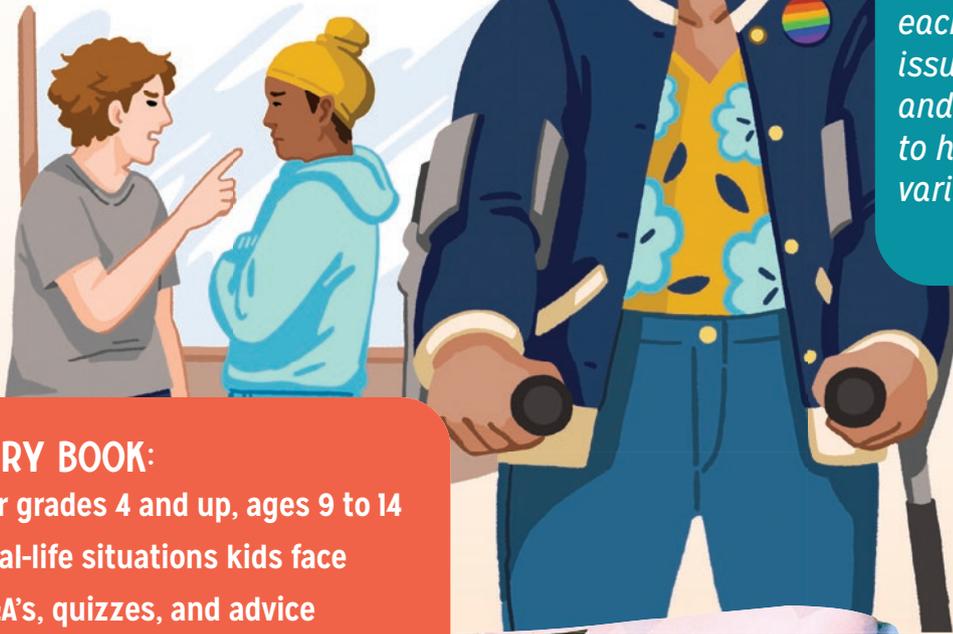


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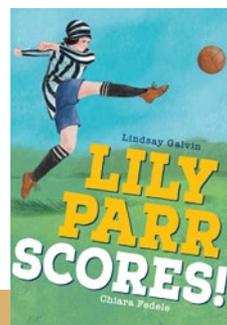
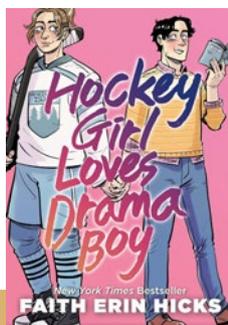
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# WOMEN IN SPORTS

Join us in celebrating the achievements of women in sports! While it's true that sports have come a long way, women have only recently begun to gain the recognition they deserve as athletes. It's important to highlight the lives of women and girls (both real and fictional) who have all excelled in their respective sports, rather than relegating them to the sidelines. In anticipation of the Summer Olympic Games happening later this year, we have compiled a list of books that showcase women's stories in a male-dominated field of sports-themed books. So, sit back, relax, and get ready to be inspired!



**1 BARELY FLOATING BY LILLIAM RIVERA**

*Kokila (August 2023)*

**Grade Level: 4-7**

This middle-grade novel focuses on Nat, a spirited Latina tween who is used to spending her time showing off her swimming skills at the local pool. Then one day she sees a synchronized swimming performance by the LA Mermaids and is captivated. Despite her parents' worries that the sport places too much emphasis on beauty ideals, Nat is determined to make a place for herself on the team. *Barely Floating* is a story that celebrates body positivity, community, and the power that comes from never giving up on your dreams.

**2 HOCKEY GIRL LOVES DRAMA BOY BY FAITH ERIN HICKS**

*First Second (October 2023)*

**Grade Level: 9-12**

In this heartfelt graphic novel, Alix finds her invitation to the Canada National Women's Under-18 Team's summer camp jeopardized due to a heated argument with her hockey teammate. Seeking guidance on how to control her temper, she turns to Ezra, a drama student who is well-known for his calm demeanor. This story subverts traditional gender roles, making it a remarkable read for all.

**3 KID OLYMPIANS: SUMMER BY ROBIN STEVENSON, ILLUSTRATED BY ALLISON STEINFELD**

*Quirk Books (January 2024)*

**Grade Level: 3-7**

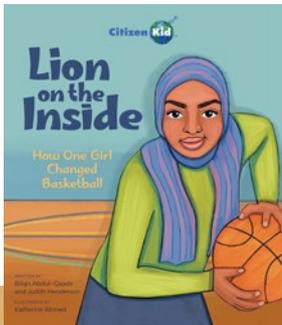
Discover fascinating and entertaining stories of young athletes from all over the world in *Kid Olympians*. It's packed with vibrant illustrations and engaging text that will captivate young readers and encourage them to dream big. Featuring a variety of physically and racially diverse Olympians and Paralympians, this book is sure to inspire and uplift.

**4 LILY PARR SCORES!** BY LINDSAY GALVIN, ILLUSTRATED BY CHIARA FEDELE  
.....

*Collins (January 2024)*

**Grade Level: 1-3**

Lily Parr was one of the greatest football (soccer) players to ever grace the pitch. At 14 years old, Lily was already showcasing her skills for one of England's top football teams. When World War I erupted, however, her life took an unexpected turn. This captivating book delves into how Lily and her fellow teammates challenged societal norms and proved that women deserved the right to play football.

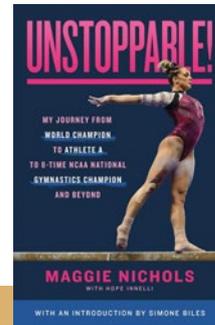
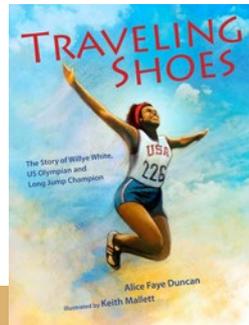
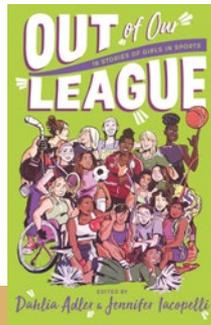


**5 LION ON THE INSIDE** BY BILQIS ABDUL-QAADIR AND JUDITH HENDERSON, ILLUSTRATED BY KATHERINE AHMED  
.....

*Kids Can Press (September 2023)*

**Grade Level: K-3**

*Lion on the Inside* tells the true story of trailblazing Muslim American basketball player Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir, who fought to earn a place on the court for women wearing hijabs. Follow her journey from basketball enthusiast to star athlete to activist, when she chose to walk away from professional basketball because the international rules wouldn't allow her to wear her hijab. Since then, Bilqis has dedicated her time to advocating for young Muslim women in sports.



**7 TRAVELING SHOES** BY ALICE FAYE DUNCAN, ILLUSTRATED BY KEITH MALLETT  
.....

*Calkins Creek (October 2023)*

**Grade Level: 2-5**

*Traveling Shoes* looks at the life of track and field athlete Willye B. White, who won medals in the Olympic games of 1956 and 1964. Through a spectacular combination of poetry, prose, and illustrations, young readers learn how Willye went from working in the Mississippi cotton fields to competing overseas in the Olympics.

**8 UNSTOPPABLE!** BY MAGGIE NICHOLS  
.....

*Roaring Brook Press (January 2024)*

**Grade Level: 9-12**

In her inspirational memoir, elite-level gymnast Maggie Nichols shares her story of abuse under the U.S. national gymnastics team, and how she managed to redefine herself in the face of adversity. Her memoir covers the sexual abuse scandal that took place behind the scenes in one of America's most celebrated sports institutions, and how Maggie risked everything for justice. It is a tale of hope, trauma, and, ultimately, triumph.



**GLOBAL ISSUES:**

# Sustainability

By Peggy Lunn

**GRADE LEVEL:**  
MIDDLE (7-10)

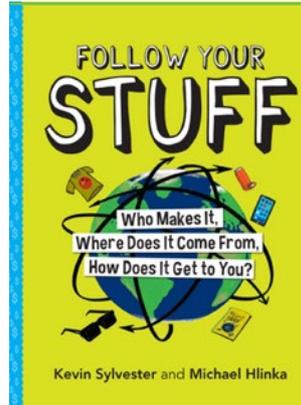
**THEME:**  
GLOBAL ISSUES

**SUB-THEME:**  
GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

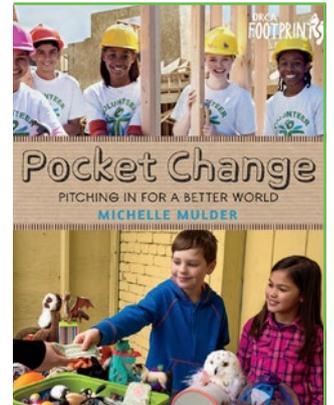
 **FEATURED BOOKS**



*Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines* by Paul Fleischman (Penguin Random House, 2014)



*Follow Your Stuff: Who Makes It, Where Does It Come From, How Does It Get to You?* by Kevin Sylvester and Michael Hlinka (Annick Press, 2019)



*Pocket Change: Pitching In for a Better World* by Michelle Mulder (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)

 **LEARNING FOCUS**

Using non-fiction texts students will:

- Connect a consumer product with its production path
- Recognize the impact of consumerism on the global village
- Identify the role they play in sustainability goals

 **LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

MINDS ON PROVOCATION

Ask students to bring in a piece of their favourite clothing. When the class has assembled their clothing pieces, look at the tags. (Alternate Strategy: If you are concerned about students in the class who may be facing homelessness, food insecurity, or other monetary concerns it might be best to create a slide deck with images of clothing and the associated tags, rather than potentially place a student



in a position of harm due to the acknowledgement of their situation by their peers.) Have students consider the following questions: Where was the article of clothing made? Which company created it?

Generate a tally chart of the various countries where clothing was made using a tool of the teacher's choice (i.e. paper and markers, Google Sheet, etc.)

**Discussion Question:** How did that item get from where it was made to being in your possession, now?

Watch these videos from Curio as a further provocation option:

- [Fighting back against fast fashion](#)
- [Clothing Waste: Fashion's dirty secret](#)

### READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

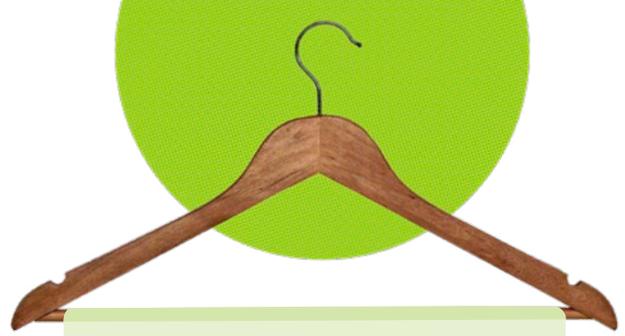
Working in pairs, small groups, or individually, students will:

- Select one of the five consumer items highlighted in the book *Follow Your Stuff*, read the section, and follow its journey from source to finished project.
- Information Literacy Extension: students can also utilize the references or additional resource suggestions in the book itself to learn how to locate and use non-fiction text features like appendices, references, and other back material.
- Work with a set of guiding benchmarks to target their information retrieval, for example: place of resource extraction, place of manufacture, vendor/sales formats, and venues.
- Create a paper or electronic map charting the various steps in the manufacturing, transportation, and delivery of products using information provided in the book.
- Consider the impact of the production of these products on global sustainability and investigate possible alternatives: What if these products were produced in Canada? What changes would that bring about?
- Students may also choose to investigate the methods of production in the places of origin and consider the human rights impacted by the production of these products.

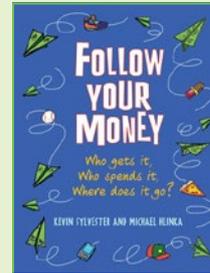
**Digital tools:** Google Earth

### MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

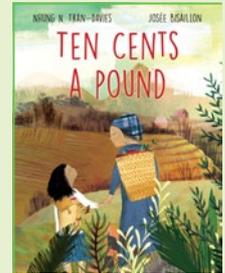
Students will use a presentation app or tool of their choice to demonstrate their item's journey (i.e. Google Maps: Transit and Food, Google Lit Trips, Explain Everything interactive whiteboard, or others recommended by [Common Sense Media](#)).



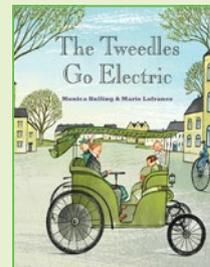
### ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS TO SUPPORT THIS SUB-THEME



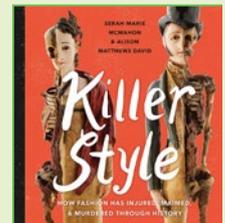
*Follow Your Money: Who Gets It, Who Spends It, Where Does It Go?* by Kevin Sylvester and Michael Hlinka (Annick Press, 2013)



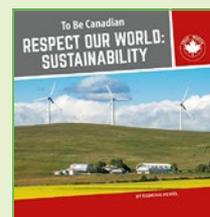
*Ten Cents a Pound* by Nhung N. Tran-Davies, illustrated by Josée Bisailon (Second Story Press, 2018)



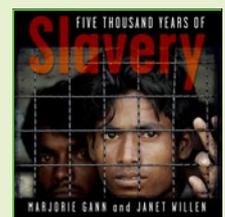
*The Tweedles Go Electric* by Monica Kulling, illustrated by Marie LaFrance (Groundwood Books, 2014)



*Killer Style: How Fashion Has Injured, Maimed, and Murdered Throughout History* by Serah-Marie McMahon and Alison Matthews David, illustrated by Gillian Wilson (Owlkids Books, 2019)



*To Be Canadian: Respect Our World: Sustainability* by Ramona Heikel (Beech Street Books, 2018)



*Five Thousand Years of Slavery* by Marjorie Gann and Janet Willen (Tundra Books 2011)



## REFLECT AND CONNECT

Alone or in their pairs or small groups, students share their respective items' journeys with their class using presentation software.

Students individually write a reflective response piece about what new information they have learned, what they are still curious about, and what changes they may apply to their own consumption/disposal behaviours.



## ADAPTATIONS FOR THIS LESSON

- **Junior (4-6) Approach:** Using *Ten Cents a Pound* as a provocation, students could explore the far-reaching social impacts of international trade on families around the world.
- **Intermediate/Senior Inquiry:** As Canadian consumers in a global community, we need to be aware of the impact of our purchasing choices. Young people are significant consumers and their demand for the newest fashion and electronics extends beyond their own homes and experiences and impacts people around the world. A deeper inquiry will help young consumers recognize the pathway from production to purchase, the origin and impact of manufactured goods on countries around the world, and the sustainability, environmental, and human impacts of consumerism. Students could also investigate/compare global sustainability goals and human rights in Canada against its major trading partners.



## MORE RESOURCES

Along with the video resources mentioned in Minds On Provocation, teachers may want to showcase other fiction or non-fiction print resources for students at a variety of reading and comprehension levels, to further their thinking or understanding of the issue or places they are curious about, and to aid in the development of Reflect and Connect creations.

- [\*Frieda Makes a Difference: The Sustainable Development Goals and How You Too Can Change the World\*](#) (United Nations Publications, 2019)
- United Nations [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- United Nations [Support Sustainable Development and Climate Action](#)
- [Canadian Resources to Support Inquiry Learning](#)





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**Angela** | 4y | Domestic Shorthair  
Location: Haryana, India  
Parent: Neelam R.  
*Loving, Princess, Shy*



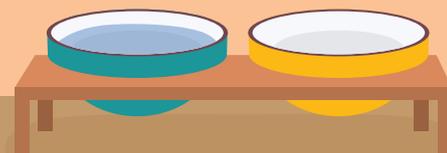
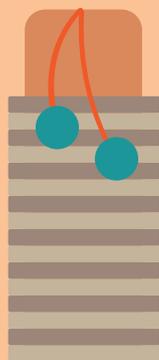
**Minnie** | 1y | Domestic Shorthair  
Location: Haryana, India  
Parent: Neelam R.  
*Goofball, Mama's Boy, Talkative*



**Otto** | 3y | German Mittelspitz  
Location: Ski, Norway  
Parent: Nani T.  
*Fluffy, Mischievous, Needy*



**Sophie** | 8y | Chihuahua/Shih Tzu Mix  
Location: Saskatchewan, Canada  
Parent: Lloyd L.  
*Affectionate, Clever, Patient*



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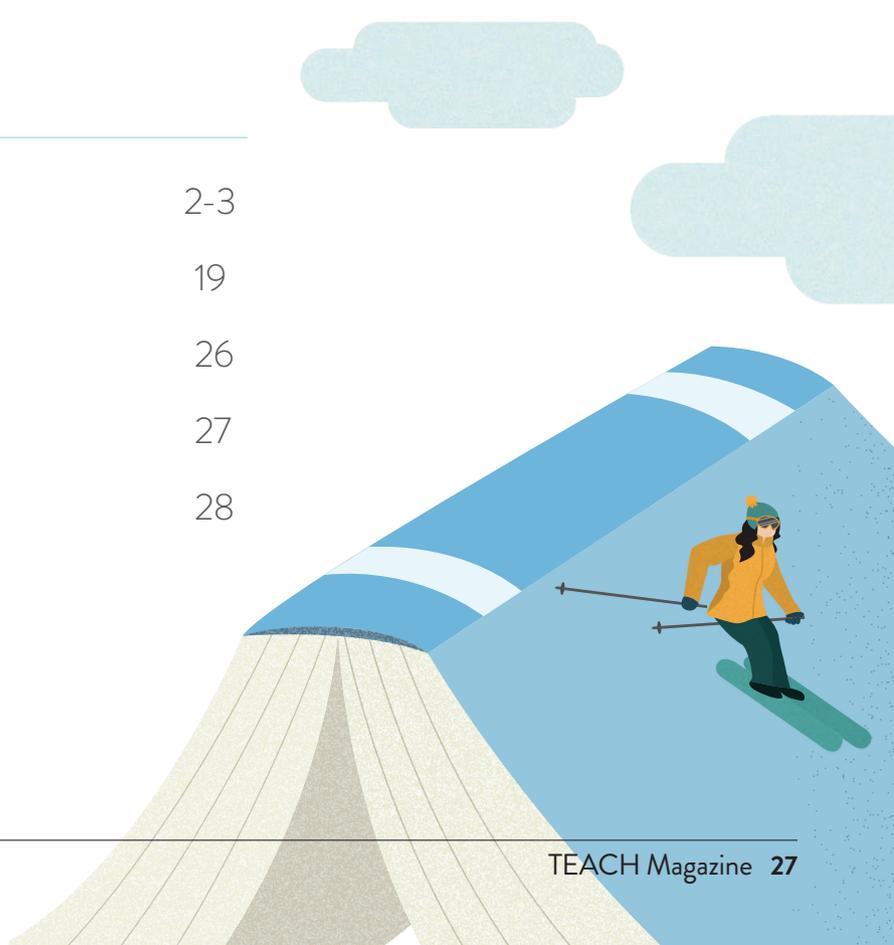
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This is not easily achieved, says Cassie Tabrizi, CEO of educational consultancy, Create-abilities. "It can be incredibly easy to treat lesson planning like a checklist. Objective: check. Standards: check. Activity: check," she says. Education experts say there is a better way. A thoughtful lesson plan can encourage exploration, freeing kids to speak in their own voices and infusing creativity into the learning process. Parents and teachers see the value in this: Gallup research found 87 percent of teachers and 77 percent of parents say teaching that incorporates creativity in the learning process has a bigger payoff for students.

**FIRST STEPS**

In order for students to find their own unique voices, they first need to feel their voices are valid. Before settling down to craft the lesson plan, teachers need to make an upfront investment in relationship-building.

"Whether it's through surveys or one-on-one interviews, you have to know who is in your classroom in order to create an environment in which they will take risks for self-discovery," says Roswena Shurn, senior policy analyst and program specialist at the National Education Association.

Shurn taught in Prince George's County, MD schools for 14 years, and found that this early effort paid dividends when she moved on to the actual lesson planning. "You take that information—who they are, what they are interested in—and you have that profile in front of you when you make your lesson plan," she says. "It's what allows your students to show up as their authentic selves."

Deborah Poulos is a teacher with over 27 years experience and the author of *The Conscious Teacher*. She studied every student's cumulative record files at the start of every year, and built that knowledge into her lesson planning. "I had strategies to individualize and differentiate so I could meet students at their levels," she says. "They knew I thought they were important."

**PLAN FOR CHOICES**

How to write a lesson plan that empowers those valued individuals to speak in their own voices? Step 1: Give them choices. Students learn in different ways, and the lesson plan needs to reflect that individuality.

When Wright gives out a persuasive writing assignment, for example, she keeps it loose. "It can't



always be five paragraphs, five sentences in each paragraph," she says. "You can get the same amount of information from them if you let them do it in different ways. They can create a commercial, they can create a blog, they can [create vlogs]. I just need to see that they can make a persuasive argument."

At The Avery Coonley School in suburban Chicago, second grade teacher Sarah Batzel even finds ways to make math an open-ended exercise. "Let's say I want to talk about fractions. I give them patterned blocks and ask them to build a figure that represents 'one-third.' They grapple with the concept, but there is more than one way of doing it," she says. "They make their own choices."

She did the same in science class, as kids designed their own glue. "We tested corn starch, we tested flour, then the children got to design their own mixture in their own way, using the data we had collected," she says.

It's that combination of data—of facts, information, and a clearly-defined end product—that keeps this kind of open-ended work from becoming a free-for-all. "Parameters foster creativity," Batzel says. "It's not just 'go make a shape.' There is real math in there, and they work within that."

Shurn builds her lesson plans on a tic-tac-toe approach: Eight ways of mastering the information (pick your own) plus a blank square if none of the others appeal to you. "Some people can demonstrate their abilities visually. Another student may be more kinesthetic, so

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