



Readers respond in many ways to what they read, including making connections to themselves, their communities, and experiences. These tips provides suggestions and resources for supporting and extending young readers' understanding and authentic reading responses to *Snickerdoodle* by Victoria Kann. Select activities and resources that best meet students' needs and interests.

View, Read, Discuss

Plan for at least two read-aloud sessions. Provide print, visual, language, or audio support as needed. Consider how you will share the book's illustrations. Students will need a dedicated space to record their thinking such as a drawing journal, response folder, or class chart.

Read aloud *Snickerdoodle*. Experience the book as readers first. Resist stopping to ask questions too often, which can hinder attention and comprehension.

After the first reading, invite students to share:

-  What did you notice?
-  What surprised you?
-  What questions do you still have?

Record students' observations through drawings, dictation, photographs of student work, chart paper, or a shared digital space such as Padlet.

During a second reading, pause to examine the illustrations and compare them to the text. *Snickerdoodle* only sees his circumstances through his point of view. How do the illustrations help readers understand what is happening beyond *Snickerdoodle*'s thoughts?

Encourage students to point to details in the illustrations and explain their thinking using words, gestures, facial expressions, or drawings.

Reflection and Discussion

Snickerdoodle is not simply about individuality. It is about the universal childhood desire to belong and the realization that true belonging does not require changing who we are.

Use these questions throughout the book:

-  What do you think *Snickerdoodle* is feeling?
-  What clues in the illustrations help you know?
-  What advice would you give *Snickerdoodle*?



-  What lesson do you think Snickerdoodle learned?
-  How are Snickerdoodle and Princess Kitty different?
-  Why is it okay for them to be different?

Major Themes

Being Yourself: Everyone has unique strengths and qualities.

Wanting to Belong: We all want to feel accepted and loved.

Jealousy and Comparison: Comparing ourselves to others can make us forget our own strengths.

Family Love and Acceptance: Love is not something we earn by being perfect.

Learning from Mistakes: Mistakes help us learn and grow.

New Beginnings and Transitions: Starting something new can feel exciting and scary at the same time.

Different Doesn't Mean Better: Differences make families, friendships, and communities stronger.

Extension Activities

1. We Are Unique Portraits

Students create self-portraits that include their interests, talents, favorite activities, and important people. Display the artwork in a class gallery. Invite students to find similarities and differences between classmates and themselves.

2. Picture Detectives

Students search the illustrations for clues about characters' feelings. Create a class chart labeled "What Snickerdoodle Says" or "What We Notice in the Pictures."

3. Advice for Snickerdoodle

Students draw or write a note giving Snickerdoodle advice. Teachers may record dictation for younger children.

4. Belonging Quilt

Each child decorates a paper square showing something important about themselves. Combine the squares into a classroom quilt that celebrates belonging and individuality.

5. Same and Different

Create a class Venn diagram comparing Snickerdoodle and Princess Kitty. Discuss how differences help make relationships interesting and strong.

6. I Learned from a Mistake

Students draw and label a time they learned something after making a mistake. Share examples and discuss.

7. Welcome Circle

Brainstorm ways to help someone feel welcome when they are new to your classroom. Create a class poster of ideas.





8. Feelings Freeze Frames

Students act out important moments from the story using facial expressions and body language. Classmates identify the emotions being portrayed.

9. My Story Connection

Students draw and share a personal connection to the story, such as starting school, moving homes, changing classrooms, welcoming a new sibling, making new friends, or taking care of a new pet.

10. I Am Special Because...

Students complete the sentence stem “I am special because...” through writing, drawing, or dictation.

Social-Emotional Connection

Many children will relate to being the new student, joining a team, moving to a new neighborhood, or welcoming a new sibling. This story reassures children that they are valued even when they struggle or feel different from others.

Learning Through Mistakes

Children often worry about getting things wrong. Invite students to discuss how mistakes can teach us new things and help us make better choices.

Additional Stories About Belonging and Acceptance



It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr



Rock What Ya Got by Samantha Berger



***Don't Touch My Hair!* by Sharee Miller**



The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend by Dan Santat



***Shine!* by Patrick McDonnell and Naoko Stoop**

Invite students to compare the characters, feelings, and themes in these stories with those in *Snickerdoodle*. How do the characters learn that they belong? How are their experiences similar to or different from Snickerdoodle's?

These Teaching Tips were prepared by Donalyn Miller. Find her at bookwhisperer.com, theauthorvillage.com, on X at [@donalynbooks](https://twitter.com/donalynbooks), and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/donalynbook.