

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE
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THE HOCKEY JERSEY



By Jael Richardson
with Eva Perron

Illustrations by
Chelsea Charles

Backstory

The Hockey Jersey was inspired by the 1979 story, *The Hockey Sweater*. It was originally published in 1979 under the title, *Une abominable feuille d'érable sur la glace* (*An abominable maple leaf on the ice*). *The Hockey Sweater* is considered by many to be a symbol of what it means to be a part of the Canadian landscape.

Synopsis

It's the day of the first hockey game and Kareema is about to take a big step into the locker room and into the world of hockey.

Overwhelmed and unsure of what's ahead, she enters the locker room and meets her new teammates—a group of young players who are also wondering if they will fit in with the team and find their place in the game.

After their coach arrives with a bag full of brand new uniforms and hands each player their jersey, Kareema and her teammates discover something special while they get dressed for the game.

As they take to the ice in their new uniforms, ready to play for the first time, Kareema realizes something unique about the game of hockey while her biggest fans cheer them on.

How *The Hockey Jersey* came to be

Children are drawn to stories that help them make sense of the world. But as our world changes, our stories must too. The mosaic of people who live in Canada continues to evolve, creating a representation gap between older stories and modern reality. *The Hockey Jersey*, as told by Jael Richardson, Eva Perron, and Chelsea Charles, speaks to the diversity of a modern Canada and offers an opportunity for children to reflect on their places of belonging, where they feel at “home,” and what brings them joy.

This book is intended to be read with children in classrooms across Canada and around the world. As educators share this story with children, each one is invited to explore some of the provocations included here. The questions and learning invitations for children are designed to be open-ended, allowing space for them to contribute their unique thoughts and experiences.

A provocation can be in the form of intentional questions asked to encourage students to consider a big idea in a story and relate it to themselves. The provocations provided in this guide will help students think about where they feel a sense of belonging through the lens of a favourite Canadian sport: hockey.

The book that inspired *The Hockey Jersey* was written by Roch Carrier, and titled *The Hockey Sweater*. When thinking about his mindset while writing the book, Carrier considered, “When was it that I felt I was really myself?” He remembered a moment when he had put on his skates, and he was taller than his mom, with a hockey stick in his hands, and he felt truly like himself. *The Hockey Jersey* strives to offer readers a similar reflection of themselves through playing a sport where they can truly feel like they belong.

Possible learning goals connected with this book

As a community of learners, we will explore listening and gain understanding, with texts and each other, to recognize the ways in which we feel comfortable being ourselves, and where we feel “at home.”

Success Criteria

When co-constructing success criteria with students, some starting points might be:

- I can make my thinking visible using different materials
- I can connect ideas from a book to my own knowledge and experiences

Getting started

Jael, Eva, and Chelsea have come together to share their thoughts about *The Hockey Jersey*. Before reading the book, play the short video for students. After watching the video, ask them to keep in mind what was shared by each storyteller as they listen to the reading of the story.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/794505717>

Read the book in its entirety first, to not interrupt the flow of the story. After reading, invite students to consider:

- What did you notice about the characters’ faces and emotions throughout the story?
- What do you think they were feeling?

Flip back to different parts of the book to give students a chance to reflect. As they share, listen and give time and space for the other students to build on ideas.

Watch author Jael Richardson introduce and read *The Hockey Jersey* in its entirety.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD3Z7gaJbMM>

Discussion

Jael and Eva write: “Is it something about the way I look?” This section of the book is important because it allows children to think more deeply about how this story creates an inclusive picture of who might be accepted as a participant in the hockey experience.

Scotiabank writes:

The Hockey Jersey was commissioned as part of Scotiabank’s “hockey for all” initiative and our mission to make hockey more diverse, inclusive, and accessible. We want all children to see a place for themselves in hockey and to feel welcome, safe, and included in the game. The story of Kareema and her teammates was written to inspire Canadians from all walks of life, to feel like they have a place in our national game.

Educators might ask students a few of these questions to gain insight about their thinking:

- What words and pictures stood out for you?
- What do you think is special about the jersey that helped bring the team together and create a sense of belonging?
- What does it mean to belong?
- How have the authors and illustrators been intentional about creating ways for everyone to feel like they belong?

The goal of this learning invitation is to invite students to connect their experiences with the story Jael, Eva, and Chelsea tell about Kareema in *The Hockey Jersey*.

Possible experiences and materials students can use as tools to make their thinking visible after reading and discussion:

- Ask them to imagine where they feel most like themselves. What is it they’re doing? How did they learn to do this thing they love?
- Using simple tools such as a blank piece of paper and pencil crayons, invite students to draw a picture of what makes them feel most like themselves, like they are “home,” or that they belong, like Kareema in *The Hockey Jersey*.
- Students can also explore their imagination through writing. Access different formats for them to use through the links supplied in the following section.

Offering various tools gives students more choice about what they create. Circulate, listen, and respond to their creations as they come to life.

Templates to support learning

As students put their thoughts to paper, below are some links to templates you can access and print for them to record their thinking. Students might use their own writer's notebook, which you have created for them in class.

1-line printout:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TNIROBU2o2oBnhY8E3HZwOCkPfwrBhaPkSSID1FM2js/edit?usp=sharing>

3-box printout:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C6ZDbGeTHFUiBNm-FxTGI3j-DUekLXgT7xN2WWrP_hLY/edit?usp=sharing

Observations and conversations

Facilitate conversations and record observations while students listen to the story, discuss themes, and create with the supplied materials to help them build a more fulsome assessment.

Record notes on this simple grid:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IZboXJkh0IG404yPQiFp-4_1kuz_FaX-UWNwdnb4FAMI/edit?usp=sharing

Bringing it all together

After they've watched the video, listened to the story, and then created their own stories, you might propose this question to them to reflect on their understanding of "*hockey for all*":

Why do you think the storytellers and Scotiabank believe hockey is an important sport for Canadian students to have access to?

