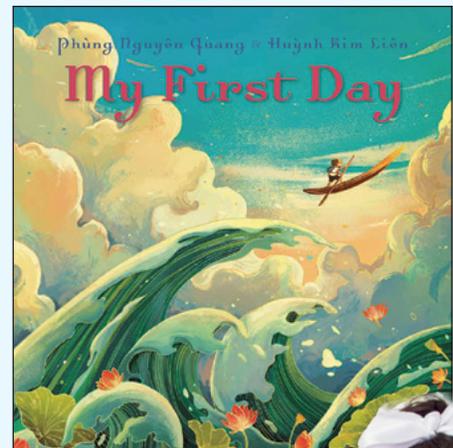
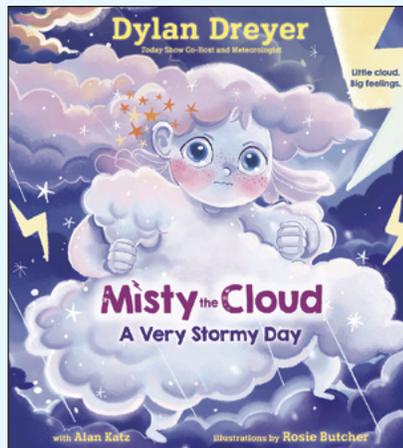
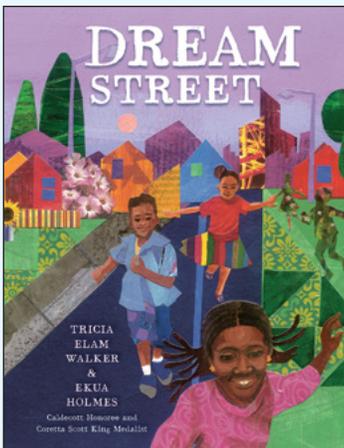
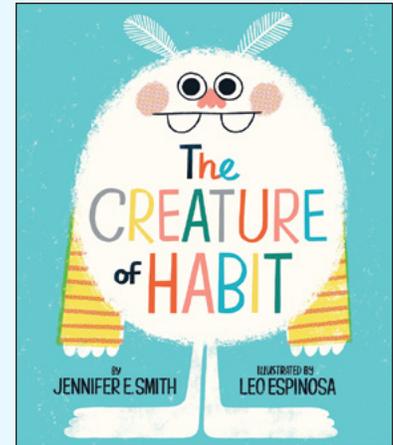
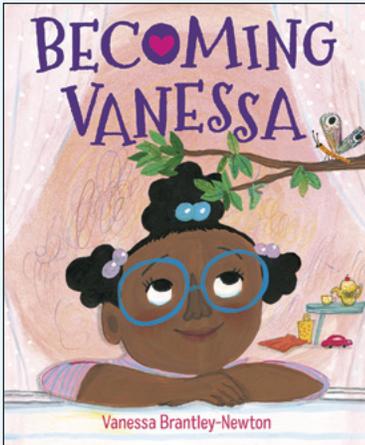




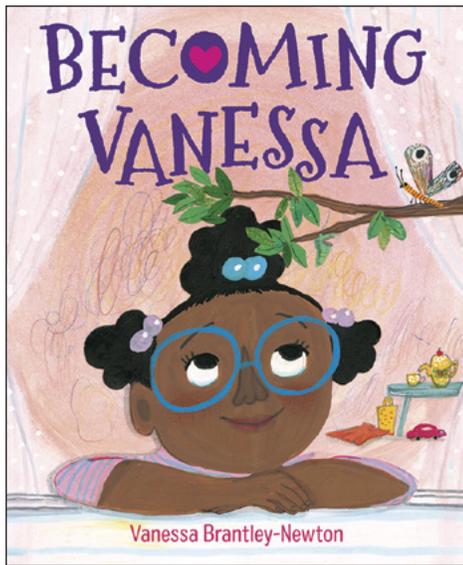
WELCOME BACK to School!



We hope you had a restful and rejuvenating summer and are excited for this new school year. To help you and your students kick off the year, we've worked with some of our wonderful picture book authors and illustrators to create a back-to-school program that uses read-alouds, engaging activities, and author videos to welcome students back and encourage conversation and creativity!

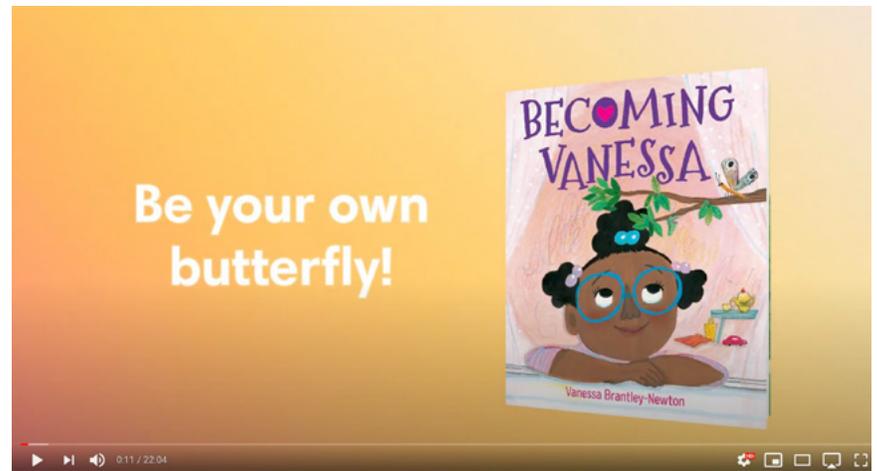
What you'll find: For each of the books above, you'll find an author/illustrator video with a welcome back to school message, a quick description of each book, and a related classroom activity! These videos can all be shared with your students, and the activities for each book are in this same packet.





About the Book

On Vanessa's first day of school, her parents tell her it will be easy to make friends. Vanessa isn't so sure. She wears her fanciest outfit so her new classmates will be able to notice her right away. Her classmates notice, but the attention isn't what she'd hoped it would be; as the day goes on, she feels more self-conscious. Her clothes are too bright, her feather boa has *way* too many feathers, and even her name is too hard to write. The next day, she picks a plain outfit, and tells her mom that her name is too long. She just wants to blend in. But when her mother tells her the meaning behind her name, it gives her the confidence she needs to introduce her classmates to the real Vanessa.



[Click here](#) to meet author-illustrator Vanessa Brantley-Newton and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *Becoming Vanessa*.

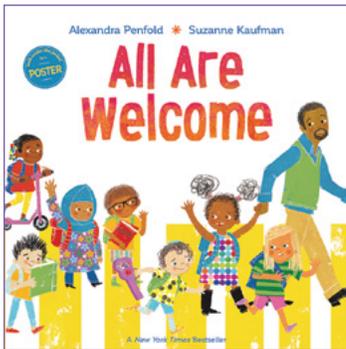
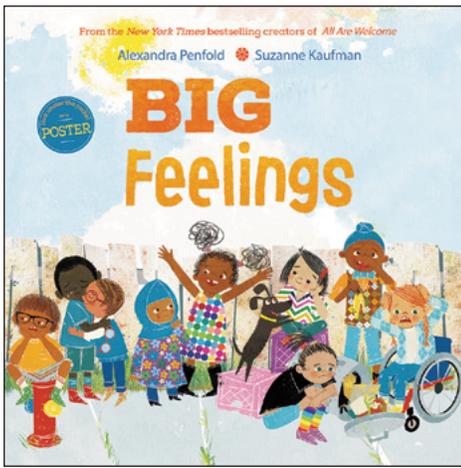


[Click here](#) for an Educators' Guide with discussion questions and additional activities.

Create . . .

Directions: Create your own classroom butterflies! Distribute a variety of papers to the students—newspapers, envelopes, construction paper—and have students make a collage out of them. Students can decorate papers, too. Next students should trace an outline of a butterfly—with teacher assistance depending on age—and then cut out the butterfly from the collage. Hang up the butterflies around the room, and talk about and celebrate what it means to grow throughout the year.





About the Book

In their bestselling picture book *All Are Welcome*, Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman celebrate kindness, inclusivity, and diversity. Now with *Big Feelings*, they help children navigate the emotional challenges they face in their daily lives. What should we do when things don't go to plan? We may feel mad, frustrated, or overwhelmed, but by talking it through, compromising, and seeing another point of view, we can start fresh, begin anew.



[Click here](#) to meet author Alexandra Penfold and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *Big Feelings*.



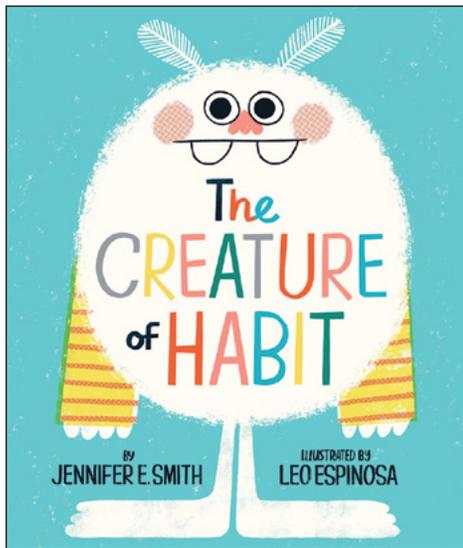
[Click here](#) for an Educators' Guide with discussion questions and additional activities for *Big Feelings*!

And [click here](#) for *All Are Welcome* activities!

Draw . . .

Directions: Have students draw their own back-to-school emotions. How are they feeling? How do they wish they were feeling? If students feel comfortable, have them share with a peer, small group, or the entire class.





About the Book

On the island of Habit, there lives a very big creature with big teeth, big eyes, and very big feet. Every day the creature does the exact same things in the exact same order. It is exactly the way the big creature likes it. That is, until a small boat carrying a very small creature with small teeth, small eyes, and very, *very* small feet arrives on the island. At first the big creature is excited to show the little creature around and explain how things are done on the island, but the small creature has his own ideas. Can these two creatures learn to appreciate each other? Is the island big enough for both of them? Told with heart and humor, this is a story about being open to new ways of doing things.



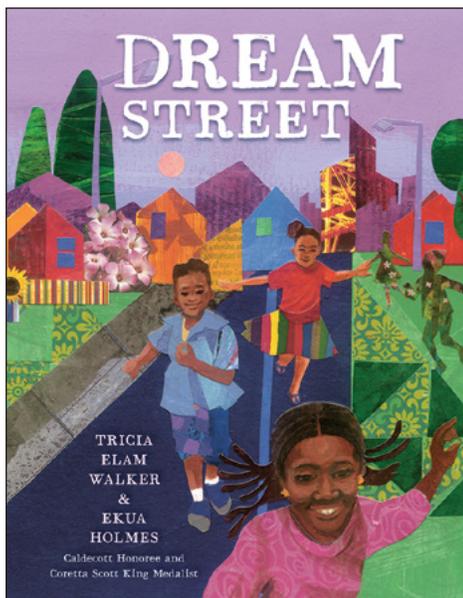
[Click here](#) to meet author Jennifer E. Smith and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *The Creature of Habit*.

Discuss . . .



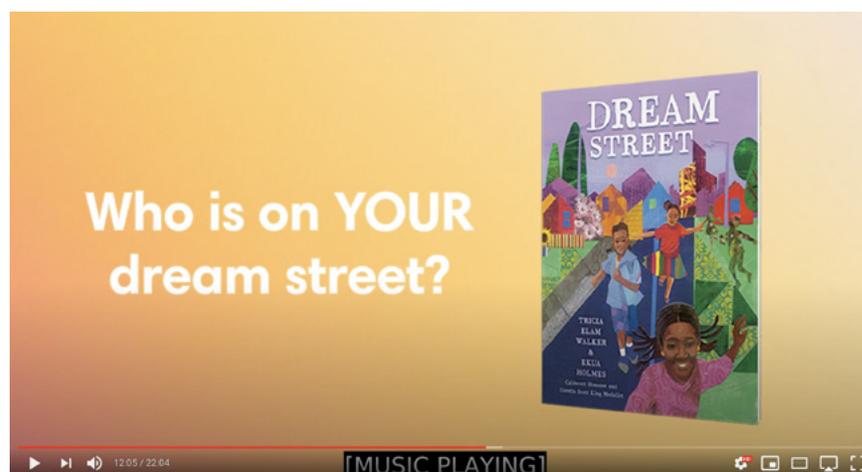
Directions: After reading, discuss the collections the two creatures have. Ask students to share with a partner or small group something they collect or would like to collect. You can also have students look around the school for items that can be collected—like sticks, leaves, or even stones! Students can get creative and make up their own creature from the island of Habit who would collect these items, or write a group story about his adventures and collections.





About the Book

Welcome to Dream Street—the best street in the world! It’s where love between generations rules, everyone is special, and the warmth of a neighborhood shines. This is the perfect book for parents to use to introduce children to the importance of community. Meet kids like Azaria, who loves to jump Double Dutch one leg at a time; Zion, whose dream is to become a librarian; and cousins Ede and Tari, who dream of creating a picture book together one day. Meet grown-ups like Mr. Sidney, a retired mail carrier who greets everyone with the words, “Don’t wait to *have* a great day. *Create* one!” and Ms. Sarah, whose voice is only a whisper but who has stories between the lines of her face that she’ll share when you come close.

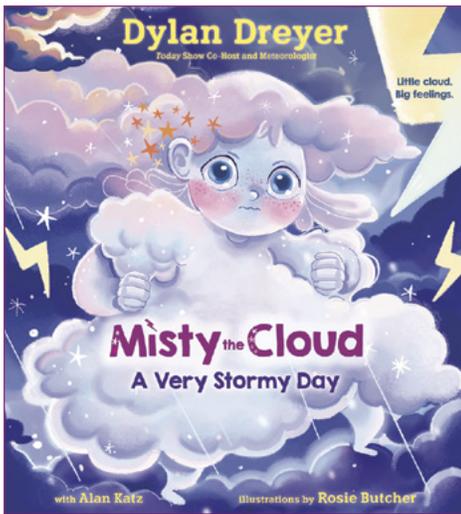


[Click here](#) to meet author Tricia Elam Walker and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *Dream Street*.

Discuss . . .

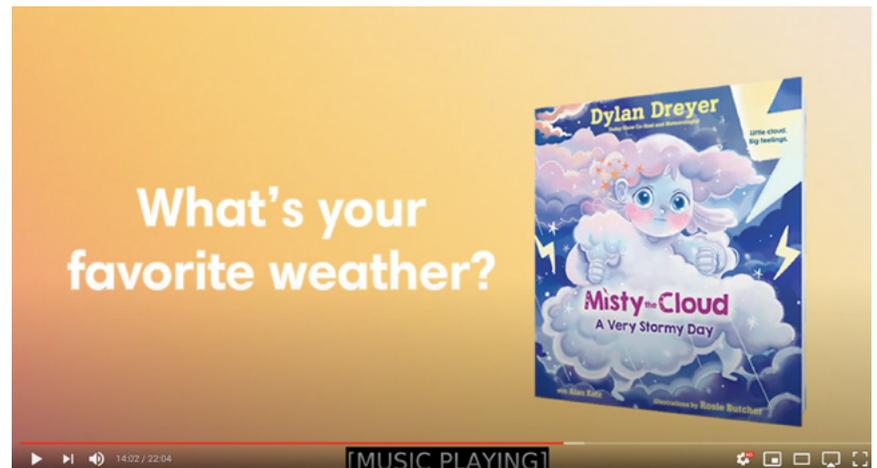
Directions: Discuss the beauty of Dream Street in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class. Have the students talk about whether they would like to live on Dream Street. If yes, with whom would they like to live there?





About the Book

TODAY Show co-host and meteorologist Dylan Dreyer launches a new picture book series featuring Misty—a little cloud with big feelings! Dylan combines her extensive weather knowledge with her experience as a mom in this very special social-emotional learning series. When Misty the Cloud wakes up feeling stormy, nothing seems to make her day better! And Misty’s grumbly mood affects everyone when her big emotions cause a thunderstorm to rumble across the sky. But with help from friends and family, Misty accepts that sometimes she’s just going to be a little stormy—and it will always pass. From award-winning meteorologist Dylan Dreyer, *Misty the Cloud: A Very Stormy Day* is the first book in a sky-high series about how to deal with good days, bad days, and everything in between.



[Click here](#) to meet author Dylan Dreyer and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *Misty the Cloud: A Very Stormy Day*.

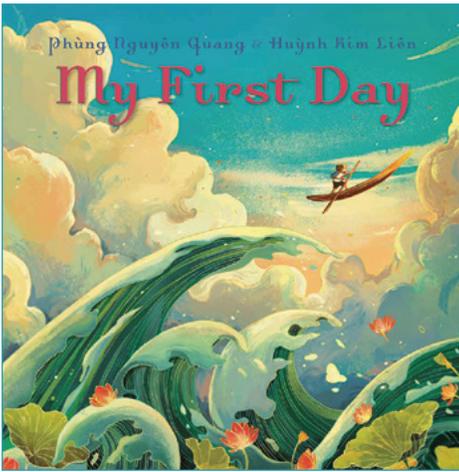


[Click here](#) for an Educators’ Guide with discussion questions and additional activities.

Think . . .

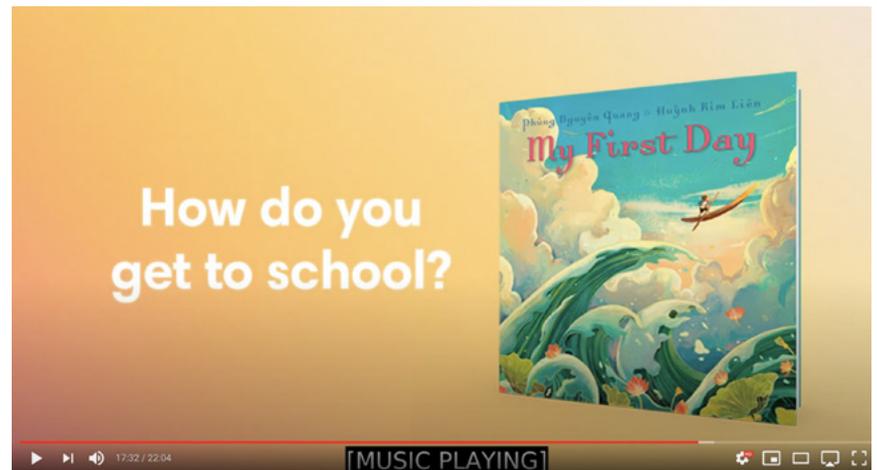
Directions: Have students think about their favorite and least favorite types of weather and how it makes them feel and why. Encourage students to daydream: if they were a cloud and could travel anywhere in the world—where would they want to go, and why?





About the Book

This is no ordinary first journey. The rainy season has come to the Mekong Delta, and An, a young Vietnamese boy, sets out alone in a wooden boat wearing a little backpack and armed with only a single oar. On the way, he is confronted by giant crested waves, heavy rainfall, and eerie forests where fear takes hold of him. Although daunted by the dark unknown, An realizes that he is not alone and continues to paddle. He knows it will all be worth it when he reaches his destination—one familiar to children all over the world.

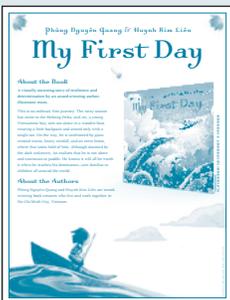


Click here to meet author-illustrators Phung Nguyen Quang and Huynh Kim Lien and to learn about a back-to-school activity for *My First Day*.

Create ...

Directions for students:

How do you get to school?
Create a map like the one in *My First Day* that shows in detail your journey to school. Use a poster or large sheet of paper and crayons, colored pencils, and markers to create your map. Share your voyage with the class and discuss how it is similar to and different from the story.



Click here for an Educators' Guide with discussion questions and additional activities.