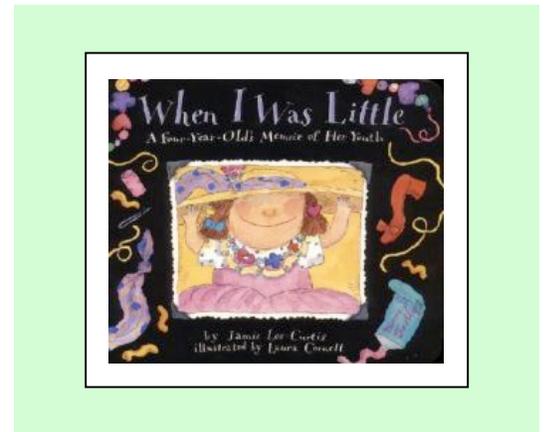


When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth

Written by Jamie Lee Curtis
Illustrated by Laura Cornell

Published: 1993 ISBN: 978-0-06-021 Length: 30 pages



Genre: Narrative, Memoir
Subjects: Writing, Reading

Educational Themes: Compare and Contrast, Repetitive Story Structure

SUMMARY

When I Was Little is a young girl's celebration of being grown up. Each page begins with the phrase, "When I was little..." and juxtaposes the young girls' accomplishments with her less capable younger sibling, who must eat mush-not spaghetti, swim naked-not in a swim suit, and needs to be helped constantly rather than being helpful. Jaime Lee Curtis weaves pre-school age achievements with a grown up dose of humor and Laura Cornell's illustrations delightfully depict a little girl, who is still little, yet feels so big.

WHAT'S INSIDE

6-Traits

Writer's Craft

Habits of Mind

Hawaiian Value

General Learner Outcomes

6-TRAIT

IDEAS: *When I Was Little* is a memoir written from the perspective of a small child, a mentor text that helps students understand how a narrative can describe one's memories of a time that once was.

ORGANIZATION: Each page begins with "When I was little..." Students can recreate this repeating pattern in books of their own, choosing several memories to include.

CONVENTIONS: This story provides students the opportunity to study past tense and present tense verbs. These can be written out on a tree map for students to see more clearly.

WRITER'S CRAFT

PERSPECTIVE: The story is told from the perspective of a pre-school aged child. Students can think about how the story would be different if told from the perspective of the child's mother or younger sibling.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST: Each page in the story is a contrast of where we all start off with where we are today.

HABITS OF MIND

PERSISTANCE: The main character arrives at her present level of achievement through practicing doing grown up girl things. Continuing to persist will lead her to being even more grown up.

HAWAIIAN VALUE

KŪPONO (Excellence): The young girl strives for excellence (and to be grown up) in all that she does.

KULEANA (responsibility): Since she is now more responsible, she is also granted more privileges.

GENERAL LEARNER OUTCOMES

SELF DIRECTED LEARNER: This story models that when children take it upon themselves to learn and grow, they are granted more grown up responsibilities and privileges.

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT AND NOTICE...

- ☑ Students can participate in a discussion of the author's comparison between then and now with respect to language and action.
- ☑ Discussion can extend to predictions of accomplishments once the young girl is older and even more capable of independence.
- ☑ It is significant to point out how the author ends the story, because it breaks the normal pattern of repetition drawing the reader in, and ending satisfactorily.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Compare the ways that the little girl has changed to ways that you have also changed from when you were little?
- Predict how this story would continue if the little girl was your age. What new things would she be able to do and celebrate?
- Can you infer why the author chose to write an ending that was different from the rest of the book's pattern?

OTHER RELATED BOOKS

My Big Sister by Valorie Fisher

My Big Brother by Valorie Fisher

Do you Know What I'll do? by Charlotte Zolotow

When I was young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant,

No David by David Shannon

POSSIBLE CONNECTION ACTIVITIES

- Memoir Writing: Students can write their own memoirs with a repeating pattern and compare and contrast structure in the writing workshop.
- Letter Writing: Students can write a letter to someone younger than themselves about all the exciting things they will be able to do when they "grow up."
- Flow Map or Timeline: Students can create a flow map or timeline of their accomplishments, organized chronologically.

When I Was Little book. Read 144 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell perfectly capture a little gi...Â Goodreads helps you keep track of books you want to read. Start by marking "When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth" as Want to Read: Want to Read savingâ€¦| Want to Read.