

Educator's Guide

For

Not Your Typical Dragon

By Dan Bar-el

Created by Tara Bardeen
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About *Not Your Typical Dragon*

Everybody knows your typical dragon breathes fire. But when Crispin tries to breathe fire on his seventh birthday, fire doesn't come out—only whipped cream! Each time Crispin tries to breathe fire, he ends up with Band-Aids, marshmallows, teddy bears and more. Crispin wonders if he'll ever find his inner fire. But when a family emergency breaks out, it takes a little dragon with not-so-typical abilities to save the day. With wry humor and whimsical illustrations, *Not Your Typical Dragon* is the perfect story for any child who can't help feeling a little bit different.
Source: Goodreads.com

About the Author

Dan Bar-el is an award-winning children's author, educator and storyteller. His writing includes both chapter books, picture books, and recently, a graphic novel. For the past twenty-three years, Dan has been working with children ages 3 to 13. He's been a childcare provider, a preschool teacher, a creative drama teacher and a creative writing teacher. In the past, Dan trained and worked professionally as an actor. These days, when not writing or teaching writing to children through the organization CWC, Dan merrily travels around the country visiting many schools and libraries.

Eight Reading Skills Every Kid Needs: Grades 1 and 2

You can help students practice the skills they've learned during the school year and help them prepare for the next school year by keeping these essential reading skill targets in mind.

Colorado public schools align their curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. The following eight reading skill targets are based on the Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading for grades K-12 as applied to grades 1 and 2.

ONE: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

TWO: Retell a story and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson.

THREE: Describe characters, settings and major events in a story using key details.

FOUR: Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in a text.

FIVE: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

SIX: Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

SEVEN: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

EIGHT: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

Note: These targets are based on the following Common Core English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, as applied to grades 1-2: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.

Enrolling Students in Beanstack

New this year! Beanstack allows students and their families to track their progress, find activities to complete at home and receive weekly customized book suggestions via email. Enroll your whole class by following these steps:

What You'll Need: Class list, parent email addresses and internet access

What to Do:

1. Go to yobod.beanstack.org.
2. Click on REGISTER A CLASS OR GROUP.
3. When asked, "Do you want to log reading and activities for this group all at the same time?," select INDIVIDUALLY.
4. Fill out the information on the page below with *your* information. Be sure to use an email that is NOT already connected to Beanstack.
5. Click on REGISTER GROUP.
6. In the top left corner, you will see "Reader 1," "Switch Readers" and "Personalize." Select PERSONALIZE.
7. Under Personalize, select BASIC INFORMATION.
8. Fill in the information for Reader 1 and click on SAVE.
9. At the bottom of the Personalize page, you will see "Share This Reader." Enter the parent email address for this reader here.
10. Next, click on SWITCH READERS (top left corner of the page) and select a new reader profile to edit.
11. Follow steps 6-10 for each additional reader.

Logging Reading Minutes and Completed Activities in Beanstack

Your group's Beanstack account allows you to quickly and easily log reading minutes and completed activities for your class. If you have shared a reader's profile with his or her parents, they will also be able to see the minutes and activities you have logged. Once you have successfully registered your group and created reader profiles for each student, follow these steps to log reading minutes and activities:

1. On the top right of the screen, click on LOG READING AND ACTIVITIES.
2. Select a specific reader's profile or choose "All Readers" to add the same entry to every student's account.
3. Select "Book" to log a specific book title. Select "Activity" to log completion of one of the activities from the YOBOD Educator Guide or YOBOD Activity Guide (currently, this

- feature is only accessible when individual readers are selected). Select “Minutes” to log reading minutes (currently, this feature is only accessible when “All Readers” is selected).
4. Follow the prompts to complete your entry.

Setting the Stage for a Reading Adventure

Creating a culture of literacy in your classroom goes beyond just reading, it’s about inviting the whole group to dive into a journey filled with fun characters, interesting discussions and activities that bring the book to life. Here are some suggestions for incorporating your Youth One Book, One Denver reading adventure into your classroom space:

1. **YOBOD Bulletin Board Collage** – Make a dedicated space for student drawings and writings related to *Not Your Typical Dragon*. Add photos of YOBOD events too!
2. **Story String Timeline** – Run a string or a long piece of blue painter’s tape along a wall in the classroom to create a timeline. Invite students to create drawings with a couple sentences of text that capture the important events of the book. Ask students to add these event markers along the timeline in the appropriate order.
3. **Our YOBOD Summer Scrapbook** – Create a class scrapbook that celebrates not only students’ favorite parts of *Not Your Typical Dragon*, but also includes images and a few words of text about the YOBOD events they attend. Have each student contribute a page to the scrapbook in response to the book and then invite small groups of students to create additional pages to capture the fun of each YOBOD event.
4. **Adventure Journals** – Provide students with notebooks, or invite them to create their own simple paper journals using notebook paper, construction paper and staples. Have students draw pictures and write a few sentences about the important events of the book. Students can also use their journals when responding to writing prompts in this guide or to write about YOBOD events they attend.
5. **YOBOD Gallery** – As a class, identify the main characters and the major events of the story. Next, create a gallery space with empty frames (paper frames cut out of construction paper or ones made from decorative bulletin board borders work well) for each character and major event the class identified. Assign pairs of students to be the “gallerists” in charge of creating an image for each frame. The gallerists will also write a short “plaque” describing the event or character depicted in the artwork.

Share!

Share your students’ projects at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Strategies for Reading a Text Multiple Times

Emerging readers and struggling readers benefit from reading a text multiple times. Here are some strategies for helping students dig deeper with each subsequent reading, as well as strategies to keep students engaged with a text beyond their first reading.

First Reading: Get the Gist of the Story

The first reading of a text should focus on the helping students develop a “big picture” understanding of the story. Beginning with the cover of the book, ask students to share their predictions about the story based on the title and the imagery on the cover of the book. As you read, ask students to make predictions each time Crispin opens his mouth.

After reading the text:

1. Have students identify the main characters and setting of the story.
2. Invite students to share a “30-second summary” of the story that includes the main events from the beginning, middle and end of the story. Once several students have shared their summaries, work together to create a single summary.
3. Ask students to consider the message behind the story. What does the story say about being different?

Subsequent Readings: Dig Deeper into the Text

When reading the story again, select a specific feature of the text on which to focus. Ask students to keep this focus in mind as they read or as they listen to you read. Suggested topics:

1. **Cause and Effect** – Does it seem like there’s a pattern to what comes out of Crispin’s mouth when he opens it? As students read the text again, pause to discuss each instance when something unusual comes out of Crispin’s mouth. Ask students to consider what might be causing this result.
2. **Problem and Solution** – What are the problems Crispin faces in the story? What problem does Sir George face? How do they solve their problems? Ask students to watch for problems that arise for the characters in the story. Have students identify how each problem is solved and offer their own ideas for ways the character could deal with the problem.
3. **Word Choice** – There is a lot of dialogue in this story. Invite students to notice the words the author uses when characters are speaking. Does he always choose the word “said?” As students read the text, pause to acknowledge the array of words used in addition to the word “said.” Examine the difference between the verbs “explained,” “mumbled,” “scolded” or “declared.” How does word choice give us more information about how characters are feeling? Create a list on the whiteboard of the words the class finds.
4. **Theme** – Discerning the theme or themes in a text can be tricky for young readers. Share with students that a theme is the “big idea” or the lesson the author wants them to take away after reading the story. Some examples of themes are: love, friendship, hard work, overcoming challenges, appreciating differences, loyalty and family. Ask

students to consider these questions as they read or as you read to them: *What is the problem in the story? What did the characters learn? How did the characters' feelings or opinions change from the beginning of the story to the end?* After reading through the text discuss these questions and work together to identify theme(s) in *Not Your Typical Dragon*.

5. **Asking Questions** – Engaged readers ask themselves questions before, during and after reading a book and then look for the answers to their questions in the text. Review the five question words of who, what, where, when, why and how. As you read the text, ask students to imagine that they are educators who wish to find out how much you know about the story and its characters. Pause every few pages to invite students to ask you a question about the story.
6. **Making Connections** – Does the story in *Not Your Typical Dragon* remind you of something? Share with students that readers often make connections between the book they're reading and their own life, or another book they've read, or something in the real world. As students read the story or listen to you read, ask students to find a connection between themselves and the book. What does the story remind them of in their own life? Have they ever felt the same way as Crispin or Sir George? Do they have a little sister? Do they like marshmallows? Ask students to also consider how they might make a connection between this story and other books they have read.

Reimagining the Text: Keeping the Story Fresh

Make the book new again with a little creativity. Here are some ways to explore the story in a new way:

1. **Story Remix** – What would happen if we changed a key element of the story? As a class, decide on an element of the story to change and then re-read the book imagining how the story would be different. For example, what would happen if the medicine the doctor gave Crispin had worked? Or what if instead of meeting Sir George, he met another dragon in the cave? What if Crispin talked to his family instead of running away?
2. **Act It Out** – Have students work in small groups to retell the story in their own words while acting out the main events. Invite students to make simple paper props to help tell the story. Allow groups to take turns performing for each other.
3. **Story Reassembled** – Make copies of the text sections of the book and cut them into strips containing a block of text for each student. Hand out the sections randomly and ask the class to work together to line up in the correct order and then read the story aloud.

Share!

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Strategies for Oral Reading

Oral reading helps students improve fluency, comprehension and word recognition. However, asking students to read aloud in front of the class can make beginning or struggling readers feel anxious. Here are some alternatives to try:

1. **Choral Reading** – The educator and the class read a passage together.
2. **Fill in the Blank** – The educator reads a passage and every time he or she omits a word, students read the missing word all together.
3. **Echo Reading** – Students echo back what the educator reads, mimicking his or her reading speed and inflections.
4. **Shared Reading** – Students follow along in their books as the educator reads aloud.
5. **Partner Reading** – Students take turns reading aloud to a partner. Encourage students to read with accuracy and enthusiasm.

Discussion Questions

Discussing a text with students allows them to check their understanding of what they read, make connections between the text and themselves, and practice important literacy skills. The discussion questions provided in this guide offer a selection of questions to get you started, but you should feel free to skip questions, add your own questions and invite students to offer their questions to the group too.

Tips for Using the Discussion Questions: Ask a few questions as you read the text in addition to at the end of the story. Asking questions while reading not only encourages student engagement, but also helps students identify important elements of the story and gives you feedback on student comprehension. Discussion questions can be divided up and used over the course of several readings of the story. They can also be assigned to students ahead of time enabling students to look for the answer as they read or listen to you read.

1. What does the word “typical” mean? How do you figure out the meaning of a word you don’t know?
2. Who are the characters in this story?
3. What is special about Crispin’s seventh birthday? Does it seem like he is excited?
4. How does Crispin plan to use his new skill?
5. When Crispin opens his mouth, fire doesn’t come out. What are some things that do come out?
6. At the beginning of the story, how does Crispin’s family feel about his unusual talent? How do you know?
7. Why does Crispin’s father take him to see the doctor?
8. When Crispin’s father gives Crispin medicine, he says, “It will help you become a real dragon.” How do you think that might make Crispin feel?

9. Why does Crispin decide to run away? Have you ever felt like hiding in your room?
10. Who discovers Crispin when he is hiding in the cave?
11. Why is Sir George looking for a fire-breathing dragon?
12. Why does Sir George say he can't go home?
13. What ideas does Sir George try in order to help Crispin become a fire-breathing dragon?
14. Who helps Crispin get home when it starts getting dark outside?
15. How did Sir George's feelings about Crispin change from the first time they met? Have you ever changed your mind about someone after getting to know them better?
16. How does Sir George's father react to hearing that Crispin can't breathe fire? Do you think this was a kind way to react? Why or why not?
17. What happens when Crispin's father starts breathing fire? Did it surprise you that the dragons knew how to start fires, but not how to put them out?
18. How does Crispin save the day when his house catches fire?
19. How does Crispin's father feel about his son's unique talent at the end of the story? Have his feelings changed from the beginning of the story? What do you think might have caused this change?
20. Did Sir George's father change his mind about dragons and about Crispin? How do you know?
21. How did Crispin's feelings about himself change from the beginning of the book to the end?
22. Do you see any connection between Crispin's problem and Sir George's problem?
23. Have you read other books about dragons? How are the dragons in this story similar? How are they different?
24. Have you read other books about knights? How is Sir George similar? How is he different?
25. Have you ever felt like being different was hard? Do you think there are kids at your school who might feel different? How could you help them feel more included?

Writing Prompts

Just like reading, writing is a skill that improves with practice. Present students with several of the following writing prompts and invite them to choose their favorite. If desired, allow students to simply write a few sentences about their day. Celebrate your students' writing by allowing time for them to share what they wrote with a classmate, a small group, or the whole class.

1. Think about today's weather. Draw a picture of what you think would come out of Crispin's mouth on a day like today. Write a sentence or two about your drawing.
2. Write an acrostic poem about DRAGONS. An acrostic poem is the kind where you write each letter of a word on a separate line and then think of a word or phrase that begins with each letter. For example: CATS → **C**ute; **A**lways eat cat food; **T**rap mice; **S**oft to hold.
3. Write about your favorite part of *Not Your Typical Dragon*. Why do you like this part?
4. Write a list of all the things you want to do this summer.

5. Write three questions you would like to ask Crispin.
6. Imagine you are a little dragon. What do you look like? Do you breathe fire or not? Draw a picture and write about your dragon self.
7. Write a letter to Crispin from his family asking him to come home. Next, draw a map to help Crispin get back home from the cave. Label as many parts of your map as you can.
8. Write a letter to the author of *Not Your Typical Dragon* telling him what you liked about his book.
9. Imagine you are at the beach. What do you think you would do there? Would you swim? Would you build a sand castle? Write about what you would do and then draw a picture.
10. Write about what you think will happen on Crispin's little sister's seventh birthday. Do you think she will breathe fire or will something else happen? Draw what you imagine and write about her birthday.

Share!

Share your students' projects at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Possible Programming Themes for *Not Your Typical Dragon*

- Dragons
- Fairy tales from around the world
- Birthday traditions
- Family trees
- Dealing with expectations from others
- Milestones in one's life such as learning to walk, starting school, riding a bike, bar mitzvah, quinceañera, getting a driver's license, graduating from high school, etc.
- Bubble science
- Marshmallows
- Stereotypes
- Knights
- Spicy foods like hot sauce, chili and salsa
- Teddy bears
- Nutrition and food choices
- Attitude and emotions
- Relaxation techniques
- Seaside sights
- Balls
- Unlikely friendships

- Family
- Fire, heat and flames
- Firefighters
- Music
- Dance
- Celebrating differences

Activities to Bring the Book to Life

Book-related activities in art, movement, language and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) bring the story to life for students and enhance learning.

Educators are also encouraged to incorporate additional activities throughout the summer that connect with the themes found in *Not Your Typical Dragon*.

Bubble Science

Beanstack Activity Section: Not listed on Beanstack

Materials: Bubble liquid (6 cups of water, 1 cup of dish soap, ¼ cup of corn syrup), small plastic cups, straws and pipe cleaners

Background: Bubbles come out of Crispin’s mouth when he tries to breathe fire.

Instructions: Create bubble liquid by combining 6 cups of water, 1 cup of dish soap and ¼ cup of corn syrup. Try not to let foam or bubbles form as you stir. Have students create a bubble wand using the pipe cleaner. If they bend it into a square-shaped loop, will they be able to blow square bubbles? Head outside and give each student a small cup of bubble liquid and a straw. Invite students to test out their bubble wands and blow bubbles with the straws too. What do they notice? If time allows, watch a short online science video about bubbles once the class is back inside.

Share!

Share photos or videos of your bubble science project at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Knight Shield

Beanstack Activity Section: Not listed on Beanstack

Materials: Cardboard shield forms or paper plates, masking tape or packing tape and markers

Background: Sir George is a knight who befriends Crispin.

Instructions: Invite students to create their own knight shields like the one Sir George carries in the story. Using cardboard shield forms (available online) or paper plates, have students draw a colorful design on their shield with markers. Add a handle to the back of the shield by creating a loop of tape and folding the sticky sides together in the middle.

Share!

Share your shields at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Mega Marshmallow Tower

Beanstack Activity Section: Not listed on Beanstack

Materials: Mini marshmallows and toothpicks

Background: Marshmallows come out of Crispin’s mouth when he tries to breathe fire.

Instructions: How high a tower can you build? Working individually, in pairs, or in small groups, challenge students to build the tallest tower they can using only the marshmallows and toothpicks you provide.

Share!

Share photos of your towers at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Positivity Portrait

Beanstack Activity Section: Inspired Artist

Materials: A photo of each student, colored pencils, scissors and paper

Background: Crispin realizes that his different talent is actually something special to celebrate.

Instructions: Begin with a brainstorming session. Ask: *What are your unique talents? Can you make people laugh? Are you good at solving math problems? Do you speak a second language? What are your best qualities?* Have students paste a self-portrait photo in the middle of a piece of paper. If using student photos isn’t possible, students can draw a self-portrait. Next, challenge students to write down as many unique talents and best qualities as they can around their photo.

Share!

Share your students’ portraits at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Shake, Shake Groove

Beanstack Activity Section: Movement Magic

Materials: Music, speakers

Background: Crispin has a dance party for his eighth birthday.

Instructions: As a class, brainstorm five different themes for a class dance break. Themes could include ocean life, robots, the zoo, insects, weather, etc. Next, select five pieces of music to play during the dance break (they do not have to go with the themes!). Create a dance floor by moving desks, tables and chairs toward the walls of the room or take your dance break to the gym. Announce the theme at the start of each piece of music and challenge students to find a way to move their body to the music while also connecting with the theme. Remind students that hilariously awkward and odd movements might result!

Share!

Share photos or videos of your dance break at ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare.

Super Solar Nachos

Beanstack Activity Section: STEM Explorer

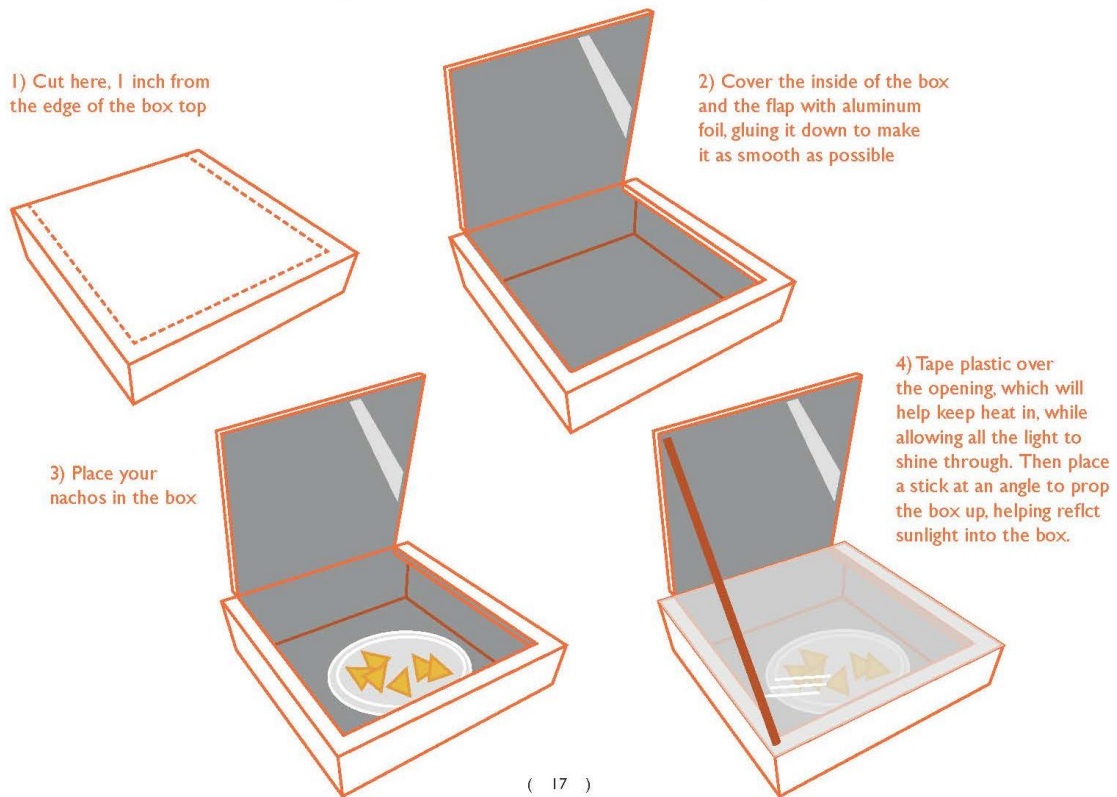
Materials: A pizza box for each oven, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, tape, a stick for each oven, chips and shredded cheese

Background: Before his seventh birthday, Crispin imagines breathing fire to boil water for tea.

Instructions: Depending on group size and time constraints, teachers may choose to build a solar oven outside of class time or work with small groups to build several ovens. Use the Solar Oven Diagram below as a guide to building a solar oven. Have an adult cut a large flap in the lid of the pizza box leaving one side connected and about 1 inch of cardboard between the sides of the flap and the edges of the cardboard. Next, have students complete the solar oven by following these steps: 1. Cover the flap with aluminum foil to create a panel that reflects rays from the sun into the box. Try to keep the foil as smooth as possible. 2. Cover the hole in the box lid with plastic wrap and tape it in place to create a window. 3. Open the box and cover the inside with foil. The solar oven is now ready to use! Set up the solar oven outside in a sunny spot while the sun is high in the sky (11 a.m – 3 p.m.). Put some corn chips on a pie plate inside the oven. Sprinkle on some shredded cheese and then close the lid. Use a stick to prop up the flap so that sunlight is reflected into the window in the box lid. And now wait. Solar ovens can take a little while to warm up and cook the food. When the cheese is melted, the snack is ready! Be careful when taking hot food out of the solar oven and use oven mitts to handle cooking dishes. Extend the activity by making other snacks in the solar oven.

Share!

Share your photos of your solar oven at [ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare](https://www.ArtsandVenues.com/YOBODShare).



Check Out These Great Reads

If your students enjoyed reading *Not Your Typical Dragon*, they might like reading these books too!

Those Magnificent Sheep in Their Flying Machines by Peter Bentley

Fraidyzoo by Thyra Heder

Me and My Dragon by David Biedrzycki

The Knight and the Dragon by Tomie dePaola

Different is Awesome by Ryan Haack

Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin

The Book with No Pictures by B. J. Novak

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae

Wild About Books by Judy Sierra

The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt

The Storybook Knight by Helen Docherty

Exclamation Mark by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Miss Maple's Seeds by Eliza Wheeler

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett

Ada Twist, Scientist by Andrea Beaty

Juna's Jar by Jane Bahk

The Hula Hoopin' Queen by Thelma Lynne Godin

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson

I Wanna Iguana by Karen Kaufman Orloff

Math Curse by Jon Scieszka