



ISBN: 9781460755037

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Date of Publication: February 2019

Say Hello

By Carly Findlay

Summary

'In fairytales, the characters who look different are often cast as the villain or monsters. It's only when they shed their unconventional skin that they are seen as "good" or less frightening. There are very few stories where the character that looks different is the hero of the story ... I've been the hero of my story - telling it on my own terms, proud about my facial difference and disability, not wanting a cure for my rare, severe and sometimes confronting skin condition, and knowing that I am beautiful even though I don't have beauty privilege.'

This honest, outspoken and thought-provoking memoir by award-winning writer and appearance activist Carly Findlay will challenge all your assumptions and beliefs about what it is like to have a visibly different appearance. Carly lives with a rare skin condition, Ichthyosis, and what she faces every day, and what she has to live with, will have you cheering for her and her courage and irrepressible spirit. This is both a moving memoir and a proud manifesto on disability and appearance diversity issues.

'Believe the hype - by turns frank, funny, and fearsome, Findlay's extraordinary memoir is an early contender for 2019's best Australian non-fiction ... a powerful and moving invitation to examine the structures of privilege and dehumanisation that we so desperately need address in this country.' *Better Read Than Dead*

Key Learning Outcomes

ACEEN001, ACEEN002, ACEEN004, ACEEN005, ACEEN008, ACEEN009, ACEEN018

Themes

Self-Confidence, Representation of ability & disability, Difference, Unconscious bias, Assumptions & beliefs

Recommended Ages: 12+

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

Manifesto

In small groups*:

- On butchers paper, each member of your group records the first word, image or phrase that comes to mind when they hear the word “manifesto”.
 - What similarities or differences can you see between responses?
 - Between the members of your group, compose a definition of “manifesto”.
- Using a dictionary, write the definition of this word on to your group’s butchers paper.
 - How close was your group definition to this “official” definition?
 - Why do you think there may have been differences between what you thought the word meant, and what it really means?
- As a class, share your findings with each other.
- What other manifestos can you think of?

Synonyms: platform, proclamation, announcement, statement of belief, edict

Memoir

In small groups*:

- On butchers paper, each member of your group records the first word, image or phrase that comes to mind when they hear the word “memoir”.
 - What similarities or differences can you see between responses?
 - Between the members of your group, compose a definition of “memoir”.
- Using a dictionary, write the definition of this word on to your group’s butchers paper.
 - How close was your group definition to this “official” definition?
 - Why do you think there may have been differences between what you thought the word meant, and what it really means?
- As a class, share your findings with each other.
- What other memoirs have you encountered?

Synonyms: account, anecdote, chronicle, journal, treatise, life story, discourse

*This activity may also be undertaken on a shared online document.

During Reading

Prologue

As a class, read the Prologue & A Note on Language together.

- What is the purpose of each of these sections of the book?
- Typically, authors include notes on language & terminology at the end of books. Why do you think Carly has chosen to include A Note on Language at the beginning?
 - After you have read the book, come back to this question and discuss how your answer may have changed.

Exploring Language

Individually or in small groups, assign students a chapter or group of chapters to analyse.

Features of a Manifesto	Features of a Memoir
Highly persuasive	First person perspective
Essay style	Use of real dates, places & people
Timely & relevant (responds to or attempts to inspire social change/need)	Dialogue
Provocative	Episodic narrative
	Reflective

For each chapter that you have been assigned:

- Identify if the chapter is more manifesto or memoir.
 - Provide examples & technical analysis (at least 3 for each chapter) to support your opinion.
- Write a paragraph which explains the key theme/idea of the chapter, and why Carly Findlay has presented it primarily in the form of memoir or manifesto.

Extension Activity – Students should attempt to rewrite part of one of the chapters they have analysed in a different genre/text type. For example, if the chapter they examined is primarily manifesto, they may attempt to rewrite it as memoir, prose narrative or script.

After Reading

Letter Writing

As a class, or individually, students identify the most important message they have taken from *Say Hello*. They then compose a letter or email to Carly Findlay in which they discuss how & why they have been changed by the book. Students should provide evidence from the text. If appropriate, students may also outline what changes they are going to make to themselves, their school or their wider community because of reading *Say Hello*.

Multi-Modal Text

Students compose a presentation – e.g. PowerPoint or Prezi – which uses a combination of text, sound and visual elements to examine one of the key themes of *Say Hello*. This should include:

- Why is this theme important?
- What does Carly Findlay have to say about this theme?
- How has she engaged her audience around this idea?
- What should we as Findlay's audience do about this?

Extension

Choose another text that is a memoir, a manifesto or both. Choose one section from both *Say Hello* & the chosen text, and complete the following:

- Choose one section from each text that you have enjoyed, identified with, or made you 'stop and think'.
- Identify three to five language features from each section.
 - Analyse and describe each of the language features.

- Use the analysis to write a short essay addressing the statement: Memoir/Manifesto is a powerful tool for personal and social change.

Suggested other texts:

The Fictional Woman by Tara Moss

Speaking Out by Tara Moss

The Female Eunuch by Germaine Greer

Working Class Boy by Jimmy Barnes

Lofty: My Life in Short: A Memoir by Lofty Fulton

Kickflip Boys: A memoir of Freedom, Rebellion, and the Chaos of Fatherhood by Neal Thompson

Able by Dylan Alcott

The Honey Bus: A memoir of Loss, Courage and a Girl Saved by Bees Meredith May

My Glory as I Had Such Friends: A Memoir by Amy Silverstein

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Carly Findlay is an award winning writer, speaker and appearance activist. She writes on disability and appearance diversity issues for publications including ABC, Daily Life and SBS. She was named as one of Australia's most influential women in the 2014 *Australian Financial Review* and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards. She has appeared on ABC's *You Can't Ask That* and *Cyber Hate* with Tara Moss, and has been a regular on various ABC radio programs. She organised history making Access to Fashion - a Melbourne Fashion Week event featuring disabled models. Carly identifies as a proud disabled woman - she lives with a rare severe skin condition – Ichthyosis.

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