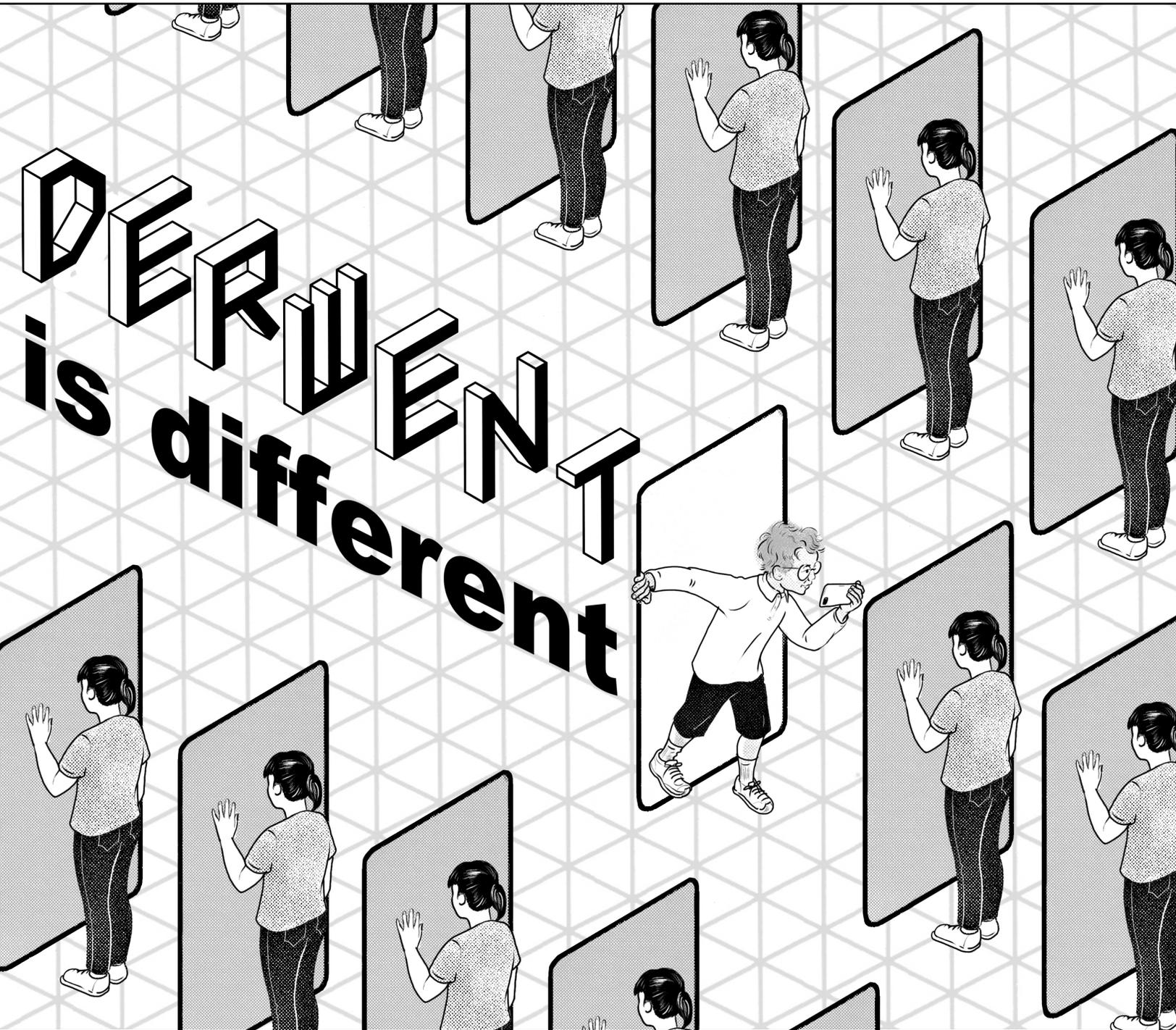


Touring professional Theatre for Young Audiences since 1975



RESOURCE & STUDY GUIDE

GREENTHUMB.BC.CA

touring@greenthumb.bc.ca | 604 254 4055

Green Thumb Theatre acknowledges the support of:



Canada Council
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Conseil des arts
du Canada



RBC
Emerging Artists
Project

As a touring company, Green Thumb Theatre's work often takes place throughout the traditional homelands of most of the Indigenous Nations and cultures across British Columbia and beyond. Green Thumb's offices are located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

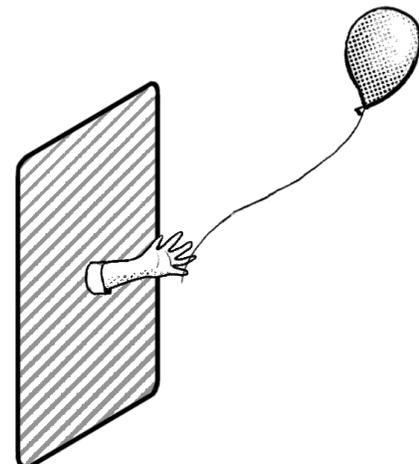
Green Thumb Theatre is committed to telling stories that spark empathy and provoke critical thinking and dialogue. This resource and activity guide is intended to help educators facilitate classroom discussions before and after the performance, and to delve deeper into the themes of the show. This guide is authored by Nitasha Rajoo, who has over 20 years of experience in performing arts as an educator and theatre-maker. Her love for the creative arts, education, travel, and adventure has allowed her to work all over the globe—leading workshops, adjudicating, teaching, directing, and programming. Nitasha holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Education, and a Master of Arts.

ABOUT GREEN THUMB THEATRE

Founded in 1975, Green Thumb Theatre creates, produces, and tours plays that explore social issues relevant to the lives of children, youth, and young adults. Green Thumb provides theatre that celebrates the language and stories of today's generation and culture to stimulate empathy, debate, and critical thinking. Green Thumb Theatre has performed for over 4 million people and has toured to every province and two territories in Canada, 36 US States, and 11 countries overseas. Original plays commissioned by Green Thumb have been translated into 9 languages and produced by more than 200 theatre companies worldwide. Green Thumb Theatre is a registered charitable not-for-profit organization. www.greenthumb.bc.ca

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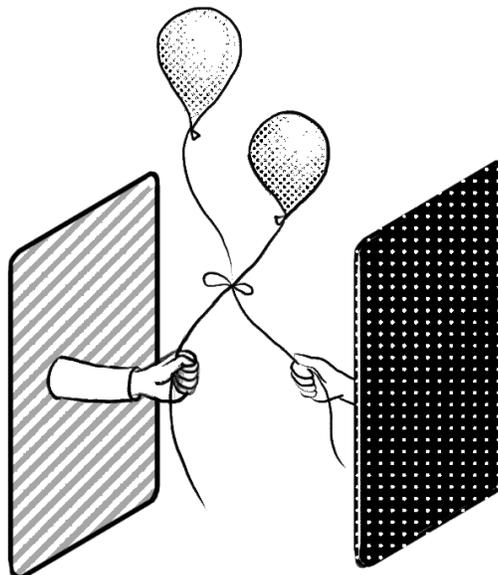
CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

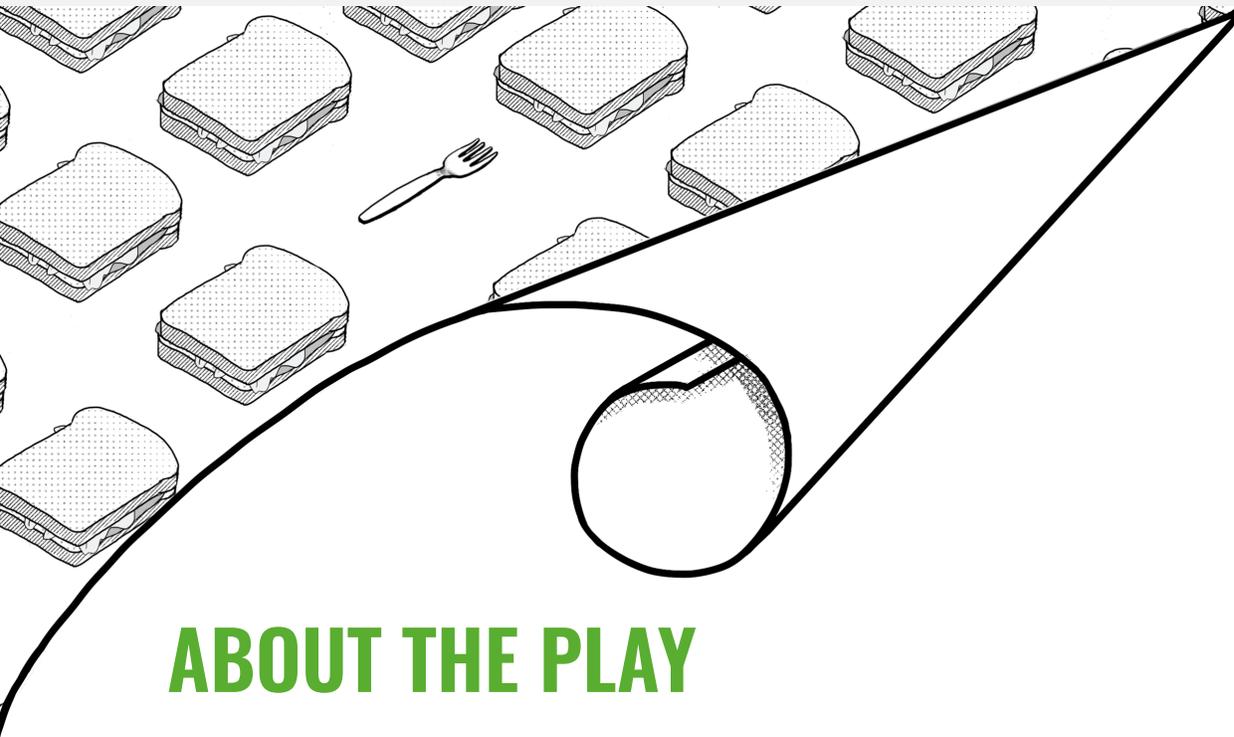
Playwright	Jamie Norris
Derwent	Daniel Curalli
Director	Sarah Rodgers*
Assistant Director	Isaac Li
Stage Manager	Jethelo Espaldon Cabilite*
Set, Costume, and Prop Designer	Jessica Oostergo
Design Associate	Elliot Roberts
Sound Designer	Daniel Tessy
Projection Designer	Nico Dicecco
Resource Guide Author	Nitasha Rajoo
Resource Guide Designer	Janet Wang
Additional Resource Guide Design	The Art Left Creative Group

*Appears courtesy of Canadian Actor's Equity Association

GREEN THUMB THEATRE LEADERSHIP & STAFF

Artistic Director	Rachel Aberle
General Manager	Shannon Maung
Production & Facilities Manager	Madelaine Walker
Tour & Company Manager	Miku Beer
Development & Communications Coordinator	Camila Fitzgibbon
Education Liaison	Aliya Griffin
Accountant	Susan Cai





ABOUT THE PLAY

DERWENT IS DIFFERENT

By Jamie Norris

Imaginative Derwent feels like a bit of an outsider at school. Luckily, he has always been able to depend on his best friend, Ramona. But now, even Ramona says he's "too weird"! To make matters worse, Ramona is spending time with Lucas — a classmate who is occupied with making Derwent's life miserable. In an effort to save their friendship, Derwent creates a video diary for Ramona, chronicling his experiences.

DERWENT IS DIFFERENT explores how we communicate in-person versus digitally, and the importance of staying true to yourself.

PREPARING TO WATCH A SHOW

Sometimes, when young people attend a live theatrical performance for the first time, they may not realize how different it is from watching a movie or a television show. With live theatre, the performers are right in front of you, and they can see when you're moving around or hear if you're speaking during the performance. To ensure we all have a good time, please remind students to use the bathroom before the show and to not talk or move too much during the performance. Let them know that part of being a good audience member is expressing their feelings about what they see, like laughing if they think something is funny or gasping if they're surprised.

After the show there will be a question and answer period with the actor and stage manager, and students are encouraged to ask questions!



MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT

Jamie Norris

You have made changes with the script, what was the reason for this?

The majority of the changes to the script were made simply to update the story to the present time and landscape. Derwent was written and first performed twenty years ago. I believe the essence of the story remains the same but the landscape has changed a bit.

The title of the play includes the word ‘different’ – what does different mean to you?

What reactions do you hope audiences have when they hear this word?

I believe the word “different” can have both positive and negative connotations. Often the “negative” connotations are based in fear and ignorance. My hope is that this play can create a space that offers the audience the opportunity to witness the story of 3 young characters who are each struggling in their own ways with these issues. I also hope that the story of the play might inspire the audience to then question and explore their own thoughts, choices, and actions connected to their own ideas about what being “different” means.

Who or what inspired you to create the character of Derwent?

This is a pretty universal story. I think lots of us, myself included, may go through periods where we may feel different or excluded and the spectrum of emotions that may accompany these experiences. I find ongoing inspiration in exploring stories inside the elementary school environment. It’s an age group and a landscape where we are, often, encountering these issues and challenges for the first time in our lives. Our experiences, reactions, and choices from this time can have far reaching effects.

Technology plays a role in the play as a way for Derwent to communicate to Ramona – what discoveries did you make in how young people use technology?

There have obviously been huge changes in this area over the last twenty years. Young people today, as always, grow up inside the technology of their time. It’s already an essential part of the world they are learning to inhabit. Much of this technology today is fluid and constantly evolving. It can foster community and connection in multiple ways on multiple platforms. Another result of this may be that it reduces actual in-person engagement.

What three adjectives would you use to describe Derwent, Ramona, and Lucas?

I hesitate to use adjectives to describe these characters. I prefer to leave that up to the audience. What I will say is that all three of these characters are encountering these challenges and situations for the first time in their lives. All three of them are learning from their experiences as well as from the consequences of the choices and actions they are taking.



MEET THE DIRECTOR

Sarah Rogers

What makes you excited about directing this play?

I am so excited to direct this sweet, funny, and magical play. I love Derwent's heart and his humour and playfulness. I am very excited to dig in and stage all the fun scenarios with just one actor. Fun Fact: The very first professional Shakespeare play that I was ever in was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and I played Helena and our playwright, Jamie Norris, played my love interest Demetrius. I had to follow him around the stage like a love-sick puppy dog. It's fun after all these years to be directing one of his plays! Maybe, this time he can follow me around!

Magic plays a role in the play - can you share any secrets about how this will be done in the production?

A magician never tells how the magic is done. But I will share that we have hired our very own professional magician, Brian Anderson. Brian has been working closely with us to create magic tricks for Derwent to execute but also he is coming up with some magic within the set! It's going to be amazing!

What have you discovered about the characters during the creative process?

It is always a joy to watch one actor explore many characters. We are having great fun discovering the voice, the mannerisms, and each character's vulnerability and strengths. Since I have a very physical and inventive actor I am delighted to discover how agile and dexterous Derwent is jumping around our set.

Do you have a favourite moment in the play?

I have so many favourite moments: I love all the magic tricks that Derwent executes - even the ones that he is still learning. I love it when Ramona and Derwent climb the monkey bars and let go of the balloons. I love all the magical changes in the set design when we move to different locations. I just adore Derwent - his bravery and quirkiness and imagination.

What questions do you hope young audiences will leave with?

I hope they leave saying: "How did he do that magic trick?" and of course, I really hope they leave asking themselves if they have ever seen someone being bullied or teased or made fun of and then think to themselves: "Next time I am speaking UP!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The questions in this section range in grade from K to 7.
Please choose questions that are appropriate for the age range you teach.

PRE SHOW QUESTIONS:

- What qualities make a good friend?
- How does it feel if a friend does not talk to you?
- Can you stop being friends with someone overnight? Why or why not?
 - What makes someone powerful?
 - What does magic mean to you?
- What can you do to stand up for yourself in an unsafe and/or uncomfortable situation?

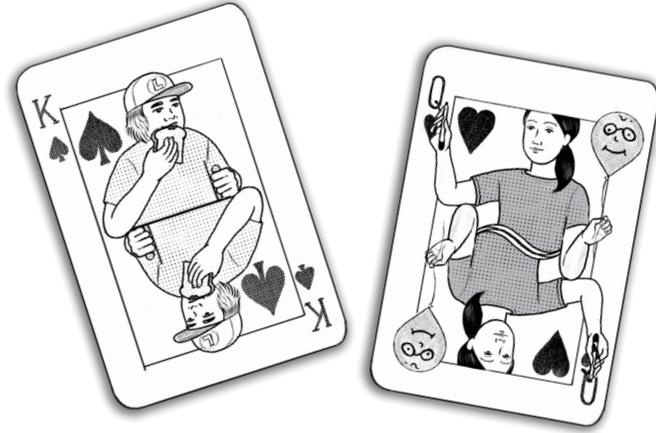
POST SHOW QUESTIONS:

- The playwright, Jamie Norris, said he wanted to leave it up to the audience to determine how they viewed the characters. With this in mind, what three adjectives would you use to describe Derwent, Ramona, and Lucas?
 - If you were Derwent, what would you do?
- Have you ever tried to help someone who was being bullied at school? What happened?
 - What are some different types of bullying?
 - What can you do if you are being bullied and/or see someone else being bullied?
- What character did you admire the most? What character did you least admire? What was it about that character that made such an impact on you?



ACTIVITY #1

Strike a pose



DEFINITION

Still Image: A still image is a frozen picture which communicates meaning. It can provide insight into character relationships with a clear focus using space and positioning, levels, body language, and facial expression. Students are encouraged to exaggerate their body gestures and facial expressions.

In assigned groups of 3 you will need to create a still image. If you are not in the image, think about your role as the creative director!

1. Derwent and Ramona when they were friends
 - What activity could they be doing?
2. Derwent and Lucas - who has more power
 - No physical contact, think about status and positioning on stage.
3. Derwent watching Lucas and Ramona being friends
 - Consider body gestures and facial expressions.

Share with the class. What do you notice about the images?

Extension - feel free to look at the images again and either ask the audience to determine these answers, or get groups to refine and recreate the images with the following prompts in mind,

Image 1 - what is one thing each character says?

Image 2 - What is one thing each character is thinking - share a thought track line aloud.

Image 3 - What is one word that describes how they are feeling?

DEFINITION

Thought Aloud Thought Tracking: Thought-tracking is a strategy that enables us to listen together to a character's inner thoughts at a particular moment. Sharing thoughts in this way provides deeper insight into the character.

ACTIVITY #2

What makes you Different like Derwent?

Derwent says *"It's okay to be a little different once'n a while. 'Cause I'm gunna be me. I mean how can I not be?"*

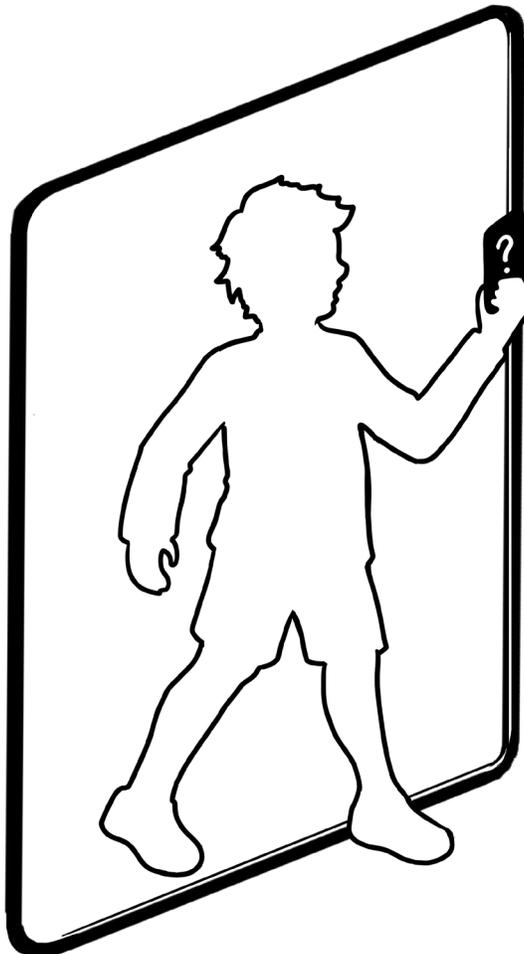
What does different mean?

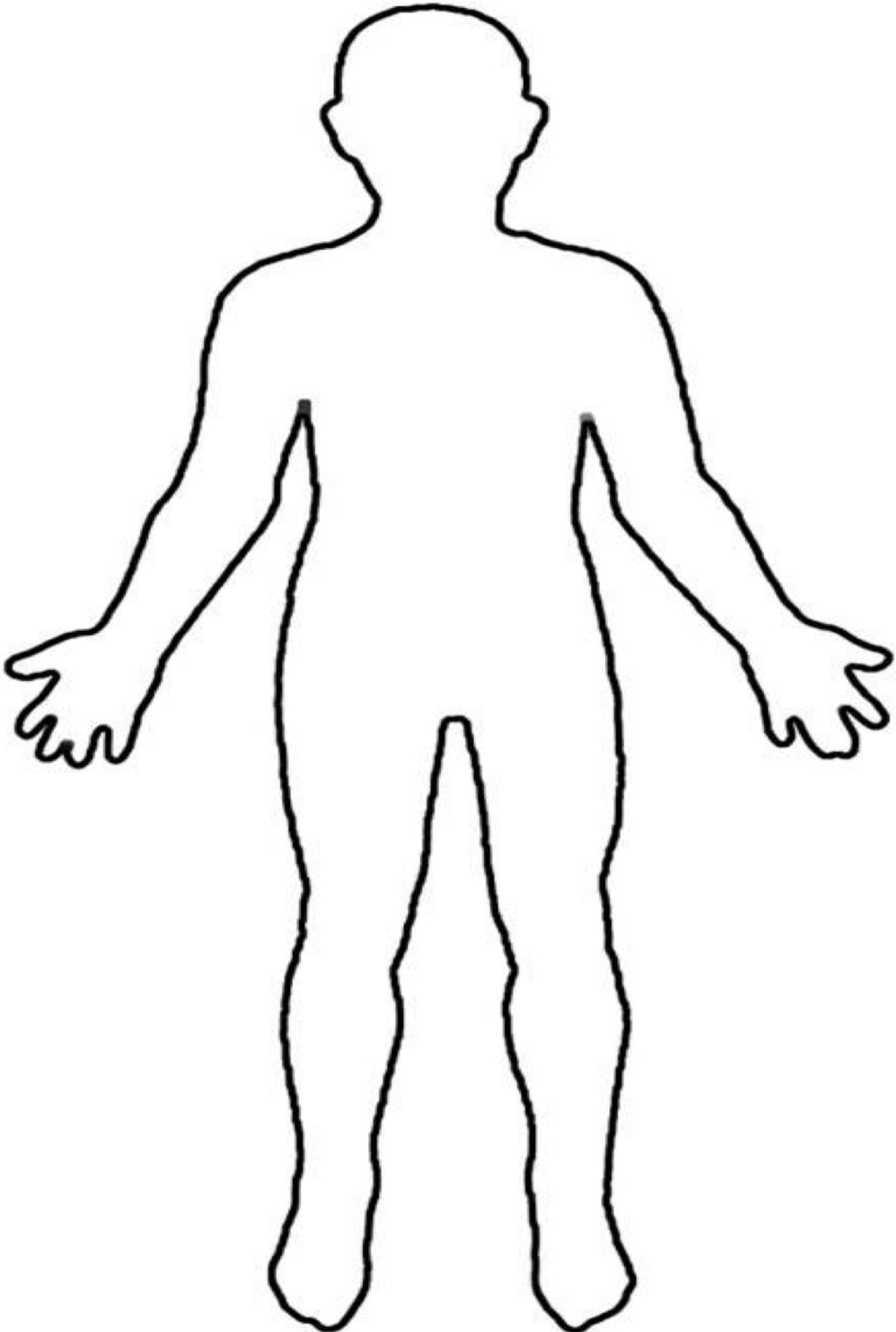
Unique, authentic, distinctive (see if students can add to this list)

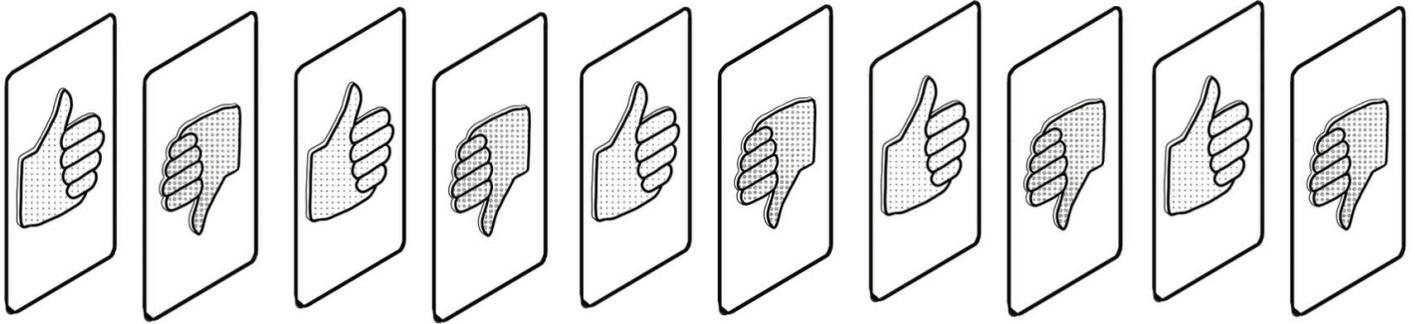
What makes you different and unique?

Instructions:

1. Inside the outline of the person (image on the next page), fill in the details that no one "sees" (wishes, dreams, fears, hopes, goals, etc.).
2. Outside the outline of the person, fill in all the details that everyone sees and understands (sports you play, hobbies, likes and dislikes, etc.).
3. Share with the class. Are there any similarities in our "differences"?







ACTIVIY #3

Be an Upstander, Be a Friend

DEFINITION

Upstander: a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

There are 4 steps to being an upstander - When we talk about being an upstander, here are things students can do:

1. Reach Out
 - Be a buddy to the person being hurt - "Hey! Do you want to join me over here?"
2. Speak Up
 - "Really, that was mean"
3. Be A Friend
 - "Are you okay?"
 - "I want to help"
4. Tell a Trusted Adult who can Help - In the performance, Derwent decides to go and see Ms. Ling about Lucas bullying him. This is a great choice, but what could his friends do as well?

Instructions:

In either a whole class discussion or in smaller groups, have a student(s) read out the line(s) from the play. Use the prompt questions to engage in a class discussion.

Scenario 1

LUCAS: "Oh yeah - I got a message for you from Ramona. She says she thinks you're a freak an' she wants you to leave her alone."

Question for Discussion: If you overheard Lucas speak to Derwent like this, what could you do to be a good friend and upstander?

Scenario 2

Derwent: "Or backward's day. That was your idea. We did that one for a whole weekend. We did everything backwards. We walked backwards. We talked backwards. Yeah it was hard at first but then remember how we got the hang of it. An' now we got like our own totally private language. Or at least we did when we were still actually talking to each other... An' what was like sooo wrong with that? Yeah it's "different" but like - it still like did the job - we could still communicate."

Question for Discussion: If someone saw you and your best friend doing backwards day and laughed and pointed- and you overheard and saw this - what could you do?

Scenario 3

RAMONA: "Sorry but I can't be seen talking to you anymore."

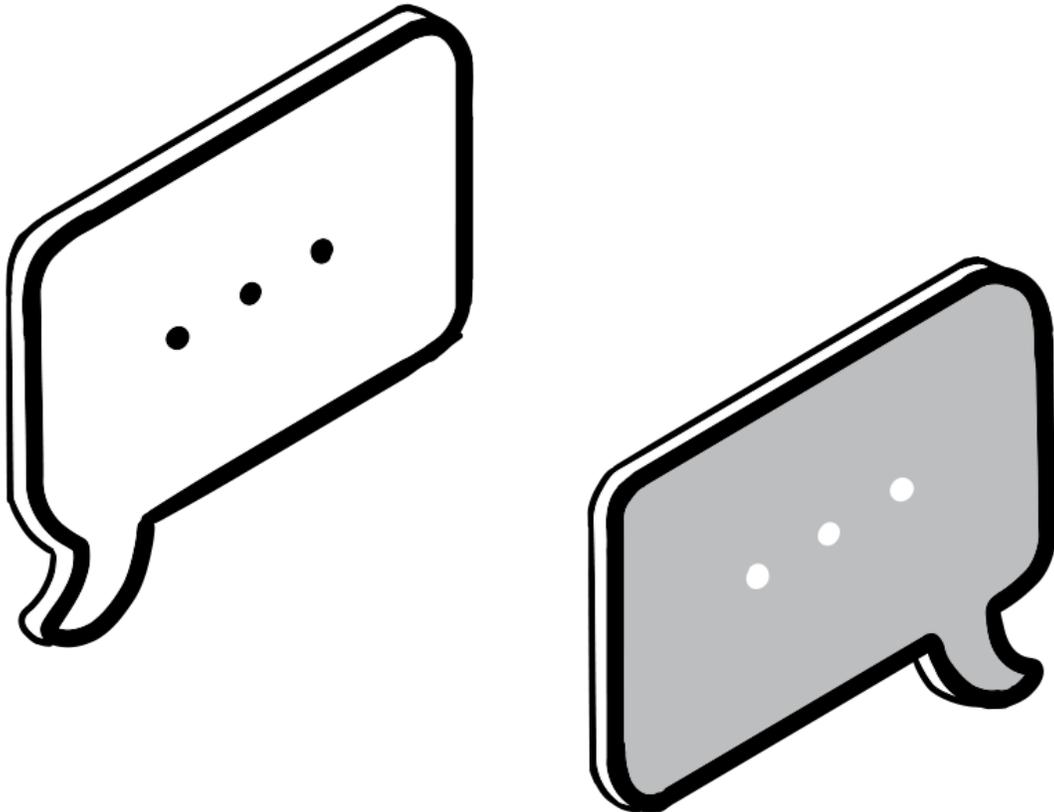
DERWENT: "But Ramona - why?"

RAMONA: "I just can't... "

DERWENT: "Ramona!"

RAMONA: "Please Derwent - just leave me alone... Freak!"

Question for Discussion: If you overheard Ramona call Derwent a freak, what could you do to be a good friend and an upstander?



CURRICULUM CONNECTORS

Physical and Health Education

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/physical-health-education/4/core>

- Identify and describe avoidance or assertiveness strategies to use in unsafe and/or uncomfortable situations
- Describe and assess strategies for responding to discrimination, stereotyping, and bullying
- Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity

Arts Education

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/arts-education/4/core>

- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences
- Examine relationships between the arts and the wider world
- Express feelings, ideas, and experiences in creative ways

English Language Arts

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/4/core>

- Recognize the role of language in personal, social, and cultural identity
- Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and deepen understanding of self, community, and world
- Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding

ANTI-BULLYING RESOURCES

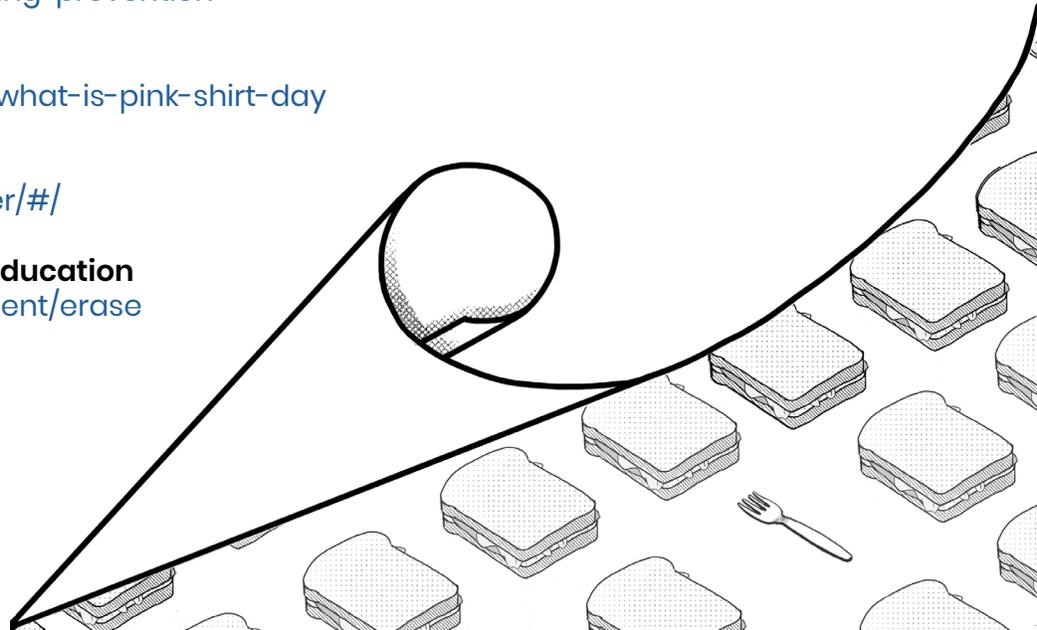
BEYOND THE HURT: Prevent bullying to create a safe environment for children and youth
<https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/violence-bullying-and-abuse-prevention/educators/bullying-and-harassment-prevention/bullying-and-harassment-prevention-programs>

Bullying Prevention: Facts & Tools for Schools
<https://www.pbis.org/topics/bullying-prevention>

Pink Shirt Day
<https://www.cbc.ca/kids/articles/what-is-pink-shirt-day>

Be an Upstander
<https://humanrights.ca/upstander/#/>

Erase = expect respect & a safe education
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS!

We love getting mail and your students' feedback!

GREEN THUMB THEATRE

Mailing address:

5522 McKinnon Street, Vancouver, BC, V5R 0B6

Email: info@greenthumb.bc.ca

Phone: 604-254-4055

Fax: 604-251-7002

Write a Letter!

Ask your students to write us a letter to share their thoughts and opinions on the performance of **Derwent is Different**. Send it to us at Green Thumb!

Write a Review!

Have your students write a theatre review about this performance of **Derwent is Different**. Send it in to us at Green Thumb!

A theatre review usually includes the following:

- A brief summary of the story
- A comment on the quality of the play itself
- A description of the costumes and set and a comment on whether these were interesting and appropriate
- A comment on the actors' portrayal of the characters and on the director's skill at pulling the whole show together

Check us out online!

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 [/GREENTHUMBTHEATRE](https://www.facebook.com/greenthumbtheatre)

 [@GR_THUMBTHEATRE](https://twitter.com/gr_thumbtheatre)

 [GREEN THUMB THEATRE](https://www.youtube.com/greenthumbtheatre)

[WWW.GREENTHUMB.BC.CA](http://www.greenthumb.bc.ca)

