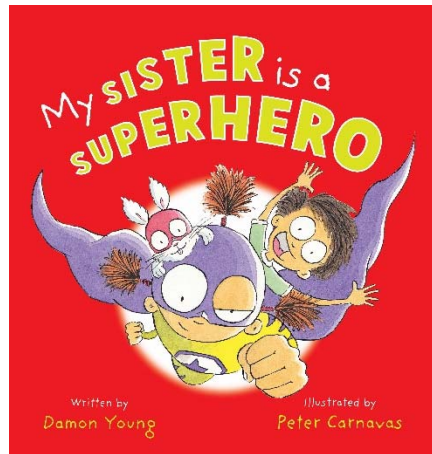


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MY SISTER IS A SUPERHERO

Damon Young and Peter
Carnavas



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising teacher librarian
in context with the Australian curriculum
(English)

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SYNOPSIS

Not all sisters are quite as unique as this sister. She can fly, read stories and bench press like no other. But most of all, she takes time to be with her brother, who is her number one fan.

My Sister is a Superhero is a story in which sisters of all shapes and sizes are celebrated. And this sister just happens to be a superhero, too!

THEMES

- Sisters
- Poetic devices
- Superheroes

WRITING STYLE

My Sister is a Superhero is written in first person, present tense. It is witty and rhythmic and would appeal to an early childhood audience. The illustrations allow for quality visual literacy. Stereotypes are challenged as the girls featured in the text break traditional molds.

STUDY NOTES

- Read the text aloud, allowing students to enjoy the illustrations and poetic flow of the narrative. Discuss the use of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and other poetic devices. How do these add to the mood and pace of the story?
- *My Sister is a Superhero* allows for excellent visual literacy. Examine the illustrations carefully. How do they add to the written text?
- In *My Sister is a Superhero*, we meet four very different sisters. Create a character profile of each sister, including:
 - How they dress
 - What modes of transport they use
 - What they do for a job
 - Where they travel
 - What they eat
 - What their pastimes are
 - What they dream about.
- Create a character profile of your own sister using the above criteria.
- Discuss how *My Sister is a Superhero* breaks the stereotype of the typical sister. How do the illustrations and text work together to break this stereotype?
- How has humour been used in both the written text and illustrations to represent each sister?
- Imagine you are one of the sisters. Write a letter about your adventures.

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- On each page, sepia-coloured vignettes tell us more about the superhero sister. Discuss these illustrations. What are we being told via these vignettes? How do these help us to gain a better understanding of the superhero sister?
- Each of the sisters has a 'sidekick' in the form of an animal. Discuss heroes and their sidekicks (e.g., Batman and Robin; Harry Potter and Ron Weasley). Look carefully at the illustrations of these sidekicks, including the end papers with the superhero sister and her rabbit. What role do these sidekicks play?
- Write a reflection about the relationship that you share with a sibling.
- Write a poem about one of the sisters in the text, using poetic devices such as alliteration, rhythm and rhyme.
- Using a suitable graphic organiser, compare *My Sister is a Superhero* with *My Pop is a Pirate* and/or *My Nanna is a Ninja*, also by Damon Young and Peter Carnavas. How are they similar to and/or different from one another?
- Create your own illustrated verse to add to this text, including all four sisters.
- Rewrite the story of one of the sisters as a narrative. Include some dialogue, using correct language conventions.
- Using a comic strip app, create a comic strip of the superhero sister's antics.
- What is a superhero? What are the qualities or characteristics of superheroes? Who is your favourite superhero? Why?
- Hold a 'Superhero Party' in the classroom. Dress as your favourite superhero. Create party invitations and invite other members from the school community.
- Borrow a range of comic books and graphic novels from your school library. What is unique about these texts?
- Draw/create your own superhero characters. What are their powers? What are their personal qualities?
- Design a range of outfits the superhero sister and her sidekick could wear.
- Create your own story that celebrates brothers – '*My Brother is a ...*'
- What do you admire about the relationship between the brother and his superhero sister? What makes their relationship so special? How do you think they keep their relationship strong and positive?

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MOTIVATION

Of what inspired the book, Damon says, 'I wanted a picture book that kids – like my seven-year-old daughter – could giggle to, before shouting "TO THE SKIES" with their cape and mask on. Along the way, I wanted it to be educational: playing with rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and perhaps some new words.'

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Peter also found inspiration in his family. 'Growing up with my own superhero sister, it was a thrill to bring one to life on the page. Damon's text gave me so many wacky images to work with and it allowed me a legitimate excuse to study superheroes for days on end. I especially love the ending ... who wouldn't want to read stories while flying above the city?'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Damon Young is a philosopher and writer. He's the author of several popular nonfiction books, including *Distraction*, *Philosophy in the Garden* and *How to Think About Exercise*. He's also the editor of *Martial Arts and Philosophy: Beating and Nothingness*. Damon's books have been published internationally, and translated into several languages, including Dutch, Spanish and Turkish. He's written columns and opinion for *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, the ABC and BBC, and he's a regular radio guest. Damon has also published poetry and short fiction. He lives in Melbourne with his wife, Ruth, and two editors (also known as children). www.damonyoung.com.au

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Peter Carnavas grew up in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. He became a primary school teacher and it was during this time that he began to immerse himself in picture books. His first book, *Jessica's Box*, was shortlisted for the 2008 Queensland Premier's Literary Award and the 2009 CBCA Crichton Award for Emerging Illustrators. He has since written and illustrated many picture books, which have been translated into German, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch. Peter lives on the Sunshine Coast with his wife, two daughters and a scruffy dog that occasionally escapes.

www.petercarnavas.com