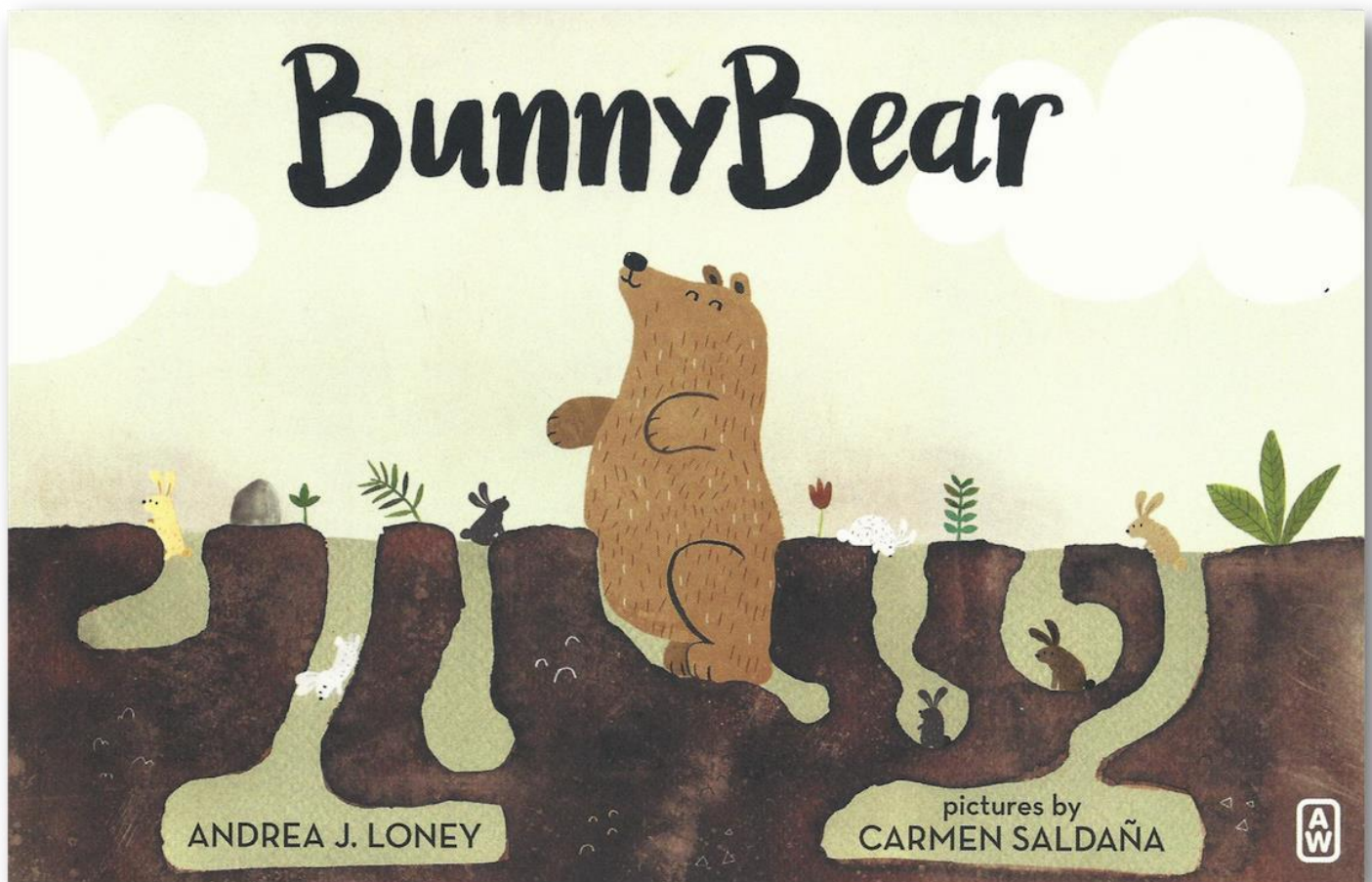


# Bunnybear

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen  
based upon the picture book  
written by Andrea J. Loney and illustrated by Carmen Saldaña



Published by  
Albert Whitman & Company

## **Andrea J. Loney, Author**

Andrea earned an MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University and then launched her entertainment career by running away with a traveling circus. Next, she spent several years writing for film and television in Hollywood. Finally, she became a teacher and fell in love with children's literature. Andrea lives in sunny Los Angeles, California with her towering stacks of picture books, her devoted family, and their embarrassingly spoiled pets. Learn more at [andreajloney.com](http://andreajloney.com).

## **Carmen Saldaña, Illustrator**

Carmen lives in Gijón, a small, rainy town in the north of Spain. As long as she can remember, she has always loved tales, children's books, painting, and drawing. After studying art, she worked in advertising agencies as a graphic designer and art director. Now she works full-time as an illustrator.

## **Marcie Colleen Curriculum Writer**

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a Masters in Educational Theater from New York University. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children's books, Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

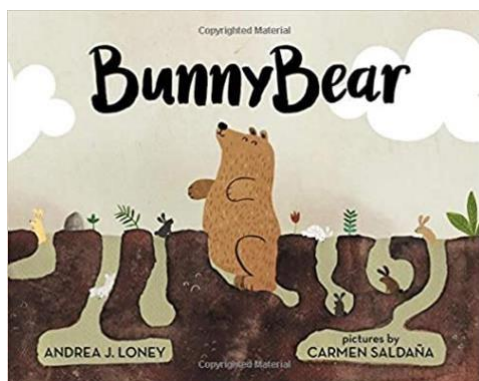
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## How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for Bunnybear is designed for students in kindergarten through fourth grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate Bunnybear into their curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in English Language Arts.



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**Author: Andrea J. Loney**

**Illustrator: Carmen Saldaña**

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Although Bunnybear was born a bear, he feels more like a bunny. He prefers bouncing in the thicket to tramping in the forest, and in his heart he's fluffy and tiny, like a rabbit, instead of burly and loud like a bear. The other bears don't understand him, and neither do the bunnies. Will Bunnybear ever find a friend who likes him just the way he is?

### Praise for Bunnybear

"Despite the lighthearted tone, Loney's story has important things to say about identity and acceptance, and is valuable both as entertainment and a conversation-starter." – Publisher's Weekly

"A sweet story of friendship and acceptance...the message of being true to one's nature is one many children need to hear." – Kirkus Reviews

"An engaging read...Bunnybear will be sure to endear himself to children, and teacher and parents will appreciate the sensitivity with which the book expresses the discord between internal and external identity to young readers." – School Library Journal

### Awards for Bunnybear

2018 ALA Rainbow Book List

2018 Storytelling World Resource Award Winner

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# English Language Arts

## **Reading Comprehension**

Before reading *Bunnybear*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, etc.

- Look at the cover illustration. Describe what you see.
- How many bunnies do you see?
- How would you describe the bear at the center of the cover?
- Mimic what the bear is doing. How does it make you feel?
- Look at the illustration on the back cover. Describe what you see.
- Read the text on the back cover. Can you guess what the story might be about?

Now read or listen to the book. Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about using the chart below.

- In your own words, explain why *Bunnybear* is considered “more than a bear.” Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- Why does *Bunnybear* give himself the name *Bunnybear*?
- How do the other bears react to *Bunnybear*?
- Why does *Bunnybear* leave his den?
- Describe what *Bunnybear* sees when he looks underground.
- At first, how do the bunnies react to *Bunnybear*?
- In your own words, explain why *Grizzlybun* is considered “more than a bunny.”
- *Bunnybear* tells *Grizzlybun* “you just look one way on the outside and feel another way on the inside.” What do you think he means?
- Why do you think *Grizzlybun* feels more like herself with *Bunnybear* around?
- Why do you think it’s important that Mama Bear and the elder bunny call their children *Bunnybear* and *Grizzlybun*?
- Why do you think *Bunnybear* finally felt like he belonged in the forest?

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>End</b>
<p>"There once was a bear who was more than a bear."</p> <p>Introduce Bunnybear:</p>       <p>Enter the conflict:</p> <p>"The other bears didn't understand Bunnybear."</p>	<p>Working to solve the conflict.</p> <p>Describe the problem Bunnybear faces and how he works to solve his problem:</p>       <p>The Climax, when everything changes or becomes out of control/heightened...</p> <p>"Then he felt a poke on his paw."</p>	<p>Resolution. How are things solved?</p>       <p>The ending (How things have changed...)</p>

- **BONUS:** Using the basic plot structure above, students can create an original story about another animal that looks one way on the outside and feels another way on the inside. Students can work individually or as a class. See the last page of Bunnybear for inspiration.
- **Art center ~** Provide a variety of art materials including crayons, pencils, markers, paint, scissors, colored paper, old magazines, and glue for students to illustrate the scenes for their stories.
- **Drama center ~** Provide puppets, costumes, and props so students can recreate Bunnybear or their new stories.

Now look at the two names on the cover.

- Who is the author? What does an author do?
- Who is the illustrator? What does an illustrator do?

## Who is Bunnybear? ~ Character Study

How a character acts and what a character says can tell readers a lot about who the character is.

Read Bunnybear paying close attention to the character of Bunnybear. Scene by scene, record your thoughts, in a chart like the one below.

What he does	Why do you think he does what he does?	How would you describe him?	What might he say?
Example: He is shaggy and stompy and can be loud.	He is a bear.	Active, strong, furry	"Roarrrrrrr!"
He loves to bounce through the forest, wiggle his nose, and nibble on strawberries.			

After gathering information regarding Bunnybear's character, use the scenarios below to write a new scene for Bunnybear. What would he do and say in one of the following situations?

- It's almost Bunnybear's birthday and he wants to throw a party.
- Bunnybear's new neighbor is not kind to him because he acts differently.
- There is a bunny hop dance and Bunnybear wants to go.

## Critical Thinking

In fiction stories, a character or characters usually changes in some way. Do you think Bunnybear changed in the story? How?

Do you think any of the other characters changed in some way? If so, who and how? (analyzing, inferring, giving support to an idea)

How would the story be different if Bunnybear was not treated differently because of who he is? (predicting, cause and effect)

What do you think is the message of this story? (empathy, kindness, friendship, it's ok to be different)

## **Writing Activities**

### **More Than a Bear ~ Point of View**

Either as a class or individually, explore each scene in Bunnybear from the point of view of Mama Bear.

- What is she thinking and doing?
- How does she feel?
- What would she say to Bunnybear?
- How do you think Mama Bear makes Bunnybear feel?

Advanced classes will be able to write Bunnybear from Mama Bear's point of view. However, classes can also create captions and thought bubbles for the illustrations, imagining that Mama Bear is present through the whole story.

## **Speaking and Listening Activities**

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring Bunnybear to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills!

### **Talking About Feelings**

Bunnybear experiences many different feelings throughout the story. Look through the book, page by page, and ask how Bunnybear might be feeling at each particular moment. Keep track on a list of each emotion named.

Once the list is finished, have children choose one and make a sentence about that feeling.

Just like Bunnybear, we all feel various feelings at different times. It is ok to feel happy or sad or angry.

Ask children to share a time when they felt the same emotions as Bunnybear.

"Today I feel happy because we have pizza for lunch."



"Last week I felt lonely because my brother went away."

"Yesterday I felt worried because I lost my jacket."

### **Listen and Share**

Sometimes understanding someone simply comes from listening to them and allowing them a chance to express themselves. Grizzlybun and Bunnybear listen to each other and a beautiful friendship is formed.

With students sitting in a circle, hand one student a small plush bear or bunny. Explain that only the person who is holding the stuffed animal can talk. Everyone else's job is to listen. When the stuffed animal is put down again, the teacher/classmates respond to that student, then the stuffed animal moves to the next person to talk (a volunteer or the former talker can pull a name from a basket).

Use the Listen and Share method for sharing sentences or personal stories about feelings.

### **Drama**

Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read Bunnybear.

## **Language Activities**

### **The Adjective Box**

Describing words are called adjectives. Andrea J. Loney uses a lot of adjectives when describing Bunnybear (i.e., shaggy, stompy, loud, etc.) How many adjectives can you find in Bunnybear? Read through the book, listing as many adjectives as you can.

Then, the following activity explores adjectives even further.

Decorate an empty shoe box and cut a hole in one of the ends. You can attach a sock (with the toes cut off) to the hole on the end to make it easy to guide little hands in and out of the box. Attach one end of the sock around the hole, allowing the rest of the sock to serve as a pathway into the box.

Place various items in the box (i.e. A LEGO, pinecone, Play-Doh, feather, etc.) These should be very tactile items. The kids will not be able to see inside the box, but only feel around.

Although they might be able to identify the object, the game is to DESCRIBE the item using adjectives. (i.e. Hard, soft, squishy, bumpy, etc.)

Each child should have a chance to reach inside the box. See how many adjectives the class can come up with and create a list.

## **Math**

### **Word Problems**

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in Bunnybear or any other book of study.

The "But when he was alone..." illustration:

- 1) How many bumblebees do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 2 bumblebees.

Draw 6 more bumblebees.

How many bumblebees are there now?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if three bumblebees flew away? How many bumblebees would you see?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

The "He called himself Bunnybear" illustration:

- 2) How many strawberries do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 7 strawberries.

Draw 3 more strawberries.

How many strawberries do you have?

Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if Bunnybear ate 4 strawberries? How many strawberries would be left? Write the equation:  $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

### **A Bunny Scavenger Hunt**

This scavenger hunt will help students sharpen observational and counting skills.

- Create several copies of the paper cut-outs of bunnies.

- Number each different feather from 1-5. You should have several of each number.
- Create one Bunnybear.
- Hide these cut-outs around the room.
- Ask students to find a set of bunnies numbered 1-5. If a student sees a number they already have they must leave it for another student to find.
- The first student to find a 1-5 bunny sequence or the student who first finds Bunnybear wins.
- Additional activity: This same game can be played with a set pattern of colors or pictures to teach sequencing.

### **Under Where? Spatial Sense**

Look at the “Underground, Bunnybear saw the most beautiful sight” illustration in Bunnybear.

Describe where Bunnybear is.

[examples: in the tunnel, above the bunnies, on the ground]

Describe where the bunny that Bunnybear followed is.

[examples: down the tunnel, inside his warren, between Bunnybear and the other bunnies.]

Describe where the other bunnies are.

[examples: inside the warren, in front of the followed bunny, under the ground.]

Have students choose another illustration in Bunnybear and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

## Science

### **Bears Research Project**

Bunnybear is a Brown Bear.

Research all about Brown Bears and how they act.

Information to be gather must include:

- Color of the bear
- Size of the bear
- What it eats
- Where it lives
- Does it hibernate?
- Draw a picture of the bear
- Write 3 words that describe your bear
- Interesting fact #1
- Interesting fact #2
- Interesting fact #3
- What commonalities does Bunnybear share with the Brown Bear?
- What makes Bunnybear different from other Brown Bears?

Once all of the needed research is done, students must create a poster visual with all of the necessary information and present their findings to the class.

OR

Make a book. Students will cut and paste or draw their bear, and include the facts they have researched.

## Social Studies

### **Inclusion, Exclusion, and Building Empathy**

Do you think Bunnybear should be ashamed that he is different?

Look at the situation from Bunnybear's perspective. How would you feel being different?

What are the many ways that others make Bunnybear feel different?

What are some of the way others make Bunnybear feel comfortable? Can you think of other ways to help Bunnybear?

- Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in with others?
- What makes you feel better?
- How is Bunnybear like the other bears?
- How is Bunnybear different from the other bears?
- What makes you different from your friends or classmates?
- What makes you the same as your friends or classmates?
- Do you ever treat people differently because they look or act different than you? Why?
- Have you been treated differently because you look different than other people? Was this treatment positive or negative?
- How do you want to be treated by your classmates, friends and family?
- How should we act towards others?
- In what situations is it necessary to treat others differently than the way you want to be treated? (others sometimes have different preferences than you)
- Who do you think Bunnybear's true friends are?
- What makes a good friend?
- What do you look for in a friend?
- What kinds of things do you do for your friends?
- Are you only kind to your friends?
- Do you help others even when they are not your friends?
- Provide an example of when you helped someone you didn't know. Did this make you feel good?
- How do you expect others to respond when you complete an act of kindness for them?
- What obligation do you have to help others?

What are some of the things that the other bears say to Bunnybear because they don't understand him?

Do you think some people are treated differently because other people do not understand the way they look or act?

Sometimes we may tease or make a comment about someone because they act or look differently than we do.

Although we don't always intend to be hurtful, sometimes we do hurt others with these comments or jokes. We might not even be aware of how our actions are affecting others. For example, the other bears telling Bunnybear to "stand up like a bear." That hurts Bunnybear.

These hurtful comments, jokes, or teasing are called microaggressions.

Here are some other examples of microaggressions:

**Microaggression Example 1: "You don't act like a bear ..."**

This is often meant to be a compliment but succeeds only in being mean.

How do you think this makes Bunnybear feel and why?

Other variations include, "Wow! You talk like a white person," "You're not like other Asian kids!" and "I don't think of you as Black."

Why is this hurtful?

This "compliment" is saying that the person is different from "their group," and that's something to be proud of. Plus, it is also comparing someone to others and that's not a nice thing.

Many microaggressions stem from over-clumping giant groups. For example, there are 1.6 BILLION Muslims in the world, and it is highly unlikely that any generalization could cover that many humans accurately!

Wouldn't it bother you if people assumed something about you because of your skin color, cultural background, or religion you are associated with?

### **Microaggression Example 2: "I assume you speak ..."**

How we speak says a lot about who we are. By presuming to know what language someone speaks based on what they look like, we make incorrect assumptions about who they are and what their background is.

Why is this offensive?

Assuming someone's language or place of origin based on physical features is rooted in stereotypes about a particular group of people.

Stereotypes: A mistaken idea or belief many people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which may be untrue or only partly true. Stereotyping people is a type of prejudice because what is on the outside is a small part of who a person is.

Learning about someone's language requires thoughtful, respectful, and appropriate discussions and relationship building.

How can you show interest in learning about someone's language in a respectful and appropriate way?

### **Microaggression Example 3: Group = (Dis)ability**

Assuming a group of people have certain abilities or disabilities (even if those abilities seem positive and are meant as a compliment) can be both hurtful and inaccurate.

It is not a compliment to say, "You are really good at math for a Latina!" because it implies that all Latinas are bad at math. And we know that's just not true.

Bunnybear might be good at hopping and maybe other bears don't hop. But Bunnybear is an individual and has his own abilities and disabilities.

### **Microaggression Example 4: Speaking Superpowers.**

Assuming one human can speak for an entire group that they identify with is silly because humans are not the same, even if they share some characteristics!

The Elder Bunny speaks on behalf of the other bunnies, but do you think Grizzlybun agrees with everything he says? Why or why not?

Is it fair to think that all bunnies are like Elder Bunny?

### **Microaggression Example 5: "What ARE you?"**

Not all people who share a group identity look or act the same.

A question that is often asked when someone cannot identify what group or groups someone identifies with is "What ARE you?" closely followed by, "Where are you REALLY from?"

Why do you think this is hurtful to ask?

How do you think Bunnybear would answer these questions?

### **How to Respond to Microaggressions**

**1.** Pause before you say or do anything.

This forces the speaker to think about what they've said, and why it might be offensive.

**2.** Open up a conversation.

For example, "That's an odd thing to say," or "That makes me feel kind of weird to hear you say that" or, "What do you mean by that?"

Explaining how the question or statement made you feel can be a helpful learning moment for the speaker.

For the person on the receiving end of the microaggression, you have the power to decide whether you want to use your energy for a conversation. It is okay to choose not to open up a conversation after receiving a microaggression. You can simply ignore and look for a community that healthily affirms your identity.

**3.** Be an ally.

If you witness microaggressions, do try to speak up so the target doesn't need to, and/or try to address the issue with the speaker.

**4.** Catch yourself.

If you find a microaggression coming out of your own mouth, identify it, apologize, and continue research and learning about how to accept diversities and be more inclusive.



## **What Makes a Good Friend?**

Discuss what makes a good friend. Draw upon examples from their own friendships and create a list describing what makes a good friend.

Example: Good friends...

- Are reliable.
- Do kind things for one another and use kind language.
- Help out when a friend is sad or has a problem.
- Like to spend time together.
- Have fun with one another.

Look closely at Bunnybear. Which characters act like a friend to Bunnybear? How?

As a class, create an action plan on how to be a good friend.

## **Finding Commonalities/Uniqueness**

Bunnybear is different from the other bears – yet he doesn't fit in with the bunnies, either. Although Bunnybear is different than the bears and the bunnies, they also have a lot in common.

Finding what you have in common with other people is a good way to start a meaningful relationship. Here is a way to learn what you have in common with your classmates, while also celebrating what makes each of you unique.

Materials: A pen and two pieces of paper.

- This activity can be done as a whole class or in pairs.
- On one sheet of paper, you will have ten minutes to come up with a list of things in common. Completely obvious answers such as "we both have hair" or "we are both in \_\_\_\_\_ class" are not allowed!
- After ten minutes, switch to the other paper. You now have ten minutes to come up with a list of things that are unique to only one person.
- Share both lists with the class when finished.

## **More Than Just Me**

Bunnybear might look like a bear on the outside, but he feels like a bunny on the inside. Just like Bunnybear there are more things about us than just what we look like. Just like Bunnybear, we can be more.

The Project:

- Have each student lay down on a large piece of paper while someone traces their body with a pencil.
- Once the student has the silhouette of their body, write words that describe what they look like on the outside.
- On the inside of the outline they can write what they are like on the inside; the things that make them special. Examples can be likes and dislikes, what they want to be when they grow up, what makes them feel "free, light, and happy," etc.
- Finished silhouettes can be displayed with the title "More Than Just Me."