

Story Summary

Benjamin the blue-footed booby is coming of age in his flock's world of flying, diving, swimming, and fishing. But he already has a unique gift: treasure-hunting. One day, after finding a mirror, Benjamin becomes convinced that his beak is too long, his wings are too wide, and his feet are too big and blue. He decides to use his treasures to change himself.

But without his beak, wings, and feet, is he even a blue-footed booby anymore?

Links:

Plaine Products Blog—"Children's Books About Plastic Pollution":

<https://www.plaineproducts.com/childrens-books-about-plastic-pollution/>

Galapagos Conservancy:

<https://www.galapagos.org/>

Galapagos Islands Virtual Field Trip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY6eD0IAJVQ>

"Plastic Pollution—What's the Problem?":

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/kids-vs-plastic/article/pollution-1>

Pair this book with:

It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr

Sue Macartney's creative style as an author-illustrator has been shaped by life on four continents and work as a graphic designer and children's art educator. She has a deep love of nature and lives in Victoria, British Columbia with her husband and a backyard full of birds. *Benjamin's Blue Feet* is Sue's first picture book.

Illustrated Book Ages 3–7 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-111-3 | Pages: 32

THEMES

Sense of Self, Conservation, Ecosystems

BISAC CODES

JUV002040 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Birds

JUV039140 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Self-Esteem & Self-Reliance

JUV039090 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / New Experience

JUV019000 JUVENILE FICTION / Humorous Stories

READING LEVEL

Lexile Measure: AD570L | Fountas & Pinnell: K

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Comprehension—read-aloud, infer, predict, make connections

Physical education—movement

Health—sense of self

Social studies—mapping

Science—animal research, conservation, pollution

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

ACTIVITY	MAIN SUBJECT AREAS	SPECIFIC SKILLS
Read-Aloud	Comprehension	Activate prior knowledge Infer, predict, and make connections
The Benjamin Game	Physical Education	Movement
You Do You!	Health	Sense of self
Celebrate the Galapagos!	Social Studies Science	Mapping Animal research project
Oceanic Plastic Disaster	Science	Pollution Conservation

THE READ-ALoud

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand texts
- demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences

You Will Need

- *Benjamin's Blue Feet*

How To:

Before Reading

Show the "Creatures of the Galapagos" page at the beginning. Invite students to point out any animals they are familiar with.

During Reading

First spread: Read expressively.

Second spread: After reading, invite students to identify the items Benjamin has found.

Third spread: After reading, invite students to identify what Benjamin has found. Ask if they have ever seen any similar items at the beach and what they did about it.

Fourth spread: After reading, ask, "How is Benjamin feeling? How can you tell?"

Fifth spread: Read expressively.

Sixth spread: Invite students to tell how they feel about Benjamin's idea.

Seventh spread: Invite students to tell how they feel about Benjamin's new idea.

Eighth spread: Invite students to predict what might happen next.

Ninth through fifteenth spreads: Read expressively. Invite response at the end. Ask students to explain how Benjamin's individual differences served an important purpose for him. Invite students to share some individual differences that people might have.

After Reading

Read and discuss the final page about Trash in the Ocean.



ACTIVITY I: THE BENJAMIN GAME

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity, with appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities

You Will Need

- *Benjamin's Blue Feet*
- index cards
- gym space
- hula hoops
- blue socks

How To:

1. Put on bright blue socks to get into character!
2. In the classroom, enlist students' help to come up with physical actions to match some of the bold nonsense words found in *Benjamin's Blue Feet*. Write them on cards. For example:
 - **string stretch-it:** hold onto a partner's hands and pull, or sit with legs stretched out while stretching to your toes
 - **hole thing-um:** twirl hula hoop
 - **twink-um doodle:** stand facing a partner and copy (mirror) their actions, then switch
 - **flap and honk:** flap arms while running around honking
 - **wobble waddle:** do a penguin walk (keep knees touching)
 - **kick-flip:** can-can kicks
 - **flap-slap:** straight arms overhead, then bring them down to slap hips/thighs
 - **wriggle-wriggle:** do the twist
 - **joggle-jiggle:** full-body jiggle
 - **churn-turn:** twirl in place
 - **worm-squirm:** inch-worm crawl
3. In the gym, as a warm-up, have students practice the actions slowly as you call them out from the cards in the order that they appear in the book.
4. Put on some moderate music and again call out the actions in order, leading students to dance the actions.
5. Switch to faster music and dance the actions in order faster.
6. Pretend to drop the cards and frantically call out actions out of order to fast music.
7. Again call out actions out of order, but with slower music to cool down
8. Finish cooling down by having students perform a few of the least active actions (e.g. string stretch-it, twink-um doodle, flap-slap) to gentle music.

ACTIVITY 2: You Do You!

Celebrate individual differences!

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- develop self-awareness and self-confidence
- demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences
- communicate their thoughts and feelings through art

You Will Need

- *Benjamin's Blue Feet*
- *It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr
- Other picture books about self-image (e.g. *Lili Macaroni* by Nicole Testa; *French Toast* by Kari-Lynn Winters; *I Love My Hair!* by Natasha Tarpley)

How To:

1. After reading *Benjamin's Blue Feet* at least once, read *It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr. Invite students to list the ways in which Benjamin was different and encourage them to affirm that it's okay for Benjamin to be like that.
2. Together with students, make a Todd Parr-style book about Benjamin. It might contain pages like, "It's okay to be a treasure-hunter," "It's okay to have a long, straight beak," "It's okay to have bristly wings," and of course, "It's okay to have blue feet."
3. Read other books that show characters coming to terms with their individuality. Discuss their unique characteristics and affirm that it's okay for the character to be that way. Invite students to each make a page for a Todd Parr-style book about that character. For example, a book about Lili Macaroni might include, "It's okay to have a freckly nose," "It's okay to have blueberry eyes," "It's okay to have a magical laugh," and "It's okay to like butterflies."
4. Invite students to each make a list of their own unique characteristics and choose one to illustrate. Have students make a line drawing of themselves in pencil. Outline their drawings in black marker and photocopy them to prevent smearing during coloring. Have students color the

photocopies using markers and write a phrase below the picture that begins, "It's okay to ..."

5. Discuss ways students can feel better if they begin to feel insecure about their own unique characteristics, such as self-talk, listing the things that make them special, or talking to a trusted adult.



ACTIVITY 3: CELEBRATE THE GALAPAGOS

Students will get to know and love the Galapagos Islands and its fauna and they will be all the more motivated to take action to save them when they get to Activity 4: Oceanic Plastic Disaster.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify the location of selected places around the world, and describe how their location and climate are related
- use scientific inquiry/research skills to investigate the basic needs, characteristics, behaviour, and adaptations of an animal of their choice

You Will Need

- *Benjamin's Blue Feet*
- internet
- Keyword Sheet blackline master (included at the end of this teaching guide)
- drawing materials

How To:

1. On world maps, globes, and digital maps, locate the Galapagos Islands and your own community. Use street view to take a virtual tour of the Charles Darwin Scientific Station and other places of interest. Be sure to point out that the Galapagos are on the equator, as is the country which administers them, *Ecuador*, which is Spanish for equator. Find the latitude of your community and discuss the relationship between climate and distance from the equator.

2. Introduce research into the Galapagos Islands using this 7-minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY6eD0IAJVQ>

Visit the Galapagos Conservancy website, which contains information on the blue-footed booby and other Galapagos species. It also contains video links and a link to the kid-started Blue Feet Foundation, which raises money for research by selling bright blue socks: <https://www.galapagos.org/>

Additional information can be found on these websites:

Britannica Kids—Galápagos Islands:

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Gal%C3%A1pagos-Islands/353160>

National Geographic Kids—“NG Kids Head to the Galápagos Islands!”:

<https://www.natgeokids.com/ie/discover/geography/countries/ng-kids-heads-to-the-galapagos-islands/>

Kiddle—“Galápagos Islands facts for kids”:

https://kids.kiddle.co/Gal%C3%A1pagos_Islands

Study—“Galapagos Islands Facts: Lessons for Kids”:

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/galapagos-islands-facts-lesson-for-kids.html>

3. Have each student research one of the animals shown on the endpapers of Benjamin's Blue Feet or mentioned in a video or article you have shared. Use a gradual release of responsibility model:

- Modeled/shared information gathering
- Guided/independent information gathering
- Modeled/shared writing
- Guided/independent writing
- Editing

- Modeled/shared graphic presentation
- Independent/guided graphic presentation
- Modeled/shared oral presentation
- Independent oral presentation

These steps are outlined in great detail in Activity 1 of the *Bat Citizens* teaching guide, and can be adapted to any animal (click “Teaching Guides” under the “Resources for this Title” side bar):

<https://pajamapress.ca/book/bat-citizens-defending-the-ninjas-of-the-night/>

4. Have students make portraits of Benjamin, using their own feet, incorporating some shapes they might be learning: First, they trace one of their shoes onto white construction paper, cut it out, and glue it onto a background of pale blue (or any color) paper, with the heel at the top. The heel will be Benjamin's head. Next, using illustrations from the book as inspiration, they cut skinny isosceles triangles of black construction paper and glue them on for the beak and wings. Then they cut rhombus or kite shapes from bright blue paper, for Benjamin's feet. Finally, they can use black crayon or marker to make eyes.
5. Have each student create a large portrait of the animal they researched, using a technique similar to the one described in step 4 if they wish. Use them in a bulletin board display celebrating the Galapagos.



ACTIVITY 4: OCEANIC PLASTIC DISASTER

After reading *Benjamin's Blue Feet* and doing further research into the problem of ocean plastic, students will be motivated to take action.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify personal action that they themselves can take to help maintain a healthy environment for living things
- describe how showing care and respect for all living things helps to maintain a healthy environment
- identify positive and negative impacts that different kinds of human activity have on animals and where they live

You Will Need

- *Benjamin's Blue Feet*
- internet
- additional picture books on ocean plastic—see list below in step 3

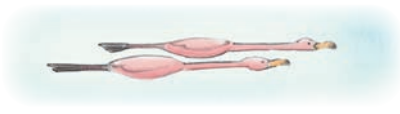
How To:

1. Read the Note about Trash in the Ocean at the end of the book. Ask if students know anything else about that topic. Start a K.W.L. (Know; Wonder; Learned) chart on the topic.
2. Guide students to learn more about ocean plastic. You might find the following links helpful. This video makes an entertaining introduction and includes links to additional resources in the description:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch/YFZS3Vh4fl>

This article is kid-friendly and includes links to many additional resources and activities:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/nature/kids-vs-plastic/article/pollution-1>



This page is geared to families but has lots of classroom-worthy ideas and would make a great home-school connection:

<https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/blog/2018/5/3/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-plastic-pollution-cartoons-books-and-activities-to-involve-the-whole-family>

And because research should always contain a balance of print and digital sources, check out this list of additional picture books:

<https://www.plaineproducts.com/childrens-books-about-plastic-pollution/>

3. After learning about a number of ways to help address the problem of ocean plastic in the course of their research, students will be ready to discuss which initiative they would like to contribute to. They might want to start a plastic-free lunch movement in the school, raise money for an ocean clean-up effort, or take a pledge to reduce plastic in their own lives, then keep a journal to track what they have done. Make a plan and take action!

This guide was created with support from Ontario Creates



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Bibliography

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18curr.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/arts18b09curr.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/social-studies-history-geography-2018.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/scientec18curr.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/healthcurr18.pdf>

https://files.ontario.ca/books/edu_the_kindergarten_program_english_aoda_web_oct7.pdf

Keyword Sheet

Animal: _____ Name: _____

Classification

Warm-blooded cold-blooded

mammal fish reptile bird amphibian invertebrate

Physical Characteristics

Size _____

Color _____

Body Covering _____

Eyes _____ Ears _____ Nose _____

Mouth _____ Tongue _____ Teeth _____

Legs _____ Tail _____ Other _____

Life Cycle

Babies _____

Later Changes _____

Adaptations

Behavior

Needs

Food _____

Water _____

Breathing _____

Habitat _____

Shelter _____

Bibliography

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____