



BULLY
by Patricia Polacco

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Nominee 2015
Grades 3-5**

*Submitted by Rebecca Richardson, Teacher-Librarian,
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Title: *Bully*
Author: Patricia Polacco
Publisher: Putnam Juvenile
Pages: 48

SUMMARY

It's hard to be the new kid in class, but when there are two new students, they provide each other the support needed to navigate the cliques of middle school. Lyla, a talented gymnast makes the cheerleading squad, propelling her into the "cool girls" clique. Jamie, a computer nerd, is left behind until Lyla realizes being cool also means being cruel in this situation. She opts for her best friend Jamie, leaving the "cool girls" behind. That's when revenge comes into play.

Gage, the coolest of the cool girls, creates a cheating scandal on the state test and points the finger at Lyla. The bullying accelerates through Facebook, cellphone messages, and other social media. Jamie finds a way to show the principal that it all started with Gage, and Lyla is off the hook with the school. However, the other students still don't know what to believe, and the consequences of bullying continue. Can friendships still be kept? Anyone new to a school or facing any type of bullying in person or through online social media, will make a strong connection with this book.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Author and illustrator Patricia Polacco was born in Lansing, Michigan, and has spent most of her life there. She lived in California for a time, and when she returned to Michigan, she moved to her grandparent's farm in Union City, the source of many happy memories and inspired stories, each rich with the cultural diversity of her family. Though she started writing at the age of 41, she is a prolific writer who often uses her family and life experiences as subjects.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at
<http://www.patriciapolacco.com/author/bio/bio.html>,
Accessed August 27, 2014.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Author talks about her book and bullying: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_Vo_3CfsnE

Fan-made book trailer: <http://vimeo.com/album/2302200/video/61799522>

OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR

Emma Kate (2008)

Thank You, Mr. Falker (2012)

Junkyard Wonders (2010)

January's Sparrow (2009)

Casey at the Bat: by Ernest Lawrence Thayer, illustrated by Patricia Polacco

RELATED TITLES (Students may also enjoy these titles)

The Ant Bully by John Nickle

The Berenstain Bears and the Gift of Courage by Stan Berenstain

The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson

Jungle Bullies by Steven Kroll

Jake Drake, Bully Buster by Andrew Clements

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Writing:

- Write an apology letter from Lyla to Jamie to tell her why she went with the group, how she felt when she saw the bullying, and why she left the group.
- Write a postcard to Patricia Polacco telling her why you liked the book and why the book is important in today's world.
- Using ABCya!, http://www.abcya.com/word_clouds.htm, create a word cloud describing bullying (mean, cruel, etc.), the feelings of the person who is bullied (sad, alone, etc), and words to take action (ex. tell, intervene).

Art:

Create a poster about bullying or use a computer program such as Publisher or Glogster (<http://edu.glogster.com/?ref=com>) to make a flier/poster about bullying.

Technology:

- Using Voki, (www.voki.com) create an avatar and state what you would do if you were bullied online.
- Play the What Happens Next game at StopBullying.gob website. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/games/play/alternate2.php>
- Invite the school counselor or other local professional into the classroom to discuss bullying.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you were Lyla, what would you have done when the popular group of girls invited you to sit with them?
2. What would you have done when you saw the mean actions of Gage, Kenyon, and Maeve?

3. Have you ever been with a group of “friends” and seen some of them be mean to or talk bad about another kid? Did you disagree with what they were doing or saying? How did that make you feel? What happened and what did you do?
4. What happened when Lyla tried to stop hanging out with Gage, Kenyon, and Meave?
5. Why do you think they tried frame Lyla?
6. The last page of the book ends with the question, “What would you do?” Ask the students individually or in groups what they would do if this had happened to them.
7. Would you want to go back to that school next year if this had happened to you? Why or why not?
8. Go to StopBullying.gov and watch one of the videos and discuss the actions of the characters. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/webisodes/index.html>

RELATED WEBSITES

StopBullying

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/webisodes/index.htmlwebisodes/index.html>

Web site is appropriate for K12 students with cartoon-style videos and games for younger students and realistic videos appropriate for teens.

National Association of School Psychologists Bullying Website

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/bullying/>

Information for parents and educators.

National Education Association Bullying Website

<http://www.nea.org/home/neabullyfree.html>

Bully Free: It Starts With Me. A toolkit for educators.

LPB Bullying in Louisiana Website

http://beta.lpb.org/index.php/publicsquare/topic/08_12_-_bullying_in_louisiana/

Bullying prevention resources for parents, students, and educators, including information specific to Louisiana.