

BLACK GIRL RISING

A Guide for Younger Readers

By Brynne Barnes, Illustrated by
Tatyana Fazlalizadeh

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F&P Text Level Gradient: X

Lexile® Measure: AD610L

About The Book

In this deeply moving celebration and rallying cry, and in the face of the many messages that still work to convince Black girls that they should shrink themselves, hide their light, know their place, Brynne Barnes and Tatyana Fazlalizadeh reclaim that narrative: A Black girl's place is everywhere, and her selfhood is everything she can dream it to be.

About The Author

Brynne Barnes has colored the world with her pen writing stories, poetry, and music since earning her BS from the University of Michigan and MA from Eastern Michigan University. She has taught at several colleges and universities. Her picture books include the award-winning *Colors of Me* and *Books Do Not Have Wings*. She lives in Southfield, Michigan.

About The Illustrator

Tatyana Fazlalizadeh is based in Brooklyn, New York, and is an artist, an activist, the creator of *Stop Telling Women to Smile*, and the illustrator of *Libba: The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotten*.



Explore The Cover

Before reading, spend some time exploring the cover of *Black Girl Rising* and understanding the central concept of “rising.” Ask students what they think it means to rise. Start by having them demonstrate physical movements, such as rising from a seated position, and how our hands rise when we want to be called upon to answer questions. Next, begin a discussion on what words come to mind when they imagine something rising?

Picture Walk

Without reading the text, study the illustrations one page at a time and identify images that are rising. Look for the birds, ballet dancers, clouds, bubbles, stars, fists, and even a tennis ball. Ask students if they recognize any images that appear on more than one page or several times throughout the book. What do they think it means?

Introduce The Text

- ✦ Prepare students to listen to a lyrical poem, as opposed to a narrative.
- ✦ Let students know there will be names mentioned throughout the poem. These are people who have inspired the author to rise in her own life.
- ✦ The author begins the text with stereotypes and admonitions about what a Black girl shouldn’t be. She then turns those ideas on their head. Explain the changes in tone to students and ask them to listen closely to hear when the author is making a positive statement versus a negative statement.
- ✦ Listen for words that sound like something or someone is rising.

Post-Reading Activity *I Am Rising Circle*

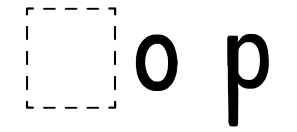

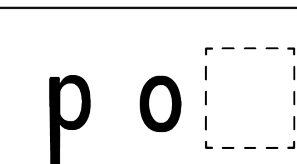
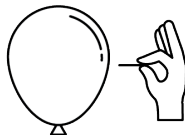
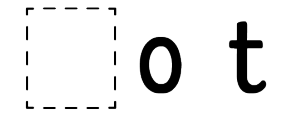
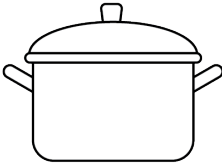


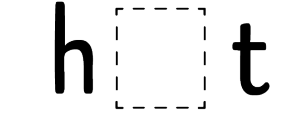
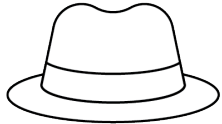
In *Black Girl Rising*, the author and illustrator use images and words to show the many ways in which we access our inner strengths. Have your students sit in a circle, take turns standing up, spreading their “wings,” and declaring what makes them feel like they could rise or even fly! Is it being a fast runner, a helper at home or in the classroom, or a good friend?

I am rising when I...



Rising To The Top Word Ladder

Rising to your full potential takes work. Can you climb, climb, climb your way to the top?

This Is Me Rising

When we rise, we feel strong and powerful—
as if we have wings and can take flight.
Use this space to draw yourself rising.

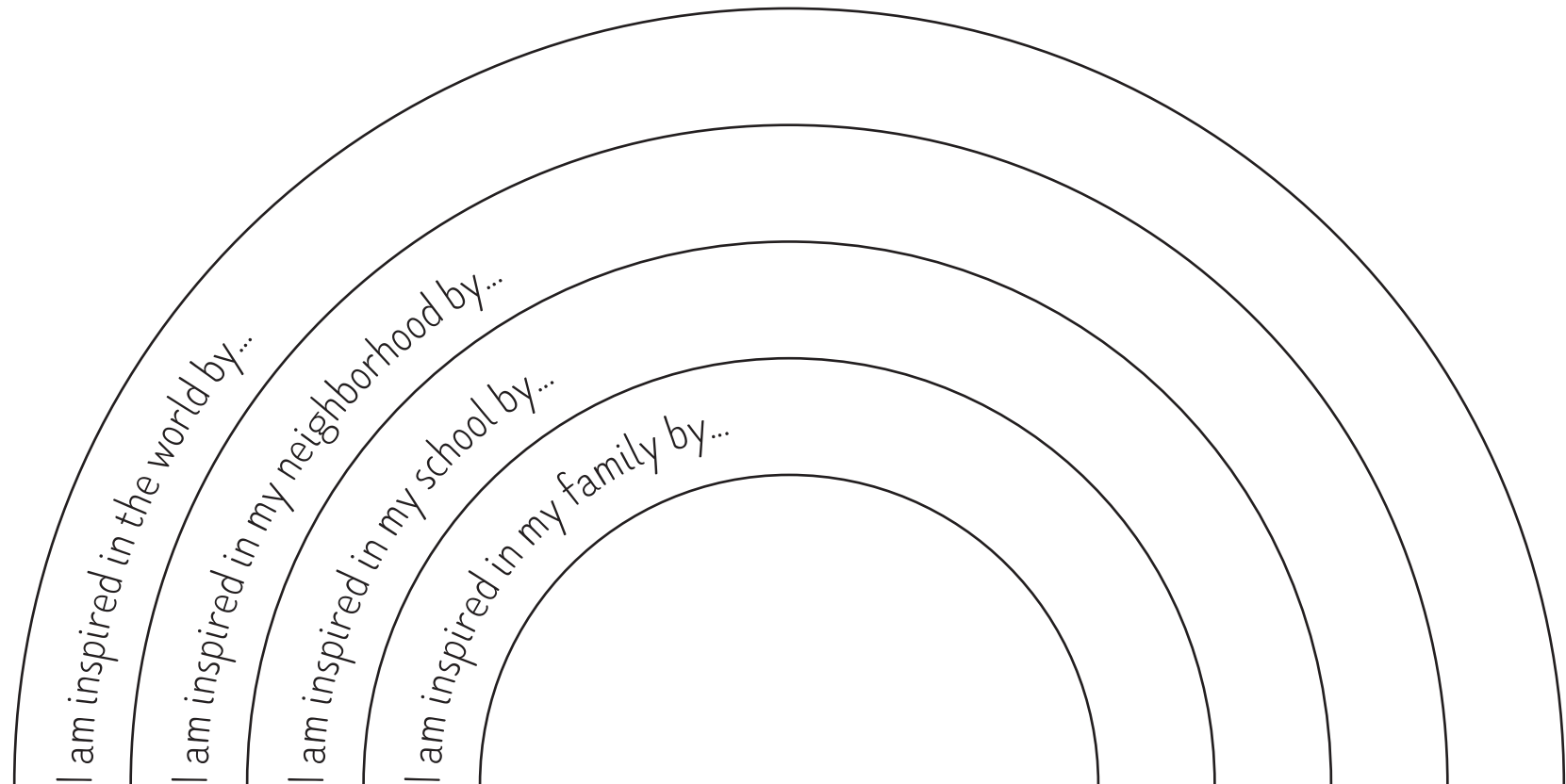


When I rise I feel:

Who Helps You Rise?

In the book, rainbows symbolize hope, love, community, and personal growth. The author and illustrator were inspired by artists, musicians, poets, athletes, and activists as well as their own family and communities. Ask students to think about the people who inspire them. Show and share their rainbows or hang up their rainbows as a reminder to look for inspiration everywhere.

Who has inspired you? Add them to your rainbow in the sky!



This guide was created by Tara Baldrige and Angela K Sherrill, co-owners of Varia, a passionate literary services team on the south side of Chicago. With over two decades of book industry experience, they are committed to promoting diversity in literature through access, education, and purposeful content.