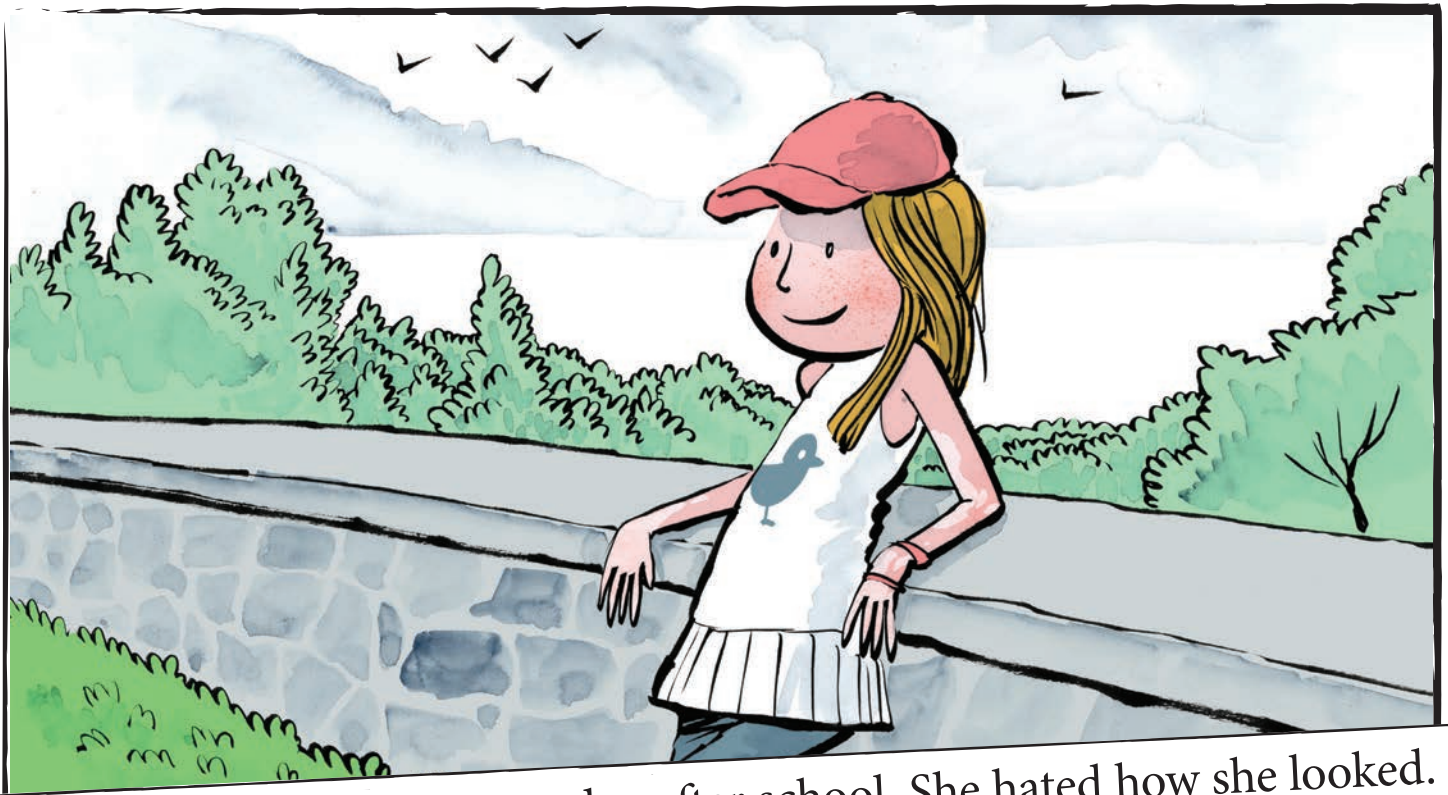


A “Different” Role Model



Ava Bright used to cry everyday after school. She hated how she looked. The 11-year-old was being bullied and teased. Today she is a successful clothing model. She is confident and happy with her life. What a change!

Ava has a skin condition called vitiligo. Her skin has white patches where the **pigment** has disappeared. It looks blotchy. People sometimes stare or say rude things.

“It was pretty crushing,” said her mother. She wondered how she could help her daughter feel better about herself.

Then her mother saw a Facebook post. An online clothing company was looking for child models who looked “different.” Modelling had always been one of Ava’s dreams. So her mother contacted the company and sent Ava’s photo.



Something's color is its **pigment**.

“We were in New York three weeks later.”

Ava did a photo shoot for a back-to-school promotion. She modelled dresses and short-sleeved shirts. Her vitiligo was plainly visible. That was okay with her.

“It [the photo shoot] felt really good,” she says. “I like making a difference in the world. I like showing people who I am.”

“I think it’s just great,” says her father. He is proud that Ava is embracing her condition. She’s choosing to model it instead of hiding it.

“I’ve definitely seen Ava get a lot of self-confidence,” he says. “And what’s really good is she’s making these choices for herself.”

The ‘perfect’ body

Aren’t models supposed to look perfect? Not necessarily. Ava’s agent says the industry is changing.

“I think people are bored of seeing perfect bodies and perfect faces.”

“Today, the more interesting and different you are, the better.”

That’s good news, and not just for models like Ava. It’s also great for kids with disabilities and differences who look at these ads.

“To see others like themselves is empowering,” says the founder of an organization called Changing the Face of Beauty. Her daughter has Down syndrome.

“It can inspire them to... reach for bigger goals in life.”

The ads also help the public to be more accepting of differences.

Making a difference

Today Ava is stronger and more self-assured.

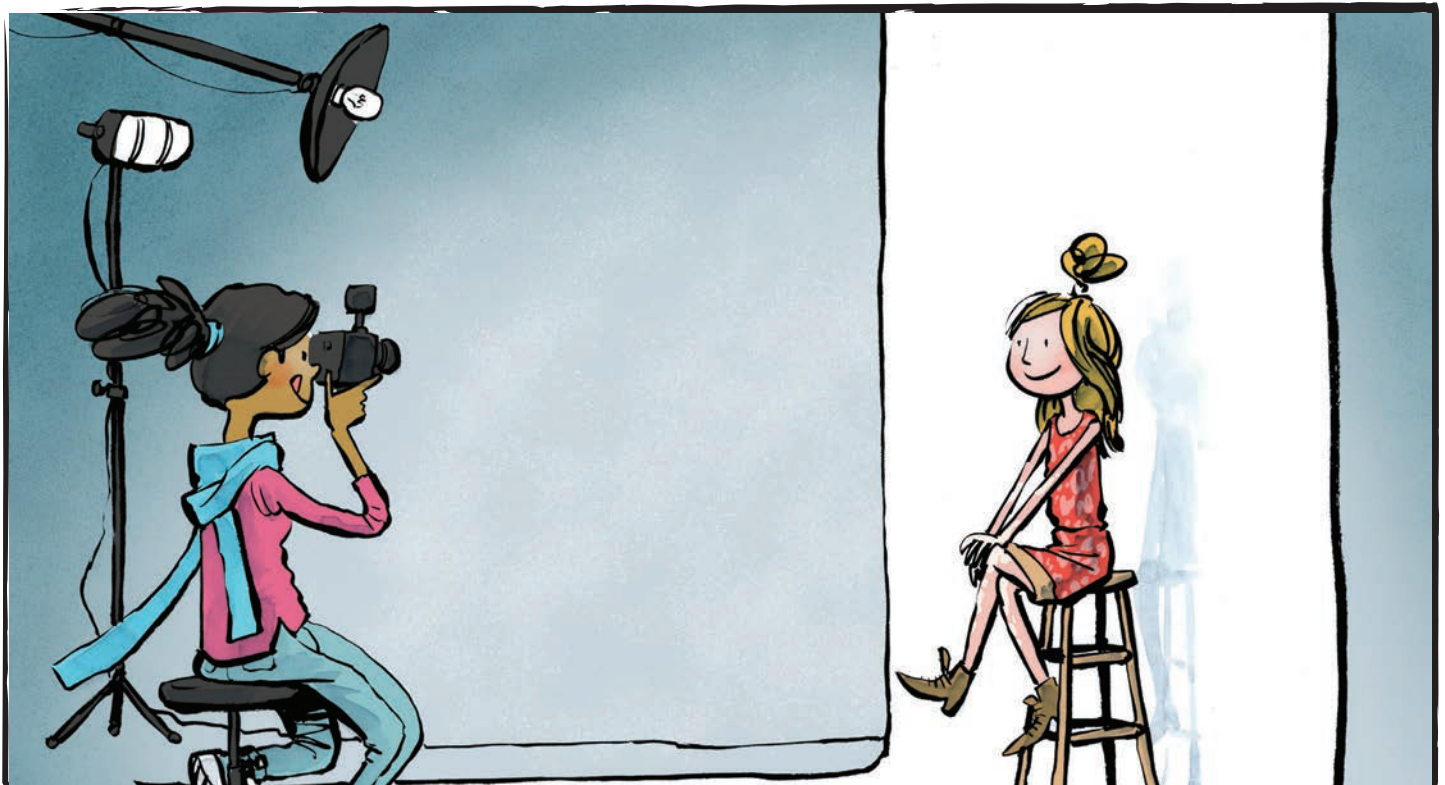
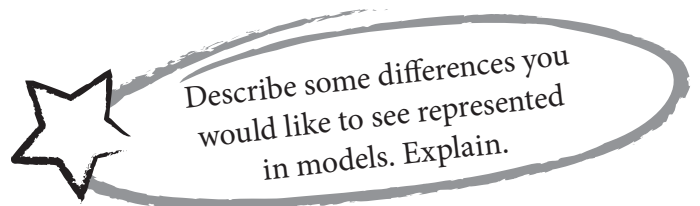
“I had to take time to find myself and figure out who I am,” she says. “Now I love my vitiligo.”

“I want to put it out there that everybody is different. People who are different can do great things too.”

The Grade 7 student from London, Ontario encourages other people to love who they are.

“Would you rather live life depressed and hate how you look? Or would you rather live life happy?” she asks.

“You only live life once, so you might as well live it at your best.”



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Comprehension Check

Answer the questions below in complete sentences:

1. Where is Ava Bright from?

2. What is vitiligo?

3. Why was Ava bullied and teased in school?

4. Why was Ava chosen as a model?

5. What is the impact of seeing “different” models in ads?

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Language Focus

Match each word from the list below with its correct definition:

confident	depressed	embrace	empower
industry	inspire	promotion	visible

1. _____ to completely accept something such as a new belief, idea, or way of life
2. _____ the people or companies who work in a particular kind of business
3. _____ clear, obvious, or noticeable
4. _____ to give someone more control over his or her life, or more power to do something
5. _____ believing in one's own abilities
6. _____ the process of attracting people's attention to a product or event, for example by advertising
7. _____ to give someone the enthusiasm to do or create something
8. _____ feeling unhappy and low in spirits

A “Different” Role Model

Lesson Plan

Before Reading:

- Purchase a bag of Smarties and a bag marshmallows. Count several of each into paper cups; one cup per student. Hand out cups to the class, with the instruction, “*Use each of your senses to fully describe both candies on the inside and the outside.*”
- Following their close investigation, ask students to share their observations, then individually reflect on these questions:
 - How are Smarties and marshmallows alike? How are they different?
 - How are Smarties and marshmallows like people? Explain.
 - Are you more like a Smartie or a marshmallow? Explain.
 - What influences people to be more like a Smartie or a marshmallow?
- Read the title of the article and the headings aloud. Invite students to predict how Ava Bright (the subject of the article) might be a ‘different’ role model.

During Reading:

- As students read the article, encourage them to highlight or underline important information about Ava Bright, her difference, and how she is making a difference.

After Reading:

- Using appropriate technology, project a photo of Ava, such as: <https://binged.it/2tnb27C> or <https://binged.it/2trxBRI>. Facilitate a **Think-Pair-Share** discussion by asking pairs of students to discuss the following questions:
 - Is Ms. Bright more like a Smartie or a marshmallow? Explain.
 - How is her difference making a difference?
- Finally, ask individual students to reflect on their own differences. What makes them unique that they are proud of? Suggest that it could be a physical characteristic, a cultural difference, a special talent or skill, or a personal quality. Some students may find it easier to respond to a stem (e.g., *I have beautiful... I’m great at... I am a fantastic... One thing I’m proud of... I am very...*).
- Invite them to illustrate and label their difference on a coloured piece of construction paper that is cut in a circle (like a Smartie). String Smarties together to create a wall display entitled ‘Celebrating Our Differences’.
- Criteria for Assessment:** A personal reflection is *meaningful* and *true*.

Extension:

- Option 1: Reflect on when a difference made a difference*
Read the children’s book *Spork* by Kyo Maclear. Connect theme of the book back to the article. Then, invite students to reflect on a time when another person’s difference made them better or a situation better (or their own difference made someone else or a situation better). Have them

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Lesson Plan

represent this moment on a quadrama. How-to instructions for a quadrama can be found at:
<https://layers-of-learning.com/quadrama/>.

- Option 2: Explore the influence of media on body image*

MediaSmarts has several lesson plans on the influence of media on body image. Check out the selection and choose one that best reflects the needs and interests of your students, at:

<http://mediasmarts.ca/>. Select topic ‘body image’ from the pull down menu found under Teacher Resources.

Internet Connections:

- Learn more about this news story:

<https://lfpres.com/entertainment/local-arts/ava-bright-just-wants-to-have-fun-and-change-the-world>

- Look at Ava Bright’s modeling portfolio:

<https://www.anitanorrismodels.com/kids-and-teens/all/1370583/ava-bright/portfolio>

- Find out more about vitiligo:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vitiligo/symptoms-causes/syc-20355912>

<https://medbroadcast.com/condition/getcondition/vitiligo>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co3CyDuKy_o

- Explore the Changing Face of Beauty’s website:

<http://changingthefaceofbeauty.org/>

Note: All URLs are posted as links at <http://www.lesplan.com/en/links>