



FOCUS on CHARACTER  
**Lesson Plans**

# Intermediate Lesson Plans

Ideal for Grades 3-6

**Every Lesson:**

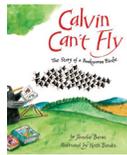
- Identifies key vocabulary and tricky phrasing
- Includes discussion starters and questions to check for understanding
- Features engaging writing prompts
- Includes activities and at least one printable activity or resource

Aligned to  
**Common Standards**

Every lesson plan aligns with grade-level standards in **Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening and Literacy.**  
Every lesson plan supports **ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.**

Seven book-based lesson plans that elaborate on the third letter of NED's name.

IDEAL FOR 3-6 INTERMEDIATE LESSON PLANS

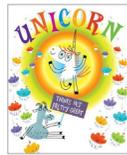


## Calvin Can't Fly

Jennifer Berne  
Illustrated by Keith Bendis

- **Everyone's Unique:** Identify and reflection chart (double-sided)

Do Your Best  
Never Give Up  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance



## Unicorn Thinks He's Pretty Great

Bob Shea

- **Story Planning:** Pre-write brainstorm
- **Peer Edit Guide:** Reference handout
- **When We Do Our Best:** Personal reflection with partners

Encouragement  
Boasting



## The Dot

Peter H. Reynolds

- **Graphic Organizer:** Persuasive Writing Organizer



## Better Than You

Trudy Ludwig  
Illustrated by Adam Gustavson

- **Personal Inventory:** Self-assessment
- **Class Survey:** Create a list to identify unique traits

IDEAL FOR K-2 PRIMARY LESSON PLANS



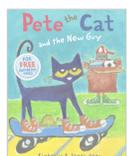
## Just a Duck?

Carin Bramsen



- **Photos of Animals:** Teaching aid
- **I Can Book:** Story retelling, personalization and writing practice
- **Art Collage:** Textural art project

Do Your Best  
Uniqueness of Me  
Friendship  
Compassion

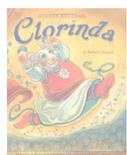


## Pete the Cat & the New Guy

Kimberly and James Dean

- **Writing Prompt:** Writing practice
- **Second Writing Prompt:** Writing practice

Self-Acceptance  
Never Give Up  
Determination



## Clorinda

Robert Kinerk  
Illustrated by Steven Kellogg

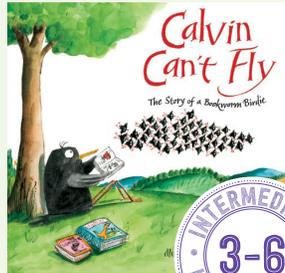
- **Writing Sheet:** Story telling and reflection
- **Good, Better, Best:** Self-Assessment

# Calvin Can't Fly

by Jennifer Berne and ill. by Keith Bendis

## Themes

Do Your Best  
Never Give Up  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Following Dreams  
Team Work



Calvin is a bird with 3 brothers, 4 sisters and 67,432 cousins. All the little starlings learn to swoop, hover, and fly figure eights but Calvin has different interests, different skills and different goals. Calvin eventually learns that he *can* do what the other birds do but that what he does best is just as important.

### Key Vocabulary

**Starling:** a black bird with dark, shiny feathers

**Eaves:** the lower part of the roof – usually sticks out beyond the wall of the building, making the perfect spot for a bird to build a nest

**Swoop:** to dive down suddenly from above

**Hover:** to stay very near to

**Soar:** to fly high with little effort

**Flutter:** to wave quickly back and forth or up and down

**Migration:** when a group moves away at the same time

**Formation:** a grouping (of birds)

**Teacher Note:** NED reminds kids that we each have our unique differences!

*“Just because we like to do different things and may even be better than other people at doing certain things – we each have things that we are best at. Sometimes we are able to get more done together because we each have unique strengths. 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!”*

## Before Reading: Discussion Starters

1. Have you ever felt different from those in your family?
2. Do your friends/family members do some things better than you do? Do you do some things better than your friends/family members? How does it feel?

## After Reading: Discussion Starters

1. How did Calvin’s discoveries differ from the other young starlings?  
*The starlings all discovered the same things-worms, grass, dirt and water. Calvin was the only one that discovered a book.*
2. What were the disadvantages of being different? Calvin wasn’t prepared to do the basic things birds do – fly! How did it impact Calvin? He was unprepared to migrate with the rest of the birds when it came time. Remind students that sometimes we have to do things – even if we don’t like them or want to – and it’s smart to “Do Your Best” at everything you do. How did it benefit Calvin? He was excited (his heart fluttered) to learn about all sorts of things. He loved what he was learning. He learned things that no one else knew. It made him happy to be in the library. How did it benefit all the starlings in the end? His book knowledge allowed him to identify storm warning signals and save the birds from disaster.

### Aligned to Common Standards

For correlation information for all of our lesson plans, please visit [theNEDshow.com/lessonplans](http://theNEDshow.com/lessonplans)

# Calvin Can't Fly

by Jennifer Berne and ill. by Keith Bendis

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Do Your Best  
Never Give Up  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Following Dreams  
Team Work

3. How did the starlings react to Calvin being unique? What was Calvin's response? They called him names. How did it make Calvin feel? Calvin ruffled his feathers (talk about how that phrase means to be upset). He was sad and escaped to where he was happy – the library. How could NED have encouraged Calvin? If the birds had been NED-like, they would have encouraged his desire to want to read about all those topics but talk to him about why he needed to learn how to fly NOW. They did tell him he only had a couple of days to learn. When the formation took off – Calvin felt lonely. He had a tear roll down his cheek.
4. Have you ever felt lonely because what you could do best was so different from what your friends could do best? Answers will vary.
5. Why did Calvin's brothers, sisters and cousins come back for him? Answers will vary as kids make inferences. They loved him. They cared for him. They didn't want him to be mad at them. They thought maybe they might need him in the future. They were told to. It was the NED thing to do!
6. Did Calvin do his best to learn the important things a starling needs to do? What could he have done differently? Calvin did not do his best. He did not practice swooping soaring. He did not attend his lessons. Calvin could have done both – some bird practice and book reading.
7. In the end, what Calvin did best (read and gain knowledge) saved the rest of the birds. How did they feel about Calvin? They believed him and listened to his advice. After the storm passed, they honored Calvin. They celebrated together when Calvin realized that he too could fly.
8. Do you think Calvin kept being the best at reading? Why or why not. Answers will vary. Maybe – he loved it so much! Other starlings might have learned to read as well – maybe even better than Calvin! It wouldn't matter as long as Calvin did HIS personal best.

## Writing Prompt

"Oh, how the wounding words of scorn do sting!" Write about a time that someone's words hurt you. What would you tell them about being more NED-like?

## Activities

**Everyone is different and important!** Write and draw your response to the questions, using the double-sided printable.

**Move Like a Bird!** Give your brain a break and do some movement that is most likely not what you would typically do:

- Ruffle your feathers
- Jump, hop, dance, flap wings
- Loop-de-loop left with your head
- Dipsy-doodle right with your arm

PRINTABLE:

Everyone is Different and Important -2 pgs

Resources

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 141886  
Author Website: [www.jenniferberne.com](http://www.jenniferberne.com)

"I Did My Best" Button

NED buttons are a great reward when students do their personal best! Visit [www.thenedshow.com/shop\\_ned](http://www.thenedshow.com/shop_ned) to purchase.





Draw a picture of  
**Starlings**

Draw a picture of  
**Calvin**

Draw a picture of  
**You**

Draw a picture of  
**A Friend**

What 67,432 starlings do best:

What Calvin does best:

What you do best:

What he/she does best:

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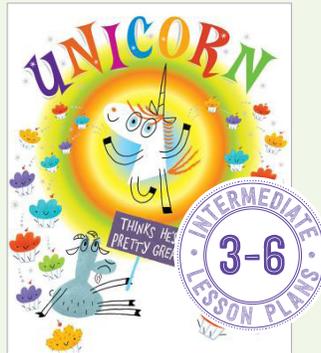
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# Unicorn Thinks He's Pretty Great

by Bob Shea

## Themes

Do Your Best  
Never Give Up  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Encourage Others  
Friendships



Goat tells the story of how things changed when Unicorn arrived in town. Unicorn could do so many things better than everyone else....and Unicorn knows it! Throughout this whimsical and witty tale, Goat discovers that if you combine Unicorn's magic with Goat's awesomeness – they could be an unstoppable “Do Your Best” team!

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

## Before Reading: Discussion Starters

1. What does it mean to “show off”?
2. How does it feel when someone “shows off”?

## After Reading: Discussion Starters

1. **Make a list of events in the story. Discuss Goat's feelings and attitude at each event.**  
*Answers will vary. Encourage students to list as many different emotion words as they can.*
  - Mad (things changed when unicorn moved in)
  - Proud (when he felt cool riding bike to school)
  - Insignificant (when unicorn flew by to get to school)
  - Excited (when dancing in talent show)
2. **Make a list of feelings that UNICORN had throughout the story.**  
*Answers will vary*
3. **Why did Goat say “I can't follow that” in the talent show?**  
*He thought Unicorn's talent was better than his. He didn't feel his best was as good as Unicorn's best.*
4. **How did Goat react to Unicorn? Goat called Unicorn names, mimicked him and made rude comments about others who befriended him. How could Goat have been more like NED?**  
*Answers will vary. How did Unicorn react to Goat? Unicorn appeared to be unaware of the problems he was causing for Goat. Once Unicorn discovered a unique ability of Goat, he was full and praise and encouragement for Goat. He talked about how he struggled with some of the very abilities that others thought were so amazing (like eating glitter and rainbows on a sensitive stomach).*
5. **Discuss how each person's “best” is not the same. Help students to see that our unique gifts and things we are BEST at can work together for good – like in the story.**

## Aligned to Common Standards

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# Unicorn Thinks He's Pretty Great

by Bob Shea

## Themes

Never Give Up  
Determination  
Perseverance  
Overcoming Obstacles  
Problem Solving  
Acceptance  
Empathy/Compassion

PRINTABLE:

Story Planning

PRINTABLE:

Peer Edit Guide

PRINTABLE:

When we do our best

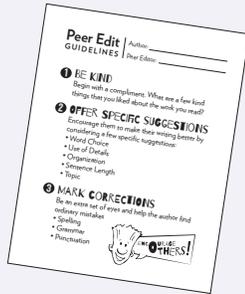
## Resources

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 159163  
Author Website: [www.bobshea.com](http://www.bobshea.com)

## NED's Peer REVIEW PROCESS

A peer edit, with clear guidelines for students to give positive feedback and suggestions on each other's work, will motivate and encourage your student writers.

1. BE KIND
2. OFFER SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS
3. MARK CORRECTIONS



## 6. Discuss how it feels to know you are doing your best?

Answers will vary. Sense of personal satisfaction. No self-judgment. No regrets

## 7. Will your BEST always be the same?

Answers will vary. Your best will get better. Your best changes from moment to moment.

## Writing Prompt

Why is it important to “Do Your Best,” even when no one is looking?

## Activities

### Writing Activity: Innovate on the Story

Using the printable story planner, instruct students to choose two new animals as the main characters in their story. Select animals based on unique characteristics and abilities of each animal. Using the same writing framework as the story, students can write a unique version of this story.

Use the Peer Editing Guide printable to revise story drafts. Students can then illustrate their stories.

Share your work! Send a copy of your published work to The NED Show! We love to see student work and may feature it on our web page or other social media sites.

Attn: Books  
All for KIDZ - Creative Department  
20700 44th Avenue W Ste 220  
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Or, email us at [creative@allforkidz.com](mailto:creative@allforkidz.com). Note: We aren't able to return stories.

### When we “Do Our Best”

Arrange students in partners. Using the printable sheet, partners can identify their personal “bests” and how they could blend them to be better together.

### “I Did My Best” Button

NED buttons are a great reward when students do their personal best! Visit [www.thenedshow.com/shop\\_ned](http://www.thenedshow.com/shop_ned) to purchase.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# PROJECT PLANNING SHEET

Choose two new animals as the main characters in your story. Select your animals based on unique characteristics and abilities of each animal. Using the same writing framework as the story *Unicorn Thinks He's Pretty Great*, write your own unique version of this story.

TITLE		
SETTING		
CHARACTERS	#1	#2
unique features		
unique abilities		

#1 does something pretty cool	
#2 does something cooler	
#1 does something that is okay	
#2 does something that is perfect	
#1 does something well	
#2 does the same thing even better	
#1 reacts (not like NED!)	
#2 sees something wonderful about #1	
#2 sees few more things wonderful about #1	
#1 compliments #2 on something #2 can do	
#2 compliments #1 on something #1 can do	
They decide together they will be an unstoppable team at ....	
#1 and #2 each contribute to the team by...	
#1 and #2 become friends and...	



# Peer Edit GUIDELINES

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer Editor: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 BE KIND

Begin with a compliment. What are a few kind things that you liked about the work you read?

## 2 OFFER SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

Encourage them to make their writing better by considering a few specific suggestions:

- Word Choice
- Use of Details
- Organization
- Sentence Length
- Topic

## 3 MARK CORRECTIONS

Be an extra set of eyes and help the author find ordinary mistakes

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation



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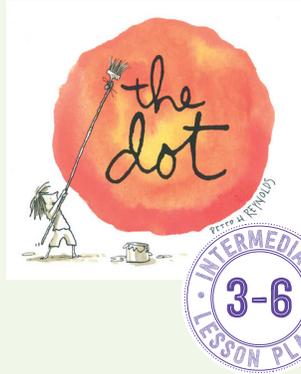


# The Dot

by Peter H. Reynolds

## 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!”*

## 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.*

## 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.

Scene in story	Feelings/Emotions/Attitudes	Supported by
Sitting at table with blank piece of paper	Sad Angry Disgusted Depressed Frustrated	Turns her back to the paper Head on hands Eyebrows arched No smile Not amused by teacher's funny comments

*Chart continues on next page*

Aligned to  
**Common Standards**

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by Peter H. Reynolds

## Themes

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Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Encourage Others

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	“Hmmp” 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

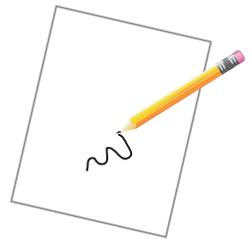
PRINTABLE:

Graphic Organizer

**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](http://www.peterhreynolds.com/dot)

### “I Did My Best” Button

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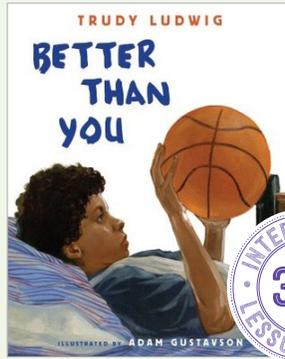


## Better Than You

by Trudy Ludwig and illustrated by Adam Gustavson

### Themes

Do Your Best  
Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Boasting  
Encourage Others  
Friendships



Everything Tyler says or does, Jake says he can do it better. Tyler soon feels like he shouldn't even try to do anything until his Uncle Kevin jumps in with some advice. He helps Tyler understand that Jake's bragging has nothing to do with his own abilities. This true-to-life story shows how boasting and bragging is no way to make and keep friends and encourages kids to be accepting of "doing your best" rather than "being the best".

**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 do YOUR personal best. That's what makes you a champion at school and in life!"

### Before Reading: Discussion Starters

1. What is more important, to do your best or be your best? *Answers will vary*
2. How does it feel to be around someone who is always better than you? *Answers will vary*

### After Reading: Discussion Starters

1. How does Tyler feel when he has to do something that he isn't very good at, like the math test? *Hands get sweaty, brain turns to mush, says "I am stupid", says "Test is stupid". He isn't very encouraging to himself!*
2. What do you do when you aren't very good at something?  
*Answers will vary. Allow students to talk about their experiences and share their personal responses to struggles.*
3. Is Jake NEDlike? What could he have done to be more like NED?  
*He does NOT encourage Tyler – he brags about his own abilities and makes Tyler feel worse. NED would have seen Tyler doing his very best and encouraged him to keep trying and not give up.*
4. What was Tyler's problem with Jake?  
*Jake kept rubbing it in his face that he could do things better than Tyler. This made Tyler feel inferior to Jake. Tyler started to isolate himself rather than face the embarrassment.*
5. Is it wrong to be proud of your own accomplishments?  
*Answers will vary. NO! just make sure you are not demeaning to others. Discuss appropriate ways to be proud of yourself.*

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## Better Than You

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### Themes

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Uniqueness of Me  
Self-Acceptance  
Boasting  
Encourage Others  
Friendships

#### 6. Who had the problem – Tyler or Jake?

*Tyler wasn't alone in his feeling about Jake. He treated others the same way. He bragged and boasted with all his friends. Help students to understand that when someone has a "better than you" attitude, it is NOT about you. Everyone has things they are BEST at...just keep doing YOUR best and your best will get better.*

#### 7. Explain why Uncle Kevin said Jake was like a puffer fish.

*A puffer fish puffs up his body to make himself bigger than he actually is. It protects him from enemies because he looks bigger. When the puffer fish gets really big – it pushes other fishes out of the way. Jake was puffing up with pride which resulted in pushing away all the friends around him.*

#### 8. Why do you think Jake needed to puff himself up when he's with his friends?

*Answers will vary. Lack of confidence, lack of attention, lack of praise for his accomplishments, jealousy, one-upmanship attitude from sports, etc.*

#### 9. Does failure mean you didn't do your best?

*Answers will vary. Failure is so important to growth. What did you learn? What can you do differently? Help students to understand that when you do your best and fail – you are just one step closer to success.*

### Activities

PRINTABLE:

Personal Inventory

PRINTABLE:

Class Survey

**Personal Inventory** Take a personal inventory of your strengths and weaknesses. Need help? Ask a friend, teacher, parent what they see in you!

**Class Survey** Create a class survey to see who is best at different things in your class! Make a long list of **actions**, **attitudes** or **attributes** and then have each student complete the survey and compare results. **TEACHER NOTE:** Encourage use of character traits in the list (Examples: curiosity, loves learning, kindness, compassion, determination, etc) as well as specific skills like baseball, art, music.

**ABC Book Activity:** Create an ABC Book about you and things you do your best at. Come up with a word or phrase for each letter of the alphabet! It's ok to be creative with spelling...*Xciting!*

**Positive Posters** Design posters for your school that remind kids to do their best at the things they do at school. Examples: Do your Best when taking a Test!



### Resources

Accelerated Reading Quiz: 146250  
Author Website: [www.trudyludwig.com](http://www.trudyludwig.com)

#### "I Did My Best" Button

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Personal Strengths

1

2

3

Personal Weaknesses

1

2

3

How can I become better at my weaknesses?

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How can I become even better at my strengths?

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