

3rd MOVEMENT: *Regret. New Start?*

SOMETIMES A WALL...

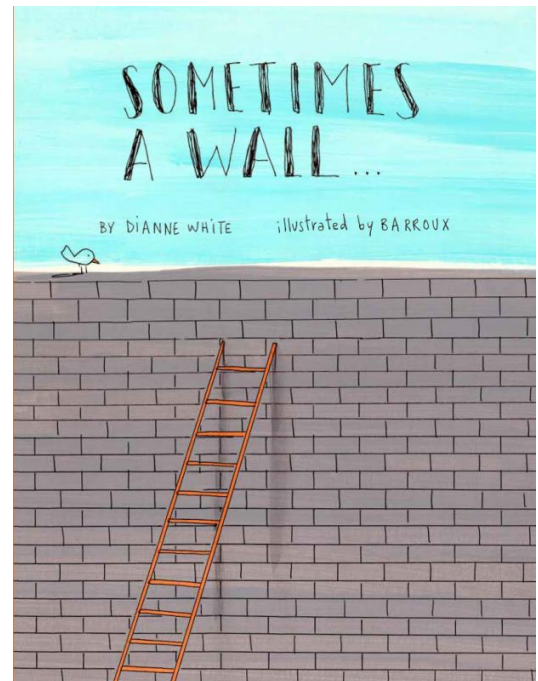
by Dianne White, illustrated by Barroux

Owlkids Books (2020) | ISBN 9781771473736

A day in the neighborhood begins with a chalk wall to draw on, a water wall to splash in, a climbing wall to clamber up, and a great wall of kids playing together.

But it isn't long before a wall comes between them, and one child is left out. After all the name-calling and hurt feelings, reflection and regret, is there a way these ex-friends can make amends?

Simple rhyming text is layered with playful illustrations to explore the many forms that walls can take – as well as the myriad feelings that accompany them. *Sometimes a Wall...* will inspire readers to scale walls of their own, with imagination and empathy.



BEFORE

Before leading students in a modified **PICTURE WALK**, use a post-it note or something similar to conceal the phrase (“A valuable lesson in friendship, one wall at a time”) on the back cover, leaving the illustration visible.

Begin with the front cover. **Ask:** What’s going on in the picture? What will this story be about? Who will be the characters in this story? What do you see that makes you say that?

What might the title, SOMETIMES A WALL... mean? Notice it includes an ellipsis (three dots) to indicate a pause or omission. It's meant to get the reader thinking: "Sometimes a wall... what?" How would you finish the sentence?

Now, open the book to reveal both the front and back covers. (NOTE: *the phrase "A valuable lesson in friendship, one wall at a time" should still be concealed.*)

Ask: What's going on in the picture? Does seeing both front and back covers change your predictions about what the story will be about? What do you see that makes you say that?

Uncover and share the phrase on the back. What might "A valuable lesson in friendship, one wall at a time" mean? Make a prediction about what will happen inside the pages of the book between the image on the front and the image on the back cover.

DURING

Guided by the open-ended questions – What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find? – continue to encourage students to "read" the story by sharing their interpretations and thoughts about the developing art and narrative.

Additional things to consider when reading: use of color and white space and use of the gutter – the inside margin at the center of a book.

AFTER

- **DISCUSSION GUIDE** (pgs. 15/16)
- Have each child draw an act of kindness on their own 6x6 paper square. Piece the squares together to create a classroom Friendship Quilt.

TOGETHER. APART. REGRET. NEW START?

A lesson to accompany SOMETIMES A WALL...

- Make a Double Bubble Map comparing and contrasting SOMETIMES A WALL with I WALK WITH VANESSA or DRAW THE LINE. (pg. 17)
- Work with the students to create a “path to peace” poster. What steps did the two characters take to resolve their differences? (see resources below for more about the Peace Path)
- Write a short unrhymed poem of apology in the style of William Carlos Williams, [“This is Just to Say.”](#)

EXTENSIONS and RESOURCES:

- [Peace Path](#) from recesslab.org
- Free downloadable [“Character/Emotions Chart”](#) from The Reading Roundup (Teachers Pay Teachers).
- Journal: Can you think of a time you experienced a similar type of disagreement with a friend? How did you feel? Were you able to work things out?
- **Be Kind** coloring page (pgs. 18/19)

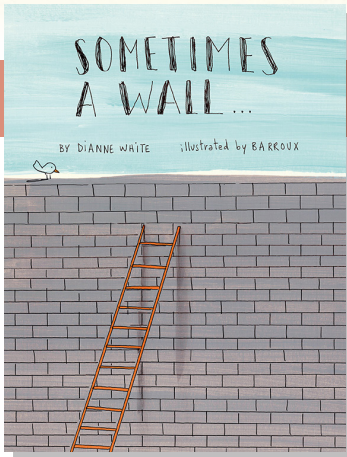
OTHER BOOKS TO EXPLORE:

- THE WALL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOOK by Jon Agee
- every little letter by Deborah Underwood, illustrated by Joy Hwang Ruiz
- BE KIND by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Jen Hill
- I AM HUMAN: A Book of Empathy by Susan Verde, illustrated Peter H. Reynolds
- LET’S BE ENEMIES by Janice May Udry, illustrated by Maurice Sendak
- ENEMY PIE Derek Munson, illustrated by Tara King
- STRICTLY NO ELEPHANTS by Lisa Mantchev, illustrated by Taeun Yoo



SOMETIMES A WALL . . .

Discussion Guide by Dianne White



Book written by Dianne White and illustrated by Barroux

ABOUT THE BOOK

An afternoon in the playground introduces different kinds of walls: a brick wall to draw on with chalk, a water wall, and a climbing wall. What follows is a playful yet profound exploration of the many ways walls can divide us or bring us together. When one child is excluded from a game, another builds a castle to leave him out. When the builder declares the castle MINE, other kids feel alienated—but the builder becomes lonely, too, when the others have fun without him. The book ends with the optimism of a new start: friendship, forgiveness, and imagination give the wall new meaning. Told with short, simple lines of playful, rhyming text and loose line illustrations, this book sparks questions with empathy, insight, and charm. It's a timely tool for inquiry-based and social-emotional learning, sharing the important message that walls can unite or divide, depending on the choices we make.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A wall can be many things. It can keep things in or out. It can protect or isolate. What are examples of different kinds of walls you've seen or experienced? What are the different ways a wall can be? In what ways does a wall divide?
2. What do you think were the different sides and points of view in the book?
3. Why do you think the children started acting unkindly toward the boy?
4. Why do you think the boy with the yellow hat wanted the boy in the striped shirt to go away?
5. Why was the boy in the (vertical) striped shirt staring?
6. Was the boy in the yellow hat being unfair? Why or why not?
7. What do you think the boy was thinking when he threw down the yellow hat and put on a crown?
8. Have you ever been like the child wearing the crown? Wanting to be "the king" of the castle? What were you thinking? How did you feel?
9. Have you ever felt left out, like the other child? What were you thinking? How did you feel? (Cont'd on next page)

ISBN: 978-1-77147-373-6

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Language Arts: Reading Comprehension; Visual Literacy
Visual Arts: Illustration Techniques; Color
Character Development: Empathy; Kindness; Caring; Respect; Bullying; Exclusion; Consequences; Problem Solving; Cooperation; Teamwork; Making and Keeping Friends; Creative Play; Imagination

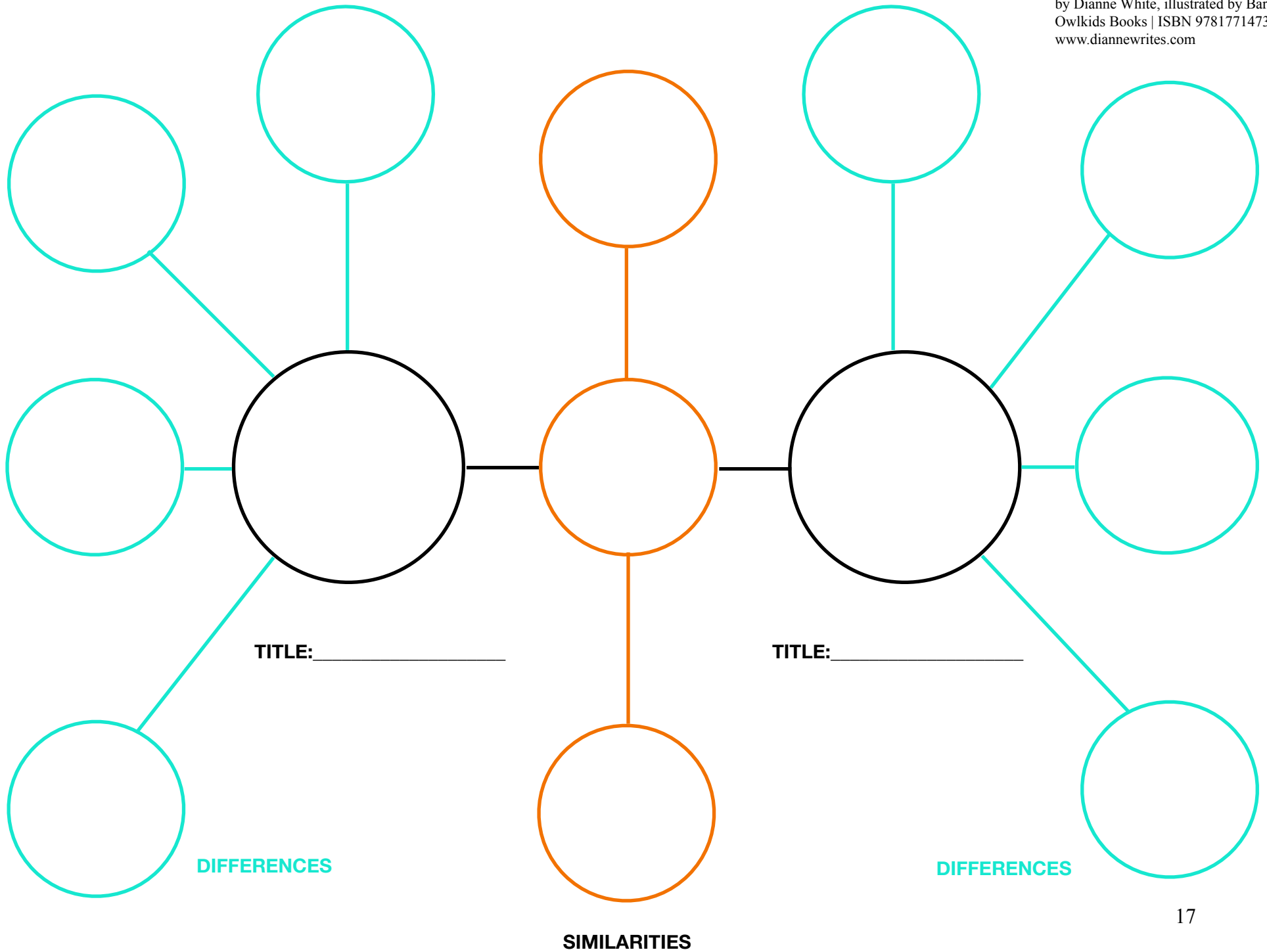
READING LEVELS:

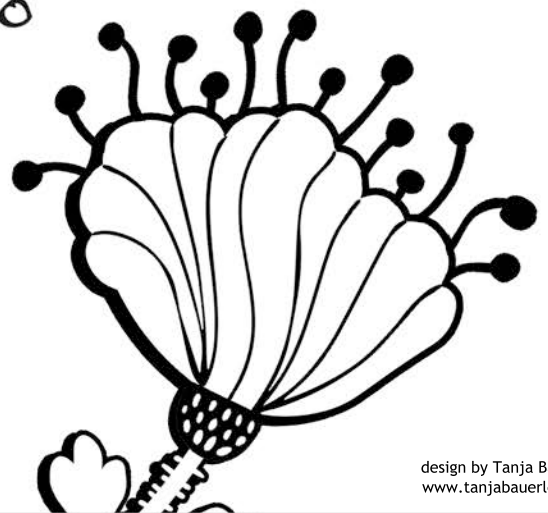
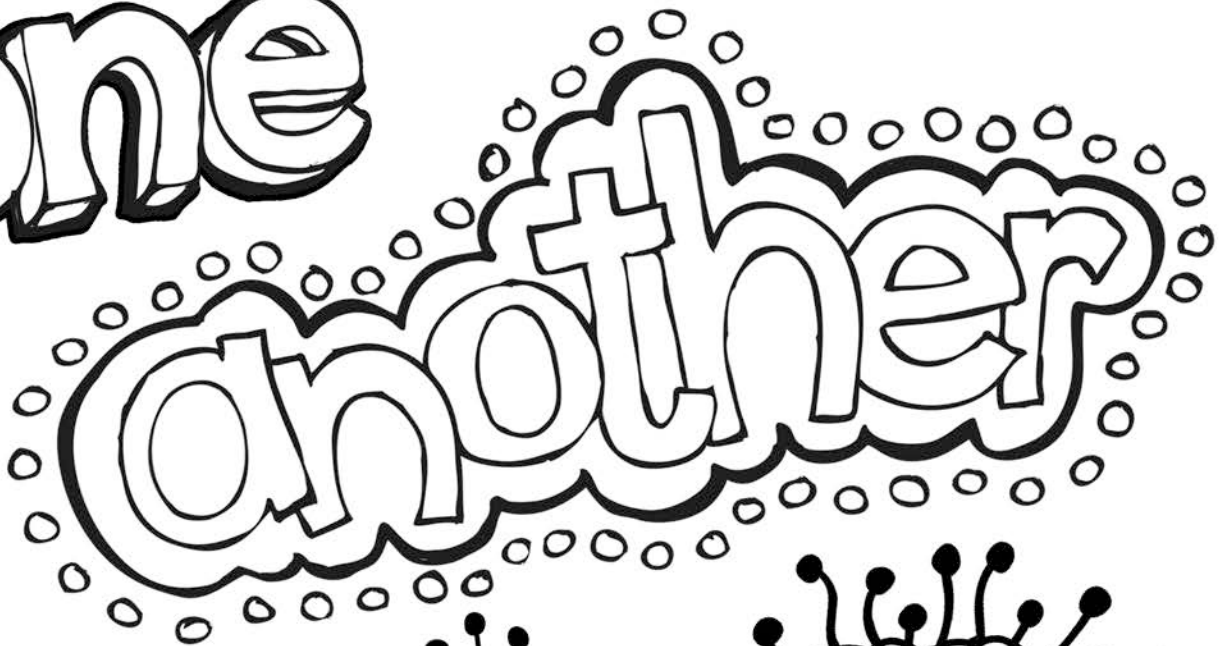
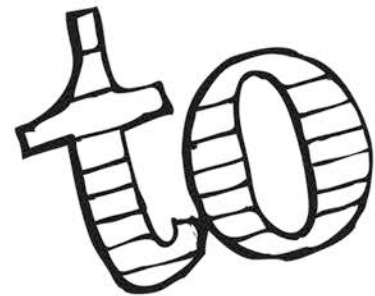
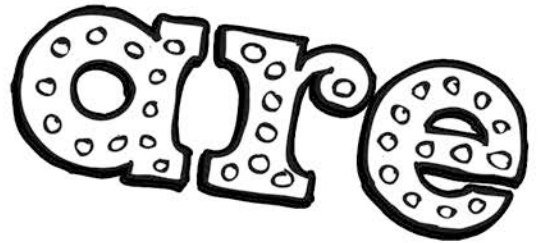
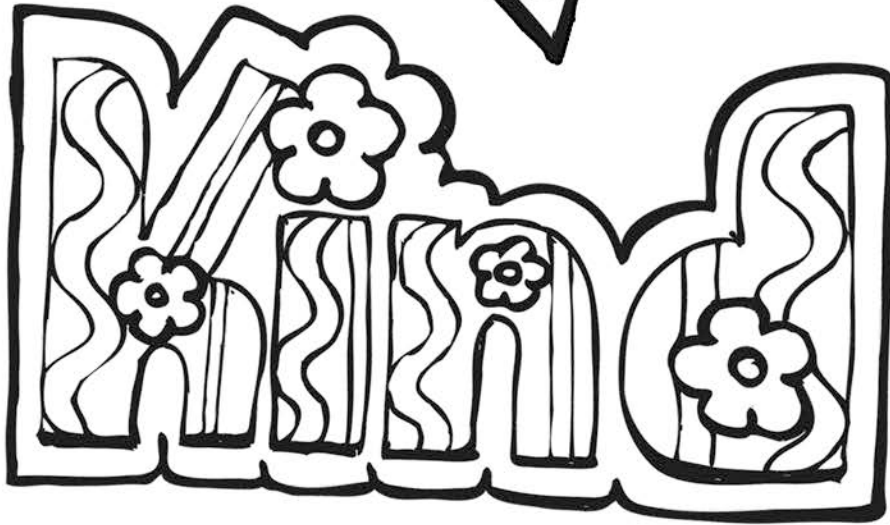
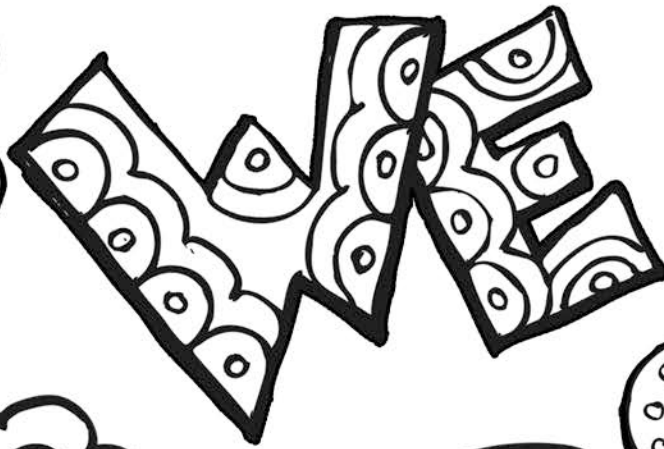
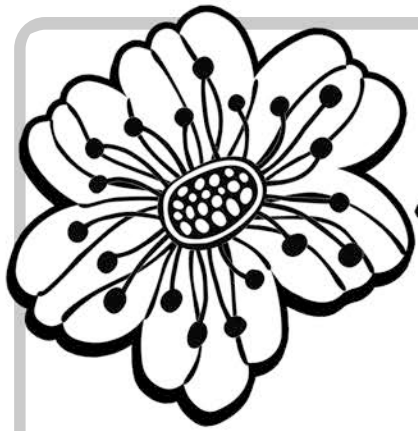
Grade: Pre-K–4
Fountas & Pinnell: M
Reading Recovery: 20
Lexile® Measure: NP
Common Core: L.2, RF.2, RL.2, SL.2, W.2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

10. What kinds of feelings do you think the boy with the crown was experiencing when he was alone?
11. What do you think made him decide to ask for a “new start?” Have you ever acted in a way that you later regretted? What did you do to fix the situation?
12. A wall can lead to anything. What did this wall lead to? How did the kids end up working things out?
13. Have you ever been in a situation in which you weren't getting along with someone and there was a “wall” between you – a wall that made it hard to get along? Were you able to resolve your disagreement? How? If you weren't able to resolve the disagreement, can you think of a way you might have handled things differently?
14. Did the problem resolve in a realistic way? What would have happened if the boy had stayed in the castle?
15. As humans, we have the ability to make choices. To be good or bad. Obey or disobey. To be kind or thoughtless. To speak up or be quiet. We make mistakes, but we can also learn and grow. Put yourself in the place of one of the characters. What do you think they are feeling and thinking? What might this character learn from the events of the story?
16. Think of a problem you've had with a friend. A “wall” that came between you. Was there only one, or more than one way to look at the problem? One or more than one way to solve it?







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