**Themes**

Do Your Best  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Encourage Others

Vashti leaves art class with a blank piece of paper believing that she can’t draw. With the encouraging words from her teacher, she starts with something very simple – a dot – and begins to realize that when she takes a step towards doing her best - she begins an amazing journey of self-discovery and acceptance of her uniqueness.

**Teacher Note:** NED reminds kids to do their best at everything!  
“Even if you can’t do something as great as someone else – you should always try to do YOUR personal best. That’s what makes you a champion!”

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**Before Reading: Discussion Starters**

1. Think about something one of your friends can do really well. How does it feel to not be able to do it as well as they can do it? **Answers will vary.** Don’t try anymore. Keep working at it. Allow students an opportunity to share.

2. How does it feel to “Do Your Best” and have it not be as good as someone else? **Answers will vary.** Encourage them to see the importance of doing your personal best and realizing that we each have unique strengths.

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**After Reading: Discussion Starters**

1. Why was Vashti’s paper blank at the end of class? Was she NED-like? **She did not feel she was an artist and instead of trying, she did nothing. She was NOT like NED – she DID give up and she DIDN’T do her best.**

2. Identify and discuss the different feelings, emotions and attitudes that Vashti showed throughout the story. **Share WHY you think she felt the way she did at that moment. Use illustrations, story and inference to discuss and support answers.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene in story</th>
<th>Feelings/Emotions/Attitudes</th>
<th>Supported by</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting at table with blank piece of paper</td>
<td>Sad, Angry, Disgusted, Depressed, Frustrated</td>
<td>Turns her back to the paper, Head on hands, Eyebrows arched, No smile, Not amused by teacher’s funny comments</td>
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Chart continues on next page
The Dot
by Peter H. Reynolds

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Scene in Story | Feelings/Emotions/Attitudes | Supported by
--- | --- | ---
Marking the paper | Mad, aggressively compliant Unhappy Prove her point | “Grabs” the marker Doesn’t turn around in chair Arched eyebrow Simple communication - “There!”
Signing the artwork | Ridiculed Made fun of | Arched eyebrows No smile “I CAN sign my name”
Seeing framed artwork | Surprised and shocked Motivated | “Hmmph” I can do better
Making new artwork | Determined Experimental Did her best | Paints and paints Tries new colors Smiles
Displaying her artwork | Proud Encourager | Smile Extends encouragement to someone else (line boy)

3. Does this story inspire you to “Do Your Best” at something you have given up on? Share your story with the class.

Writing Prompt
Journal Writing: Write a persuasive argument piece. Is it more important to DO your best or BE the best? Support your answers. Use the printable to aid students in organizing their arguments.

Activities
The Squiggly Line Divide students into groups of 3-5. This is a silent activity (you can thank us later)! Hand the group one piece of paper with a squiggly line on it. The first person has 60 seconds to do his/her best to create something using the line. Every 60 seconds, the paper and pencil is passed to the next person to do his/her best and keep the drawing growing. Students must add to what is drawn and not start something entirely new. Remind the student to not talk about what they are trying to draw. Provide encouraging words about discovery and experimentation as each person works on the drawing. Keep it rotating as long as interest is high and time permits. Have each student sign the drawing and hang your class masterpieces!

Resources
Accelerated Reading Quiz: 69954
Author Website: www.peterhreynolds.com/dot
“I Did My Best” Button
NED buttons are a great reward when students do their personal best! Visit www.thenedshow.com/shop_ned to purchase.

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Free lesson plans & resources at www.thenedshow.com/teachers
# Persuasive Writing Organizer

**Your Position**

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<th>Reason 2</th>
<th>Reason 3</th>
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**Support**

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**Conclusion**

Do your best to persuade someone!