

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Collection

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

Why Am I Me? By Paige Britt, Sean Qualls, and Selina Alko

SEL Competencies:

Self-Awareness: Understanding and reflecting on one's identity, thoughts, feelings, and how they relate to others.

Self-Management: Managing emotions related to understanding one's unique self and others.

Social Awareness: Developing empathy and understanding the diversity of experiences and identities.

Relationship Skills: Building strong, positive relationships by embracing differences and fostering mutual respect.

Responsible Decision-Making: Making decisions that are respectful and considerate of others' identities and experiences.

Background

Why Am I Me? by Paige Britt, with illustrations by Sean Qualls and Selina Alko, explores the big question of identity and individuality. Through simple yet profound illustrations and language, the book encourages young readers to think deeply about who they are and how they relate to others. It asks the question "Why am I me?" and offers a celebration of diversity, helping students recognize that everyone is unique, yet all are connected. The book fosters self-awareness and empathy, helping children understand how their identity shapes their experiences and how they can respect and appreciate others' differences.

Before You Read

What do you think the title *Why Am I Me?* means?

(Encourages students to think about identity and what it means to be themselves.)

Have you ever wondered why you are the way you are? What makes you, YOU?

(Prompts self-reflection about personal identity and uniqueness.)

What makes people different from each other? What makes them the same?

(Encourages students to think about similarities and differences in themselves and others.)

How do you think understanding who you are can help you understand other people better?

(Starts the conversation about social awareness and empathy.)

Why do you think it's important to understand yourself and others?

(Prepares students to think about self-awareness and the importance of empathy)

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	and understanding.)
While You Read Guiding Questions	<p>What do you think the main character is wondering when they ask, "Why am I me?" (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on the character's thoughts about identity.)</p> <p>What are some of the things the character notices about themselves? How do these things make them unique? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on personal identity and recognizing what makes each person special.)</p> <p>When the character looks around, what do they see in others? What is different about other people? (SEL Competency: Social Awareness – Recognizing differences in others and learning about diversity.)</p> <p>How does the character feel when they realize everyone is different in some way? Why do you think they feel that way? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Reflecting on emotions related to self-awareness and understanding diversity.)</p> <p>How does the character's perspective change as they continue to wonder about who they are? What do they learn about themselves? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Understanding how personal reflections help shape one's identity.)</p> <p>What is the message of the book so far? How do you think it's going to end? (SEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making – Making predictions and reflecting on the meaning of the story's theme.)</p> <p>Why do you think the author chose to show the different ways people and creatures are similar and different? (SEL Competency: Social Awareness – Understanding that diversity is what makes everyone unique and connected.)</p> <p>How do you think the character feels after discovering that we are all connected in some way, even though we are different? (SEL Competency: Relationship Skills – Building positive relationships by understanding the connections between individuals.)</p>

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	<p>What do you think the character learns about themselves at the end of the story? How does this change how they see others? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on the growth of the character’s understanding of themselves and others.)</p> <p>How does the ending of the story make you feel? What do you think the author wants us to understand about being ourselves? (SEL Competency: Social Awareness – Reflecting on how empathy, connection, and understanding others are important in relationships.)</p>
After Reading	<p>K-2 Activity: "Me and You" Identity Web</p> <p>Objective: To help younger students reflect on their own identity and the identities of others, fostering self-awareness and empathy.</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large paper• Crayons, markers, or colored pencils• String (optional) <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discussion: After reading, discuss what makes each person unique and how we all have different qualities. Review how the character in the book discovered what makes them "me."2. Create Identity Webs: Have students create an identity web by drawing themselves in the center of the paper. Around their picture, students will write or draw things that make them who they are (e.g., family, hobbies, favorite food, etc.).3. Compare and Share: After students complete their webs, they will share with a partner or the class. Emphasize how everyone is unique but also how we all have things in common.4. Reflection: Have students share how they feel after learning more about their classmates’ identities and what they learned about themselves. <hr/> <p>3-5 Activity: "The Identity Tree"</p>

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Objective: To explore how self-awareness shapes our identity and how recognizing differences and similarities can foster social awareness.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Markers
- Scissors, glue

Instructions:

1. **Discussion:** After reading the book, talk about what makes people different and the importance of embracing those differences. Discuss how self-awareness can help us understand and respect others better.
 2. **Create Identity Trees:** Students will create a tree where the trunk represents their identity and the branches represent different aspects of who they are (e.g., family, culture, talents, interests). On the leaves, students will write qualities that make them unique.
 3. **Group Share:** Have students share their identity trees in small groups, encouraging them to listen to how others see themselves and find connections between their identities.
 4. **Class Discussion:** Discuss how the activity helped students understand more about their peers and recognize the value of diversity.
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6-8 Activity: "What Makes Us Who We Are?" Essay and Reflection

Objective: To engage students in deep reflection on identity and diversity, while considering how self-awareness shapes their relationships with others.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pens or pencils

Instructions:

1. **Discussion:** After reading the book, discuss the themes of self-awareness, diversity, and empathy. Encourage students to reflect on how they define themselves and what influences their identity.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Writing Prompt: Have students write an essay answering the question, <i>"What makes me, me?"</i> In their essays, they should discuss what makes them unique, as well as how understanding other people's identities helps them form stronger relationships.3. Peer Sharing: After writing, students will share their essays with a partner or small group and reflect on how their identities may be similar or different.4. Class Reflection: Facilitate a group discussion about how recognizing differences and similarities helps to foster empathy and deeper connections with others.
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