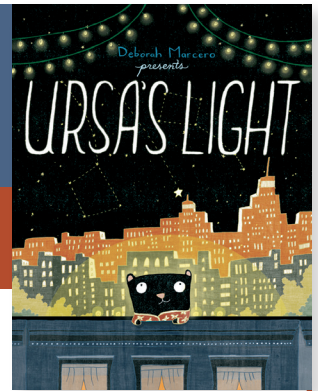


# URSA'S LIGHT

by Deborah Marcero

## Common Core Teaching Guide



### ABOUT THE BOOK



There were all the other bears ...  
and then, there was Ursa.

One night Ursa had an idea. An amazing idea. A wild idea. She was going to fly! It was such a crazy idea that no one believed she could do it. She was a bear, for goodness sake, and bears don't fly! Or do they . . . ?

*Ursa's Light* will spark your imagination and make your spirit soar!

### INTRODUCTION

Dear Teacher,

Ursa is different from all of the other bears. She has drive. She has determination. She has imagination. Put them all together and Ursa is a bear with a dream that must come true—somehow! Amidst the cautious warnings, skepticism, and occasional ridicule of others, only her little brother and the readers of this book believe in Ursa's dream of flight.

*Ursa's Light* provides opportunities for discussions of personal dreams and paths to accomplishment while also allowing students to meet Common Core Reading Literature, Speaking and Listening, and Writing standards.

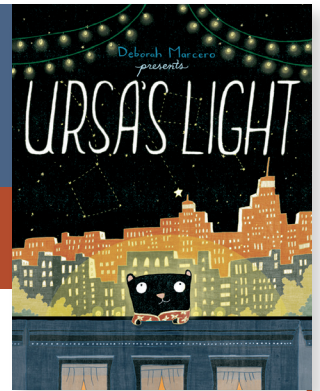
And if you and your students have time to spare for some real creative thinking, you can use the book as a springboard for two lively art and design activities.



This guide was prepared by Toni Buzzeo, M.A., M.L.I.S., author, educational consultant, and school librarian. [www.tonibuzzeo.com](http://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 Ursa's World View activity in 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.

## URSA'S DREAM



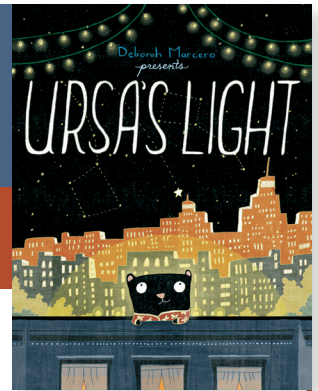
#### Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:

After reading *Ursa's Light* aloud, challenge students to answer the following questions about key details in the text:

- **Who** is the character with a challenge/dream in this story?
- **What** is her challenge/dream?
- **Why** do you think Ursa might feel different from all the other bears?
- **Who** is the one other bear who believes in Ursa's dream?
- **Where** does the story take place? Name each of the settings as Ursa follows her dream.
- **When** does Ursa realize that she may not fly?
- **How** does she feel at this point in the story?
- **How** does Ursa finally meet her challenge and achieve her dream?

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## Common Core Teaching Guide

### Reading Literature Standard 2

**RL K.2** With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

**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.

## A DREAM OF FLIGHT

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** After sharing *Ursa's Light* with students, engage them in a conversation about Ursa's dream of flight. Ask:

- How does Ursa feel about being different from other bears? Does it seem to trouble her?
- What steps does Ursa take in order to follow her dream?
- Does she achieve her dream by the end of the story? How?

When your discussion is complete, ask students to retell the story. Invite Grade One and Two students to end their retellings by saying what they believe the central message of the story is meant to be.

### Reading Literature Standard 5

**RL 1.5** Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

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

## INFORMATIONAL OR LITERATURE?

**Grade One:** Provide a selection of informational books from the library about bears and about flying for students to browse. When they have completed their browsing, read *Ursa's Light* aloud. Ask them to explain how this fiction book is different from the informational books they have been browsing. Ask them to name additional fiction books to ensure that they understand the difference between literature and informational texts.

## TRY-AND-FAIL

**Grade Two:** *Ursa's Light* uses a Pattern of Three story structure. Explain that a Pattern of Three can use one of the two following formulas: try-and-fail, try-and-fail, try-and-succeed OR try-and-fail, try-and-fail, try-and-fail, then succeed. Discuss the difference between the two formulas and determine which Pattern of Three formula *Ursa's Light* employs. Then invite students to complete the **Four-Square Pattern of Three** activity sheet (on the following page).

# FOUR-SQUARE PATTERN OF THREE

FILL IN THE EVENTS OF *URSA'S LIGHT* TO UNDERSTAND THE ORGANIZATION AUTHOR DEBORAH MARCERO EMPLOYED WHEN SHE CREATED THE STORY.

1) SO SHE \_\_\_\_\_

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BUT \_\_\_\_\_

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2) SO SHE \_\_\_\_\_

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BUT \_\_\_\_\_

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## URSA WANTS TO *FLY* ...

3) SO SHE \_\_\_\_\_

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BUT \_\_\_\_\_

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4) BUT FINALLY WHEN SHE \_\_\_\_\_

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SHE DECIDES TO \_\_\_\_\_

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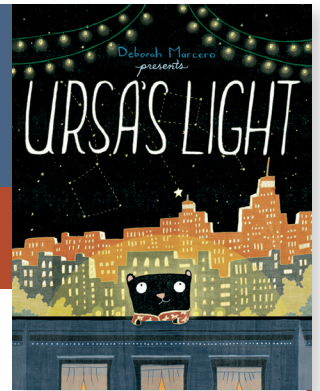
\_\_\_\_\_ AND SHE SUCCEEDS!



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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.

## URSA'S WORLD VIEW

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Before reading *Ursa's Light* aloud to students, share and discuss the first double-page illustration. Ask students:

- *What are the other bears like? How can you tell from the illustrations?*
- *How are the other bears similar to each other?*
- *How do you know that Ursa is different?*

Next, share and discuss the second double-page illustration. Ask students:

- *In what ways is Ursa different from the other bears? How can you tell from the illustrations?*
- *How does Ursa's imagination make her different?*
- *Would you rather be like Ursa or like her classmates? Why?*

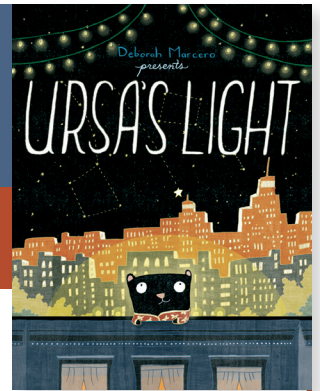
Finally, discuss the role that the illustrations play in introducing characters and concepts. Ask students:

- *If you had read or listened to ONLY the text of these four pages without seeing the illustrations, would you understand the ways in which Ursa is different from her classmates? Why or why not?*
- *How do Deborah Marcero's illustrations help you to understand the ways in which Ursa is different from the other bears?*
- *What things does Deborah Marcero show Ursa doing in school that reveal her differences?*

# URSA'S LIGHT

by Deborah Marcero

## Common Core Teaching Guide



### Reading Literature Standard 9

**RL K.9** With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

**RL 1.9** Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

## DETERMINED GIRLS

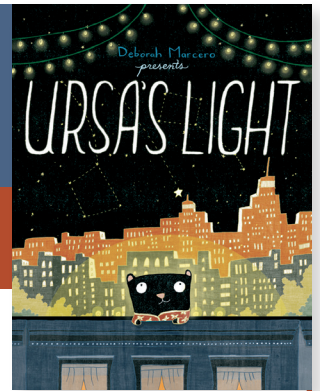
**Kindergarten and Grade One:** After reading and discussing *Ursa's Light*, share and discuss *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires. Ask students:

- *In what ways are Ursa and the main character of The Most Magnificent Thing similar? In what ways are they different?*
- *How are the things the two characters do to achieve their dreams similar? How are they different?*
- *How does each character deal with failure?*
- *What role do Ursa's little brother and the girl's dog play in the two stories? Is that role similar or different?*
- *What inspires Ursa to try one more time? What inspires the girl to try one more time? How are these inspirations alike and how are they different?*
- *How are the final events of the two stories alike? How are they different?*



# URSA'S LIGHT

by Deborah Marcero



## Common Core Teaching Guide

### WRITING AND SPEAKING AND LISTENING 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.

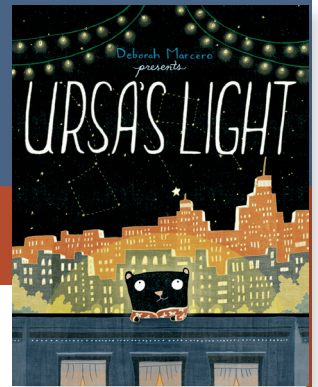
#### I HAD A DREAM TOO

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Begin with a conversation about a time when each student had a dream of achieving something that seemed quite difficult, as Ursa does. Encourage students to share specific details of their experiences including the setting, who else was there, and how they tried to achieve their dreams, including times that they tried and failed. 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.



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by Deborah Marcero



## Common Core Teaching Guide

### Writing Standard 7

**W K.7** Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).

**W 1.7** Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

**W 2.7** Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

### Speaking and Listening Standard 3

**SL K.3** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

**SL 1.3** Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

**SL 2.3** Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

## I CAN FLY!

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** After reading and discussing *Ursa's Light*, launch a short research project about things that fly. Begin by brainstorming a list of animals and other things that fly (perhaps listing pigeons, bats, and dandelion seeds first, as these were Ursa's ideas). Either as a whole group (**Kindergarten**), in small groups or pairs (**Grade One**), or individually (**Grade Two**), choose one of the flying things to study further. Provide students with access to primary level informational books as well as print and online reference resources. Instruct students to look specifically for information on the physical characteristics and behavior related to flight for their chosen “flyer” to add to the **I Can Fly!** worksheet (on the following page).

Once students have lists of facts about their “flyers,” challenge them to present their information to the group orally and invite the group to ask the speakers questions in order to clarify or to seek additional details.





# I CAN FLY!

A(N) \_\_\_\_\_ CAN FLY BECAUSE OF THESE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

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A(N) \_\_\_\_\_ DOES THESE THINGS, ALLOWING IT TO FLY.

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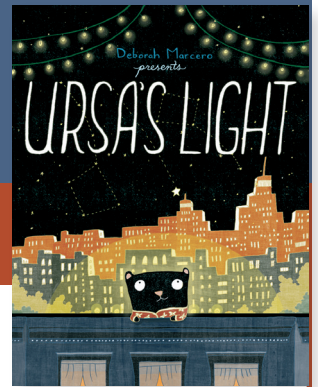
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### ART EXTENSION ACTIVITY

#### Blueprint for Flight

After reading and discussing *Ursa's Light* and completing the **I Can Fly!** writing and speaking activity, ask students to carefully study and discuss Ursa's blueprint-like drawings for the flight of pigeons and of dandelion seeds. Then invite students to create their own blueprints for the design of a garment or apparatus that would allow them to fly like their chosen flyer on the accompanying **Blueprint for Flight** sheet.

#### Design into Practice

If time allows after completing the **Blueprint for Flight** activity, invite students to draw a portrait of themselves in their garment or apparatus before, during, and after flight is attempted on the accompanying **Design into Practice** sheet. Allow time for sharing these drawings and discussing positives and negatives in the designs they have created.

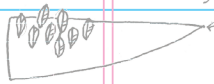
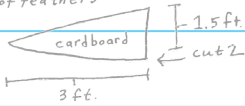


# BLUEPRINT FOR FLIGHT

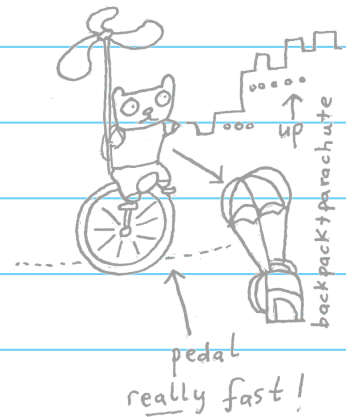
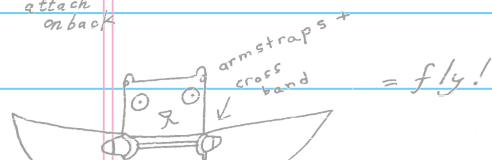
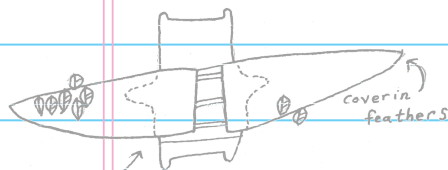
Pigeons



gather bag of feathers



attach feathers to cardboard

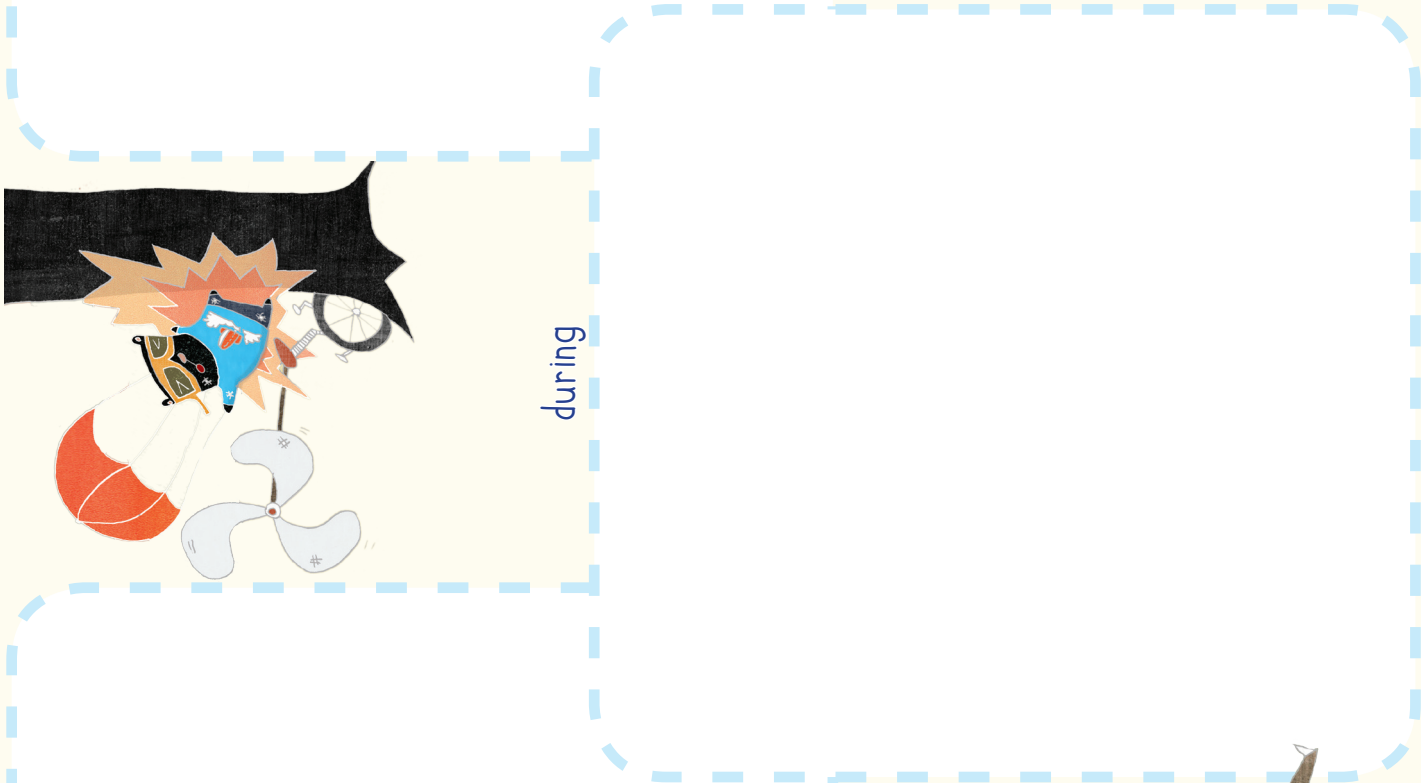


# DESIGN INTO PRACTICE

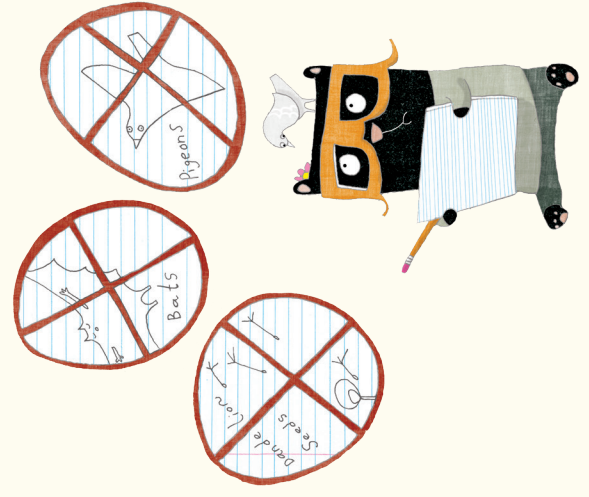
before



during



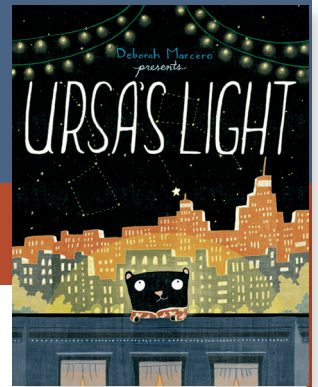
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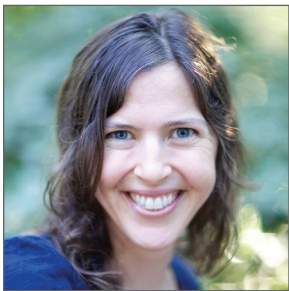
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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR



**Deborah Marcero** received her BFA in drawing and photography from the University of Michigan, and her MFA in poetry from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She loves to draw, write, doodle, make silly drawings, and jot down things she notices in the world around her. This is her debut children's picture book.

[www.peterpauper.com](http://www.peterpauper.com)

Illustrations © Deborah Marcero

