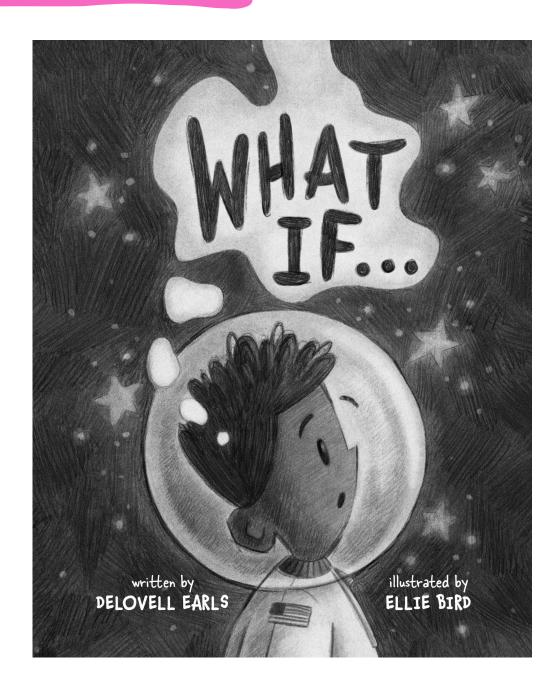


A TEACHER'S GUIDE

Suggested Grades 1st-3rd



WHAT IF...

Written by DeLovell Earls
Illustrated by Ellie Bird



Teacher's Guide



WHAT IF....by DeLovell Earls illustrated by Ellie Bird

Summary

WHAT IF... is an imaginative journey into creativity and invention! Through the adventures of The Kid and Tinker, a whimsical toy robot, students will discover how "what if" questions are the spark behind human innovation, from the invention of fire to space exploration. Each page brings examples of creative problem-solving, encouraging students to ask big questions and work together to solve problems around them.

Perspective

Explore the diversity of human ingenuity and how creativity varies across cultures and times periods.

Themes

Problem-Solving, Curiosity, Mentorship, Creativity, Imagination, Resilience, Growth, Empathy, Helping Others, and Exploration

Book Talk Blurb

Take a second to look around! Go ahead... Everything you see, every invention, every idea—began with a simple question: WHAT IF... Author DeLovell is passionate about awakening the creative in everybody and envisions a better world with more problem-solvers!

Set Purpose: A Call to Creativity

Pre-Reading Classroom Discussions

Note: Be mindful of the students in your class, their backgrounds, and their timidness to try new things!

The Goal: Teach how curiosity, teamwork, perspectives, and resilience can lead to new solutions.

Help students connect the book's themes to real-world challenges they care about. Emphasize that asking "What if?" builds creativity, helps them overcome obstacles, and fosters emotional resilience.

Step 1: Build background

Discuss the following topics with students:

- Empathy
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Growth Mindset

Step 2: Introduce the title to the students and predict!

• What will the story be about?

Step 3: Frame the reading with a purpose

- Read to find out if predictions are correct.
- Read to discover the message the author is trying to convey.

Call to the Class: As we read, think about times when you've felt stuck or faced a problem. Think about why the author chose 'What if' for the title. Write down any questions that might come to mind!

Objective

Encourage students to engage deeply with the text through prompts that connect storytelling to core ELA skills and STEAM concepts.

ELA

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4-3.4: Identify words and phrases in stories that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5-3.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language and word relationships.

SEL

Responsible Decision-Making: Analyze situations and make thoughtful choices, even when the answer isn't clear.

During Reading

Read-Aloud Conversations

Use selected excerpts to spark student reflections and discussions. Here are a few text excerpts with suggested prompts below.

1. Excerpt <u>Page 4</u>: But don't just sit there, pout, and whine / Ask WHAT IF! Tinker! Design!

Prompt: "What does it mean to 'Tinker'? Why might trying something new help us when we feel frustrated?"

2. Excerpt <u>Pages 13-16</u>: But what about when the road ends? / And we reach the sea, WHAT IF we swim? / That would take a million days the ocean is filled with massive waves!

Prompt: What is the problem Tinker and the Kid face? Why isn't swimming across the ocean a good idea? What are some possible solutions to their problem?

3. Excerpt <u>Page 21</u>: There's something that you need to hear / The solution is not always clear / It's more than fine to make a guess / Try things out, and fix the mess.

Prompt: When was a time that you made a guess or made a mistake and it benefited your life and what does that tell us about the process of learning

Excerpt Page 34: All of these gifts we have around us / Were once 'WHAT IFS'—and now surround us!

Prompt: What are some inventions you're grateful for? Can you imagine a world without them?

Excerpt: How might we make the world better? What if we put our brains together? Imagine all that we can achieve if we ask WHAT IF, work hard, and believe.

Prompt: What are some problems you face every day in your classroom or school that you would like to fix? How can you possibly solve that problem?

Objective

Encourage students to engage deeply with the text through prompts that connect storytelling to core ELA skills and STEAM concepts.

ELA

ELA CCSS.W.1.3-3.3: Write narratives recounting events with details.

ELA CCSS.W.2.7: Recall information from sources to build knowledge.

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SEL

Relationship Skills: Communicate effectively, work cooperatively, and resolve conflicts constructively.

Gratitude and Appreciation: Recognize and value the contributions of others.

Resilience: Learn from challenges and keep going.

Respond, Reflect, React, and Research

Post-Reading Classroom Activities

Here, we break down the ideas and themes in the book into four categories for further exploration.

Respond

Write an immediate response to the book, encouraging students to connect personally

- "What part of this story felt the most exciting to you? Why?"
- "If you could invent anything, what would it be?"

Reflect

Write a short reflection about a time you helped a friend or worked with others to solve a problem

- "Who was it? What were they feeling? What was the problem?"
- "What solution(s) did you come up with? Did it work on the first try? How did you make it work in the end?

React

Design a solution to a simple classroom problem (e.g., organizing books or sharpening pencils).

- Activity: "Draw your own invention or system and share it with the class, explaining how it would help others."
- Activity: "In groups, brainstorm a problem that your school faces and list 'What if' ideas that could help solve it."

Research

Deeper exploration of historical or scientific concepts mentioned in the book

- Activity: "Choose one invention from history (e.g., fire, the wheel, the airplane, the cell phone, etc.) and research how it was created. Present your findings to the class."
- Activity: "Research a famous inventor who asked 'What if?' and write a short paragraph about their invention journey."





Connect with the Author



My name is DeLovell Earls. Most people call me "D". I am a former Division I basketball player turned coach. Former Air Force Officer turned Inventor/Entrepreneur. I'm a creative, compassionate individual who finds a deep sense of purpose in working with little humans. It's my mission to make an impact on the world around me

through design. I want to give back to my community as much as possible, and I hope that I'm an example and proof to others that they can do the same.

You can follow my journey with whatiffers Instagram @whatiffers! Please tag me in anything you might post.

You can also share any photos or feedback with me at delovell@earlybirdypublishing.com

Or tag us on Facebook and Instagram @whatiffers

I am also available for in-person and virtual author visits if that's something you, your library, or your district might be interested in. Pricing is set on a case-by-case basis and is a product of travel and time criteria.

If your whatiffers want to send any mail or their own WHAT IFs... feel free to ship them to me (I'll share my address upon request)

All the best on your creative journey and thank you for sharing the power of WHAT IF...

Best,

De

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Other Resources

You can find a growing world of **FREE** resources and activity sheets to encourage students to go further! We have coloring sheets to encourage creativity and design sprint resources to help bring ideas to life and encourage critical thinking skills! Enjoy!

whatiffers.com/resources