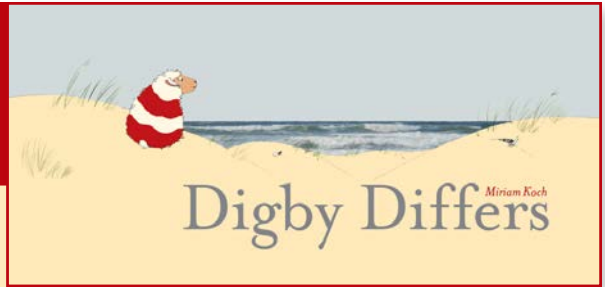


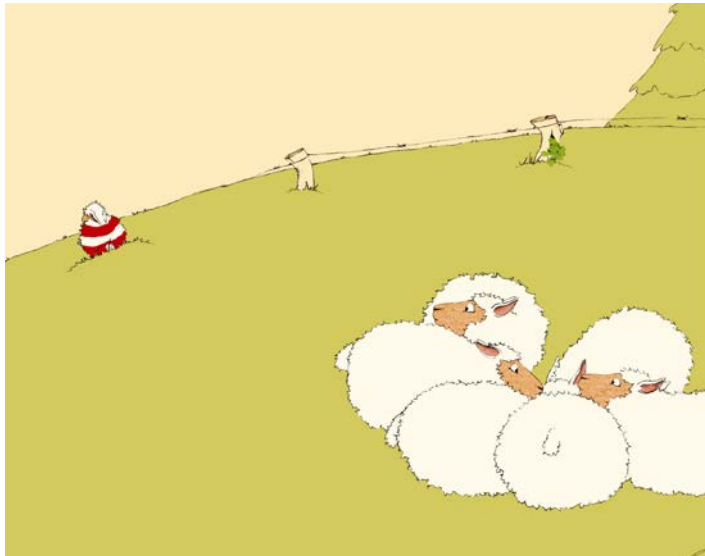
Digby Differs

by Miriam Koch

Common Core Teaching Guide



About the Book



We're not always born into our home—sometimes we have to go out and find it.

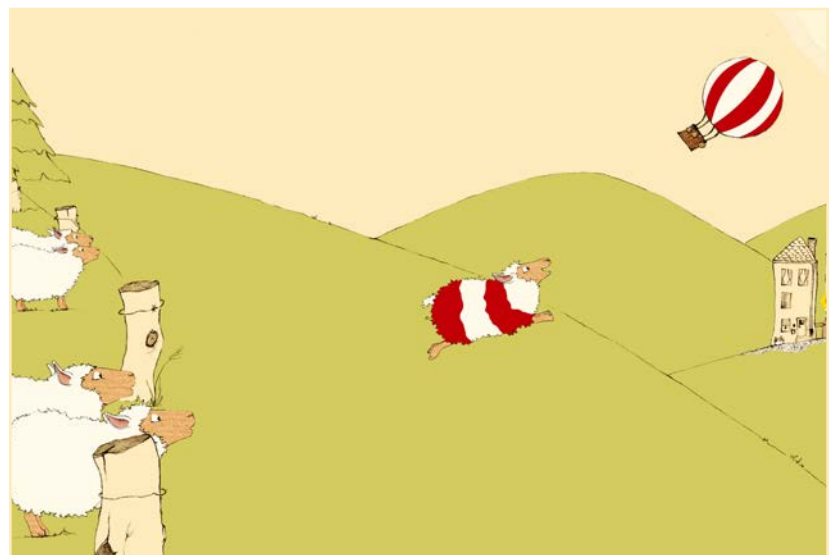
Digby always felt a little different from everyone else. For some reason he just never felt like he belonged. He longed for a place that felt like home. One day his yearning sends him on a journey of discovery that takes him to a place where the air is different, and there's a rushing sound quite unlike anything he's ever heard before. At last, Digby finds a place where "feeling different" feels just right.

Digby Differs is a wonderful declaration of love for the sea, and a beautiful (and big!) boost of morale for all those who feel just a tiny bit different.

Introduction

There isn't a person, young or old, who hasn't felt like Digby does—different and alone. When we feel that way, we long to escape our isolation and find a place where our differences do not matter, where we feel accepted and at home. *Digby Differs* will open up the possibility for heartfelt discussions as well as a host of opportunities to meet Common Core Reading Literature, Speaking and Listening, and Writing standards.

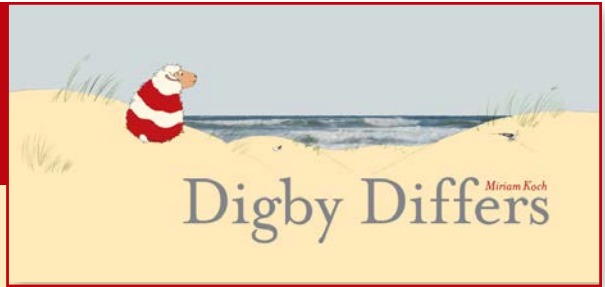
And if you and your students are in the mood for some real creative thinking, you can use the book as a springboard for a lively art activity about differences.



This guide was prepared by Toni Buzzeo, M.A., M.L.I.S., author, educational consultant, and school librarian. www.tonibuzzeo.com

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Common Core Teaching Guide

Reading Literature and Speaking and Listening Standards

Note: If you plan to work with Reading Literature Standard 7, read the **Now I See** activity on the following pages before sharing the book aloud with your students.

Reading Literature Standard 1

RL K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Speaking and Listening Standard 2

SL K.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL 2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

A Most Unusual Sheep

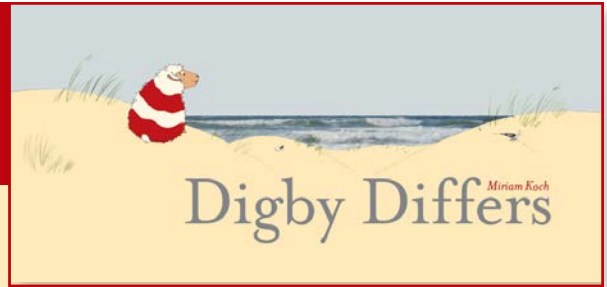


After reading *Digby Differs* aloud, challenge students to answer the following questions about key details in the text:

- **Who** is the character with the problem in the story?
- **What** is his problem?
- **Why** does Digby feel so different from the other sheep?
- **Where** does the story take place? Name each of the settings as Digby takes his journey.
- **When** does Digby know he has found a solution to the problem?
- **How** does Digby finally solve his problem?

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Common Core Teaching Guide

Reading Literature Standard 2

RL 1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

RL 2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Digby's Desire

After sharing *Digby Differs* with students, engage them in a conversation about Digby's problem. Ask: *How do Digby's differences make him feel, and how does he respond? Does Digby solve his problem by the end of the story? How?* When your discussion is complete, ask students to retell the story, ending their retelling by saying what they believe the central message of the story is meant to be.



Reading Literature Standard 3

RL K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

RL 1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

RL 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Follow Digby's Journey

After reading *Digby Differs* aloud to children, ask them to identify the main character, reminding them that the main character is the one with a problem. Determine whether there are any secondary characters. Then turn your attention to the host of settings for the story. (Note: Author/illustrator Miriam Koch thought about the coast of her beloved North Sea as she wrote this book, so that may be the specific setting, but of course, the book could take place anywhere there is a hillside and an ocean.)

Once students have discussed characters and setting, ask them to identify the major events of the story and identify the key details of each. Invite them to use the ***Follow Digby's Journey*** activity sheet on the following page individually or project it onto your electronic white board and complete it as a group.

Mapping Digby's Journey

Once you have completed the ***Follow Digby's Journey*** activity, challenge students to create a map of Digby's journey—from the inland hillside sheep field to the seaside sheep field with a view of the lighthouse. Instruct them to use the key events they defined in the ***Follow Digby's Journey*** activity. If you have plenty of room, ask students to create a bulletin board or wall-sized map. If time and space

are limited, ask students to place the scenes provided on the road they find on the ***Mapping Digby's Journey*** activity sheets on the following pages.

Grade Two: Extend the conversation by asking students to explain how Digby responds to each of these major events.

Follow Digby's Journey

For each major event, list the key details that apply.

Major Event

Key Details

Digby sets off on a journey

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Digby arrives in the city

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Digby rides the train

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Digby arrives at the lighthouse

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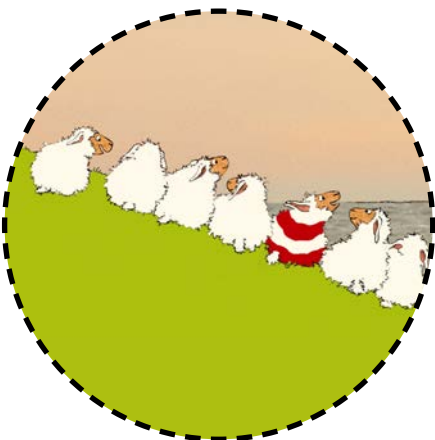
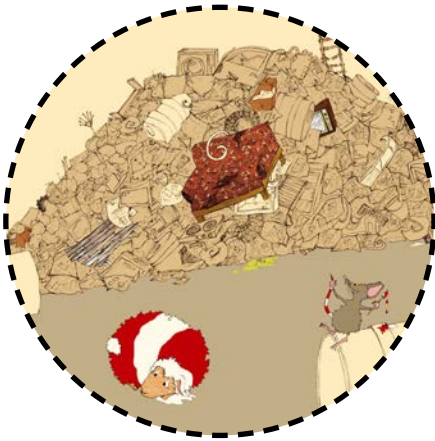
Digby joins his new flock

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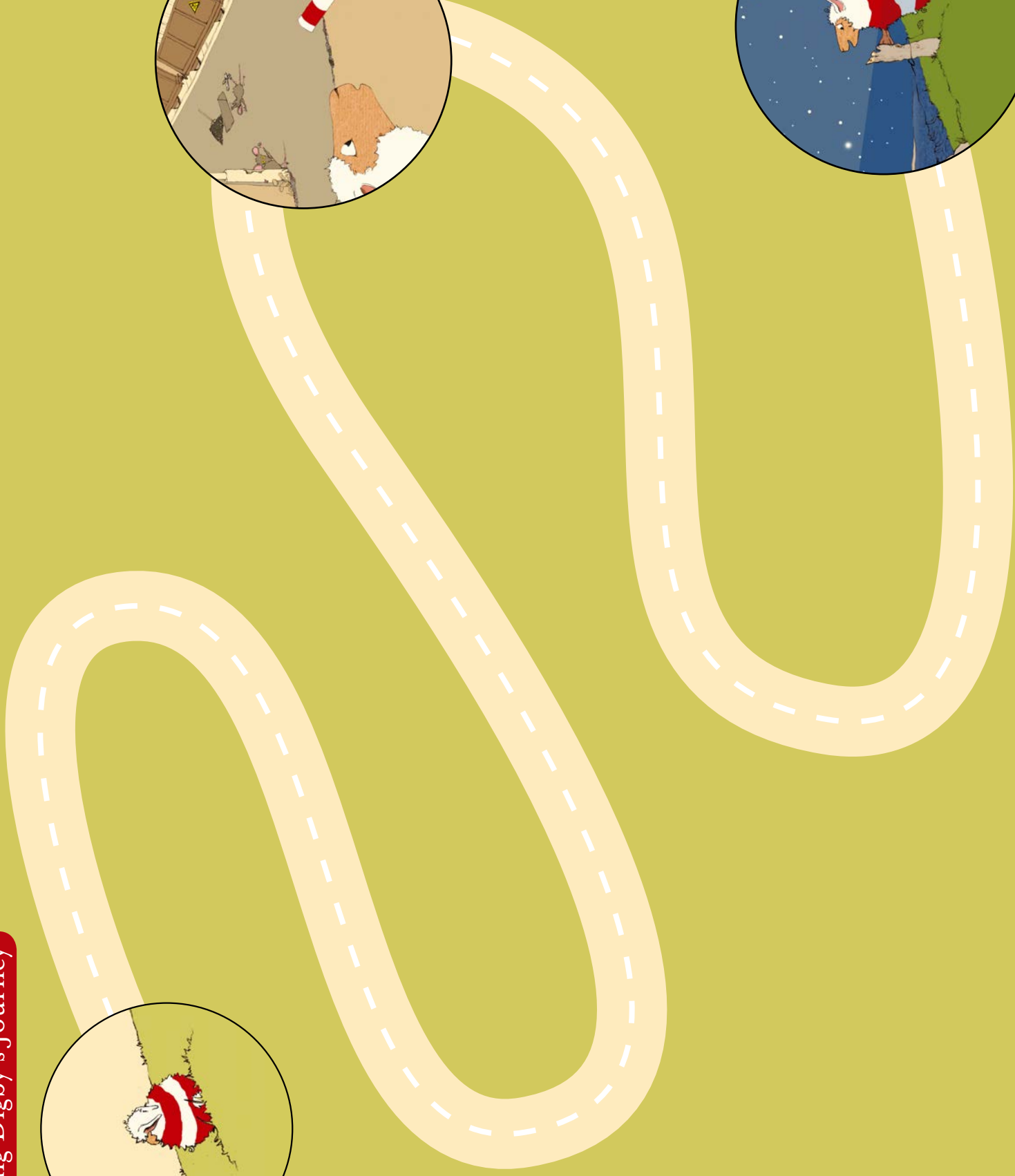
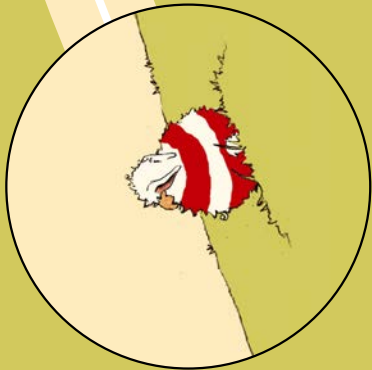
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Mapping Digby's Journey



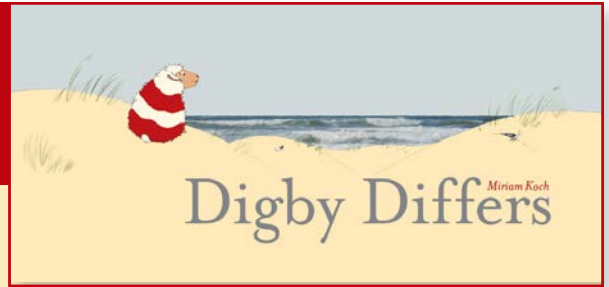
Mapping Digby's Journey



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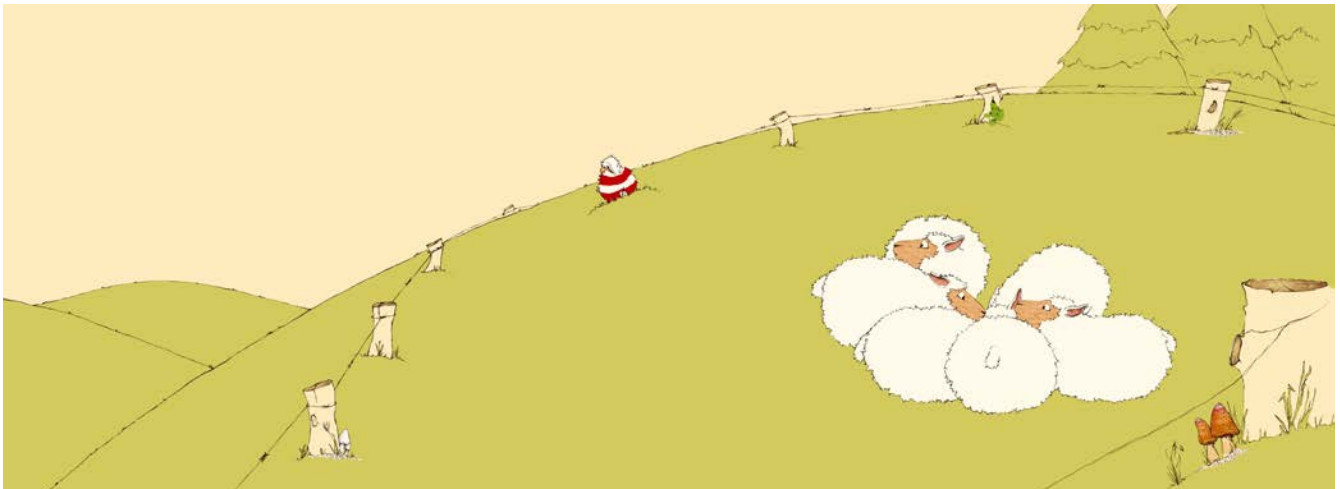


Reading Literature Standard 5

RL 2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

A Circular Path

Grade Two: After completing **Follow Digby's Journey**, ask students to look closely at the first double-page spread:



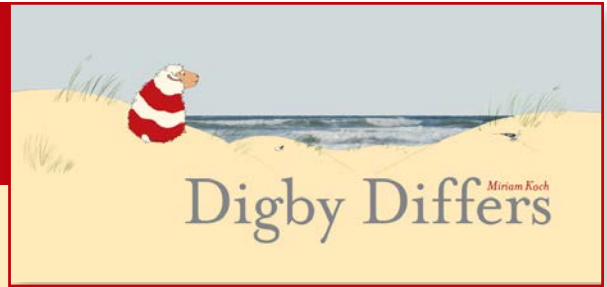
and the last double-page spread:



Ask: What things are different from the beginning of the story to the end? What things are the same? Is it possible that it is Digby who is different? Discuss how the beginning and end work together to form a satisfying story.

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Common Core Teaching Guide

Reading Literature Standard 7

RL K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

RL 2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Speaking and Listening Standard 4

SL K.4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

SL 1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

SL 2.4 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

Now I See

Reading Literature Standard 7 targets important learning when reading picture books because it focuses on the interplay between text and illustration in creating story understanding.

Begin by masking the cover of the book in some way so that children cannot see the cover illustration. Read the book aloud *without* sharing any of the illustrations. (Note: Omit the phrase “As you can see” when reading the second page.) Ask students to imagine Digby and his journey from place to place, searching for a place he belongs. If time allows, invite them to draw a picture of Digby as they imagine him at the end of the story on the **Now I See** framed activity sheet on the following page.

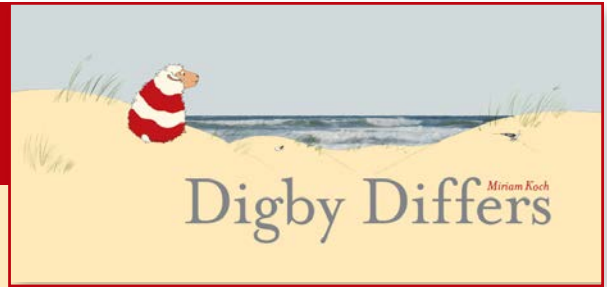
When you have finished reading the story (and students have drawn their pictures, if time allows), invite students to describe Digby and his journey as they have imagined or drawn him. Encourage them to speak clearly as they describe the places and events of the story.

Now share *Digby Differs* again, this time with the illustrations. Discuss the ways in which the characters, settings, and events they imagined differed from those that author/illustrator Miriam Koch painted. Ask: *Does seeing Miriam Koch’s illustrations increase your understanding of the story’s characters, settings, and events and its message? Why or why not?*

Now I See

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Common Core Teaching Guide

Writing Standards

Writing Standard 3

W K.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

W 1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

W 2.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

I Have Felt that Way Too

Begin with a conversation about a time when each child felt different from others and therefore felt alone. Encourage students to share specific details of their experiences including the setting, who else was there, and how they responded to their feelings of being different. Then, ask

children, individually, to write or dictate narratives in which they describe their experiences. Instruct them to narrate the key events in their stories in the order in which they occurred and to use language that communicates their personal reactions to what happened.

Art Extension Activities

The Size and Shape of Things

Encourage students to consider the format of *Digby Differs*. Ask: *What is different about the size and shape of this book compared to most of the other picture books you read? Why do you think author/illustrator Miriam Koch chose to make her book very wide but not very tall?* Then visit the library and send your students on a hunt in the picture book section to find other picture books with unusual dimensions and size. Once you have a sizable collection of books, discuss why each book is designed as it is and how it contributes to the reading experience. (Hint: Include the tiny trim-size Beatrix Potter books if they are available.)

Imaginations Run Wild

Challenge students to select their favorite animal to star in a newly imagined story. Like Digby, their animals must have physical differences (but not stripes) that they can see reflected in the world around them as Digby recognizes his red and white stripes in the hot air balloon, the cola cup, the gramophone, the striped awning, the striped gate, the railroad crossing arm, and the lighthouse.

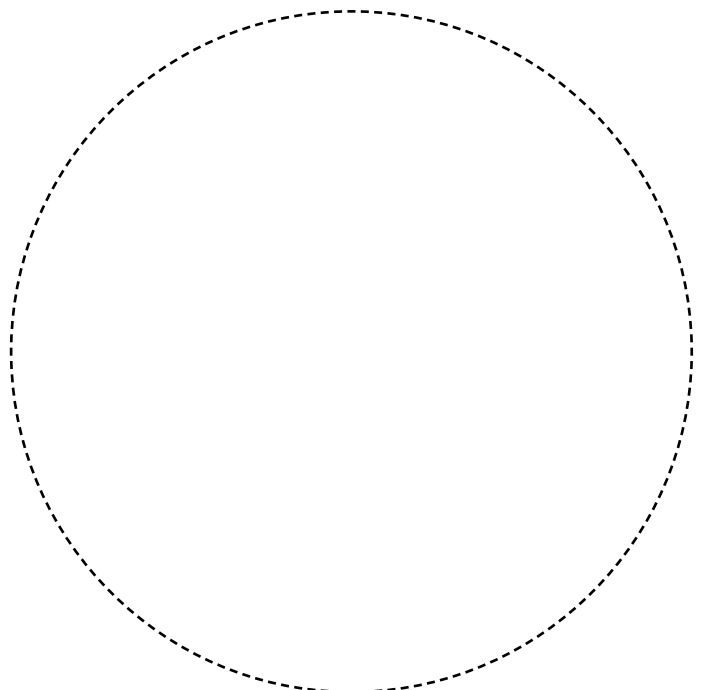
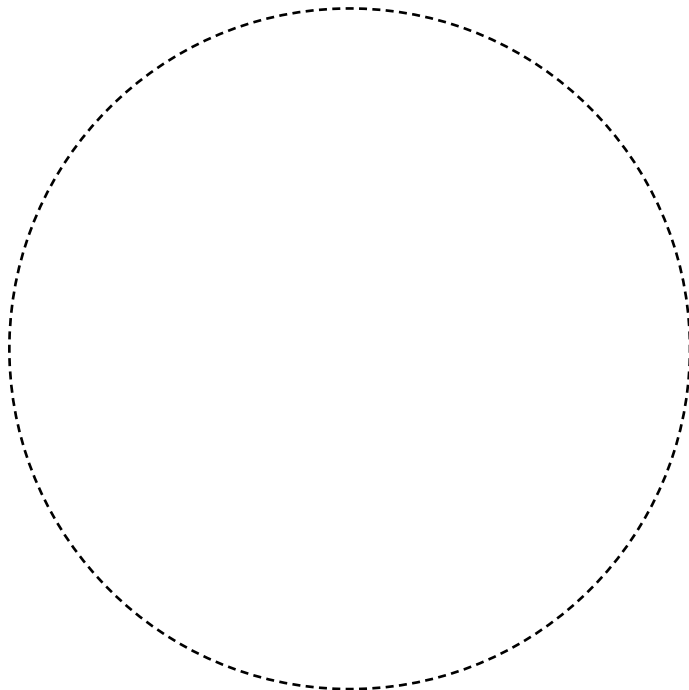
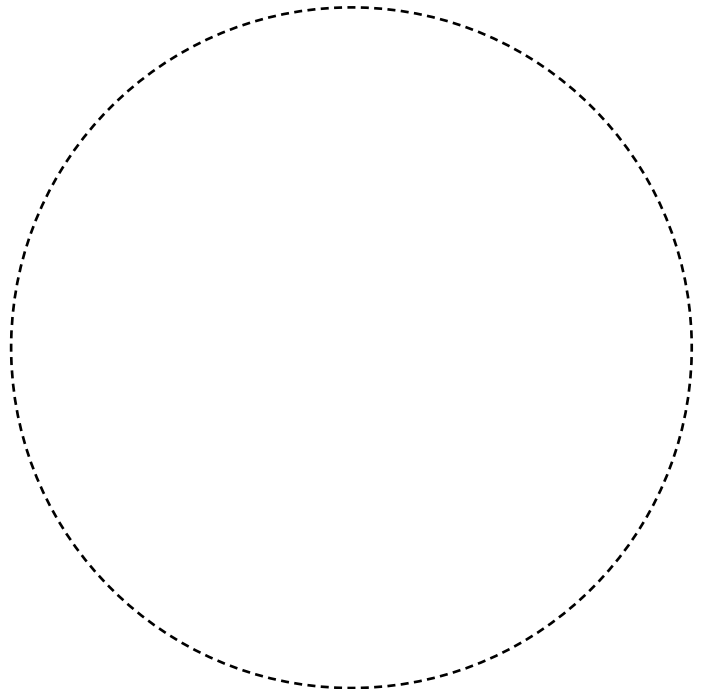
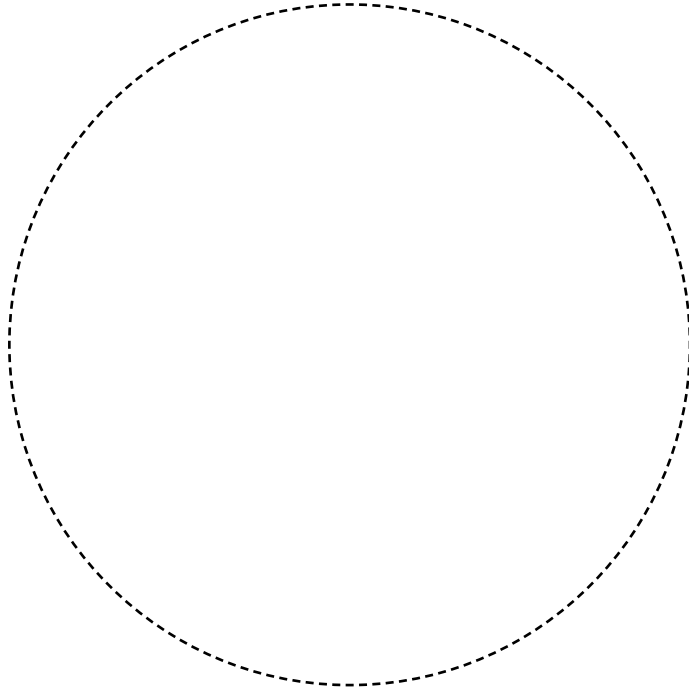
Invite students to plan for the items that will reflect their characters' physical differences using the **Imaginations Run Wild** design sheet on the following page. Host an **Imaginations Run Wild** sharing session when students have completed their design sheets.

Imaginations Run Wild

Look at all of the things Digby found that had red and white stripes like he does!



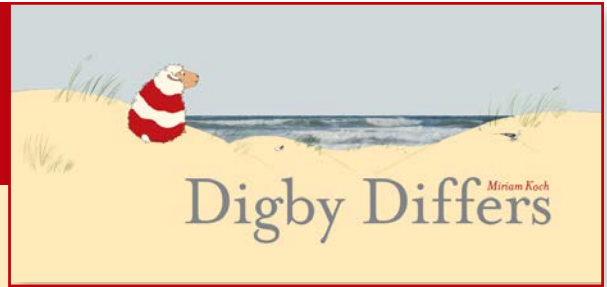
Can you think of some things to put in the circles/ovals below that are the same as your imaginary animal?



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About the Author/Illustrator

Miriam Koch, born in 1980, studied Communication Design with an emphasis on illustration in Trier, Germany. She now lives and works as a freelance writer and commercial artist in Bremen, Germany. Her love for the North Sea and its coast inspired her to create *Digby Differs*, which was originally published in Germany under the title *Fiete Anders*.

www.peterpauper.com

Illustrations © Miriam Koch

