



Life Lessons Teacher's Guide

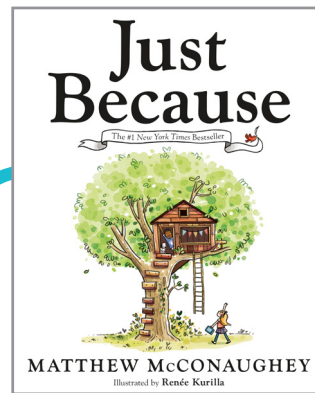
IMAGINATION IN ACTION



This guide helps teachers **PREPARE** for the Crayola Creativity Week daily theme *Life Lessons*. You can print the two downloadable Thinking Sheets: *Visual Voice* and *Creative Leadership* or you could use the Thinking Sheets as your guide while students work on plain paper. Either way, they can use a variety of art materials you have on hand. Crayola Colors of the World® colored pencils, crayons, or markers are great for drawing authentic skin tones.

In his book *Just Because*, Matthew McConaughey shows the value of challenging assumptions and encourages children to reconsider how they interpret everyday experiences including what people say and do. Filled with humor and serious reflection, the author provides robust opportunities to engage students in conversations about real-life *just because* experiences. Illustrator Renée Kurilla adds thought-provoking scenes that students can relate to, summed up by the page that shows *how I see it* is not always the same as *how you see it*.

Challenge your students to examine situations and consider various possible causes or multiple reasons why something might have occurred and what different people might be thinking about a shared experience. Ask them how their real-life experiences align with the positive life lessons that the author and illustrator presented in *Just Because*.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES—Students will:

- examine situations to consider various possible causes or multiple reasons something could occur,
- identify misunderstandings and be open to other ways of looking at behaviors and emotions,
- challenge assumptions, particularly those based on something they have seen or heard but don't fully understand,
- realize there are many creative ways to demonstrate leadership, including “lead from behind,”
- reveal ways people can have several contradictory thoughts or feelings at the same time,
- celebrate non-verbal ways that people share their voice, and
- build upon the positive life lessons presented in *Just Because*.



Using the *Visual Voice* Thinking Sheet, students will **RESPOND** to Matthew McConaughey's suggestion that they find and use their visual voice to express thoughts and feelings non-verbally. If students are unfamiliar with the concept of visual voice, ask them to cite examples of how music, dance, visual art, and Matthew's favorite—drama can express ideas without saying a word.



CONNECT the book's main points that misunderstandings can be corrected and assumptions can be overturned when we put our imaginations into action to embrace alternative ways of seeing situations. Ask students to share examples of this based on their personal experiences.



**Penguin
Young
Readers**

Just Because
Penguin Young Readers
Text ©2023 by Matthew McConaughey
Illustration ©2023 by Renée Kurilla



Learning

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As students **CREATE** a visual voice sketch, ask them to focus on the facial expression and body language that helps communicate their message.



As students **PRESENT** their *visual voice* art to classmates have a class discussion about the ways images around them communicate without words. Collaboratively explore billboards, websites, social media graphics, or book illustrations and ask each student to describe the main message the art is communicating. Then ask how similar or different their interpretations are of the visual voices the class explored.



Using the *Creative Leadership* Thinking Sheet, students will **RESPOND** to Matthew McConaughey's belief that "we are all leaders" and we should "celebrate all the creative ways people lead!" Encourage them to consider various leadership styles and examples they observe in the classroom, community, and world.



Ask students to **CONNECT** their personal leadership style to examples found in the book *Just Because* or that they've observed in real life. Delve into the style called "lead from behind" by asking students what they think it means and to describe examples of it. Can they think of times when they've helped others succeed or used creativity to come up with winning ideas that they generously shared with others? How can improving communication, building trust within a team, or changing assumptions all be examples of leading from behind?



As students **CREATE** a creative leadership sketch ask them to focus on a leadership style they embrace or celebrate. Remind them of some of the examples from the book. For example, "Just because you got the gold, doesn't mean that you won" and "Just because you failed, doesn't mean that you blew it." Leaders learn from mistakes. They help others feel proud.



As students **PRESENT** their creative leadership sketches and explain the leadership qualities they celebrate, ask them to cite examples of how this is demonstrated in school and at home.



After students have completed the *Life Lessons* activities, discuss the **LEARNING OBJECTIVES** with them. Ask students to **REFLECT** on their growth and assess their progress in each of those areas. Have a class discussion about how student self-assessment involves many of the leadership skills that the book addressed.

Note for teachers and parents:

For more creative inspiration and hands-on explorations go to Crayola.com/CreativityWeek
To share student artwork on social media please post using [#CrayolaCreativityWeek](https://twitter.com/CrayolaCreativityWeek)
We can't wait to see what they create.



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