

Say Yes - A Story of Friendship, Fairness and a Vote for Hope

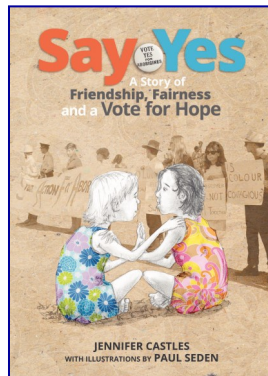
By Jennifer Castles & Illustrated by Paul Seden

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Once there were two little girls who were best friends. They did everything together. As they got older they weren't allowed to do the same things anymore. Because they looked different. Because of the law... This is a story about the landmark 1967 Referendum, the two women who came together to change the law... and how the Australian people said YES.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Indigenous Australian Culture
- 1960's Australia
- Elections and Voting
- Friendship
- Justice/Fairness
- Racism

Discussion Questions & Activities:

- The notes at the back of the book offer background to some of the situations depicted in this book, in which the prejudices enabled by local rules and laws were truly blatant. Imagine having to sit in a special part of a cinema, or not be allowed to swim at the public swimming pool. Do you still see evidence of such prejudices in your own community?
- Research the part that Mrs Jessie Street, Mrs Faith Bandler and others such as Harriet Ellis played in the Australian Aboriginal movement.
- Encourage students to discuss the origins of racism. Sensitively invite students of various ethnicities to explore their feelings and experiences.
- How did the laws enable racism to flourish in the 1960's?
- Were attitudes very different in the 1960's to now? What evidence do you base this on? Are there examples of racism in our society or in the policies of those in positions of power?
- Investigate how the voting system works. Are all those who live in Australia eligible to vote?
- Research referendums in Australian political history, and which votes have been carried or not carried.
- These two friends form a bond which challenges prejudices. How easy or difficult is it for a friend to resist peer group pressure to conform to community standards and prejudices?
- Empathy is derived from being able to put oneself into someone else's shoes. The narrator is so close to Mandy that she feels her pain; she feels her exclusion in white society. Discuss.
- 'It's just not fair' is a repeated line in the text. What constitutes fairness and justice? Do people always view fairness in the same way? Think, for example, of the differences of opinion between different political parties or different cultures or religions.
- Invite students to write a letter to a politician outlining why Mandy's treatment is wrong, as if the letter has been written by her friend, the narrator of this text.
- The artist's images are executed in pen and ink drawings in watercolour. Archival photographs are also used in several frames. Discuss these techniques and the artist's and designer's choice of mediums with your students and then encourage them to create pictures in the same style, in response to this text.
- How does Paul Seden convey emotions in his images? Discuss the use of perspective, spatial relationship and body language in this visual text.
- Have the class create a mural on a wall in your classroom; invite students to create different panels telling the story of the 1967 Referendum.