

**STORY SUMMARY**

What does it take to become a stunt-person? How does a mathematician spend her days? When does a barber become the center of a community? In this refreshing take on a careers book, meet twenty-five individuals of different backgrounds, genders, and abilities who have found their careers through a wide range of experience, education, intention,

and inspiration. *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It* includes full-color photographs and illustrations, informative sidebars, tips for trying out a field of interest, a glossary, an index, and spotlight features on children and youth who are already gaining experience for their own dream jobs.

Pair this book with:

- *The Girl Who Rode a Shark: and other stories of daring women* by Ailsa Ross, illus. Amy Blackwell

Additional Resources

- www.melissacristinamarquez.com
- www.youngoceanexplorers.com
- www.dresscodeproject.com
- www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/photo-camp
- www.eugeniacheng.com/math/videos
- www.gamesforchange.org
- [@ryanwilsonbakes](https://www.instagram.com/ryanwilsonbakes) on Instagram

An author and junior high school teacher, **Colleen Nelson** earned her Bachelor of Education from the University of Manitoba in her hometown of Winnipeg. Her recent works include *The Undercover Book List*, the award-winning Harvey Stories, which include the Governor General's Literary Award finalist *Harvey Holds His Own*, and the picture book *Teaching Mrs. Muddle*. Colleen writes daily in between appearances at hockey rinks and soccer fields in support of her two sports-loving sons.

Kathie MacIsaac is an award-winning literacy advocate who is passionate about books for middle-grade readers. She is a co-author of the blog *Bit About Books* and a co-founder of the website *MG Book Village*, which facilitates connection between members of the middle-grade community. Kathie manages the children's department of the Headingly Municipal Library near Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she lives with her husband and daughter.

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THEMES

Careers, Aspirations, Social Justice, Inclusion, Informational text

BISAC CODES

JNF011000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Careers
 JNF007000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Biography & Autobiography / General
 JNF069000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Diversity & Multicultural
 JNF050000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / School & Education
 JNF070000 JUVENILE NONFICTION / Inspirational & Personal Growth

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Language Arts: comprehension, research, writing, oral presentation;
 Careers; possible extensions for Science, Social Studies, Media Literacy,
 Health & Physical Education, Mathematics, and Computers

READING LEVEL

Lexile Measure: 1060L | Fountas & Pinnell: X

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS:

ACTIVITY	MAIN SUBJECT AREAS	SPECIFIC SKILLS AND TOPICS
Read-Aloud	Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> activate prior knowledge infer, make connections
Weekly Dream Hour	Career guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore different occupations
Book Study	Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehension research oral presentation
Careers Across the Curriculum	Science, Social Studies, Writing, Media Literacy, Health, Physical Education, Mathematics, Computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> numerous topics, including the scientific method; social justice; letter writing; creating media works; healthy food; fitness challenge; the importance of math in careers; and video games
Just the Facts!	Reading Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informational text features



APPROACH 1: READ-ALoud

This approach is a traditional read-aloud.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand texts
- explore a variety of fields of work, occupations, and careers, and develop awareness of the impact of local and global trends (e.g., demographic, technological, economic, social) on the opportunities available to them

You Will Need

- *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*
- chart paper and markers
- internet

**How To:**

1. Write the heading “Jobs and Careers” at the top of a piece of chart paper. Ask students to name some careers that they have heard of or are interested in, and record them on the chart.
2. Introduce *If You Can Dream it, You Can Do it* by reading the cover and foreword.
3. Each day, choose one or two spreads to read and discuss. Help students activate prior knowledge by asking what they already know about the given career. Instruct students to listen for references to different jobs. Read the main text, sidebars, and text boxes, etc., of a two-page spread. Afterward, invite students to name jobs they heard about in the text. List these on the chart. Allow students to share about someone they know who has a similar career. Make a list of activities suggested in the book that students would like to try, and websites they would like to visit. Add to it each time you read, and support them in their efforts to try these activities.

4. Many of the featured “Dreamers” faced barriers of some kind. As these come up, discuss any social-justice issues related to these barriers, as well as broader issues that arise, such as the environment.

APPROACH 2: WEEKLY DREAM HOUR

In this approach, students take turns presenting one of the “Dreamers” featured in the book, after the teacher models a presentation.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- explore a variety of fields of work, occupations, and careers, and develop awareness of the impact of local and global trends (e.g., demographic, technological, economic, social) on the opportunities available to them

You Will Need

- *If You Can Dream it, You Can Do it*, one or more copies
- tech tools such as computer and data projector

How To:

1. Schedule one thirty-minute period per week for this activity. There is enough content for twenty-five weeks. Alternately, obtain a class set of books and complete the project over two to three weeks.
2. Introduce *If You Can Dream it, You Can Do it* by reading the cover and foreword. Explain that each week you will be learning about one of the inspiring individuals in the book. Each student will have a chance to learn about one such individual in depth, and to share what they learn with the class.
3. The first week, the teacher will model an exemplary presentation, demonstrating what they would like students to do when it is their turn. A presentation might include the following:
 - a short speech that retells the story in the book, using point-form cue cards

- an A/V presentation that defines the main job and the spin-off jobs listed on the page, and explores websites referred to in the story and sidebars
 - a poster encouraging classmates to take specific actions
 - a plan for a class project inspired by the chosen individual
4. Collaboratively with students, create a schedule by which students will present, either individually or in pairs. If you are using a single copy of the book, the next student on the schedule will have the book for the week, to read, choose, and prepare their presentation. They would do this during independent reading time, any free time in the classroom, and at home. If you are using a class set of books, all students can be researching and working at the same time. You can then schedule blocks of time for research and for presentations over the course of a couple of weeks.

Here are some examples for the contents of the presentations, if students need prompting:

Inspiring Individual	A/V Presentation	Poster	Project
Melissa Marquez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marine biologist • aquatic veterinarian • scuba-diving instructor • marine environment economist • ichthyology • microbiology • environmental marine • youngocean-explorers.com • melissacristina-marquez.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spend time outdoors looking for unusual things in nature • watch shows and read books about nature • promote sustainable actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • order and read Melissa's children's book series, <i>Wild Survival</i> • take the Young Ocean Explorers 21-day challenge, described on their website • read <i>No More Plastic</i> by Alma Fullerton • pick up litter

Inspiring Individual	A/V Presentation	Poster	Project
David A. Robertson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • author • creative writing teachers • editors • writers of articles for magazines and newspapers • Dav Pilkey • Marsha Skrypuch • Patricia Polacco • Sarena and Sasha Nanua 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enter writing contests • get to know your public library • find out about local writers' guilds • keep a journal of writing ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start a class blog about favorite authors • start a writing group • invite an author to the classroom
Scott Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ornithologist • museum curator • avian veterinarian • wildlife rehabilitator • birdwatching tour guide • Mya-Rose Craig 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read <i>We Have a Dream</i> by Mya-Rose Craig 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in Audubon Society Christmas bird hunt
Ryoji Amamoto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher • education director • community literacy outreach worker • early childhood educator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteer at library, church/temple/synagogue/mosque, etc. programs or after-school clubs • learn about overseas teaching opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up a reading buddy or recess games club for younger students at school



APPROACH 3: BOOK STUDY

This approach begins as a guided read and can progress to a student-led literature circle.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand texts
- explore a variety of fields of work, occupations, and careers, and develop awareness of the impact of local and global trends (e.g., demographic, technological, economic, social) on the opportunities available to them

You Will Need

- *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*, one copy per student (this could be 6 copies for a small group, or a class set if all groups will work on it concurrently)

How To:

1. Gather a group of about six students of fairly similar reading ability. Write the heading “Jobs and Careers” at the top of a chart paper. Ask them to name some careers that they have heard of or are interested in, and record them on the chart. Introduce *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*. Invite students to be prepared to learn about some jobs that they might not know about.
2. Read main text of the first chapter (pp. 8–9). Depending on the group, this could be a read-aloud with students following along, a shared read, a guided read, or an independent read. Ask a comprehension question that targets a skill you are working on. For example, “What do you know about Melissa Marquez and how do you know it?” This requires students to infer characteristics of a person based on evidence in a text. One possible response is that she has a passion for teaching others. Evidence includes “not just to learn about sea

life, but to help others explore it” and “her dream was to...teach at a university.” Discuss a variety of responses.

3. Invite students to read the various text boxes and sidebars and discuss them. Watch for items that really spark their interest and suggest they investigate or act on these items. For example, if they think it would be cool to look for unusual things in nature (Pro Tip #1), help them arrange a nature walk. If Riley Hathaway captures their imagination, provide computers or tablets for them to explore her website.
4. Add to your chart the names of any careers mentioned on these pages.
5. Assign the next chapter to be read at home and discussed with other family members. Encourage students to pursue some of the extensions suggested in the sidebars and tell about them the next day in class.
6. Each day, repeat steps 2–5 with the next chapters, gradually encouraging more independence from the readers, until the book is finished.
7. Provide opportunity for students to choose and research a career, either from the chart you have created together, or a different career. You might ask them to include education requirements (see pp. 6–7 for different education pathways), expected salary, working conditions, and current demand for the job, as well as a video of someone doing the job or a guest speaker who has that career.

APPROACH 4: CAREERS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

In this approach, teachers use specific sections of *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It* to introduce an activity in their specific curriculum area.

Learning Expectations:

Learning expectations are numerous and will vary according to which activities are chosen. The curriculum areas addressed are listed in the chart below.

You Will Need

Materials needed are numerous and will vary according to which activities are chosen. Materials are implicit in the suggested activities listed in the chart below.

How To:

Read all or part of a two-page spread of *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*, to introduce any of the following learning activities. This can help students become excited about activities they didn't think they were interested in. For example, learning that gymnastics and dance are important skills for a stuntperson might draw in students who were previously uninterested.

Curriculum Area	Pages	Suggested Activities
Science	8–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn how to follow the scientific method go for a hike to look for unusual things in nature watch videos on youngoceanexplorers.com
	18–19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plant vegetables learn where your food comes from
	22–23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do a birdwatching tour, bird counts
	26–27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> study the nervous system use microscopes
	34–35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visit a zoo or animal sanctuary
	42–43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get a class pet
	55–55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a unit on structures
Social Studies	10–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> start a social justice club write letters to government representatives fundraise for social justice issues
Writing	12–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep a writer's journal start a writing group start a blog
	46–47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a letter to the editor write a news article

Curriculum Area	Pages	Suggested Activities
Media Literacy	16–17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a portfolio of photos
	20–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take videos of weather
	32–33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> view, then create a documentary in photos
	44–45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a media work using graphic design
Health	12–13, 16–17, 38–39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore individual differences and acceptance
	24–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a wilderness survival course
	40–41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cook healthy food
Physical Education	30–31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn how to call play-by-play in sports and have students call games
	48–49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do a fitness challenge learn a dance do gymnastics
Mathematics	36–37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn why math is important in life watch math videos at eugeniacheng.com
Computers	56–57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check out gamesforchange.org

APPROACH 5: JUST THE FACTS!

In this approach, teachers use *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It* as a mentor text for learning the features of informational text.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- identify purpose and set goals for specific listening tasks
- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and information in oral texts
- extend understanding by connecting to previous knowledge
- identify a variety of text features and explain how they help readers understand texts

You Will Need

- *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*
- chart paper and markers
- internet

How To:

1. Prepare a chart like the one below. You will add to it as you read aloud *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*.

Features of Informational Text

2. Decide in advance how much of the book you will read each day. There is a lot of information and students will absorb more of it if it's presented in manageable chunks. For some students, one spread each day might be enough. Other students may be able to handle more. Show the cover and read the title, subtitle, authors and illustrator. Ask: "Do you think this book is fiction (a story), or non-fiction (information)?" "What clues are there on the cover?" Read the back cover as well.
3. **p. 2** Read the dedications at the bottom.
4. **p. 3** Read the heading *Contents*. Discuss its purpose and read a few of the topics in it. Point out that a table of contents is an important feature of informational text (though some chapter books also have one). Write *Table of Contents* on the *Features of Informational Text* chart.
5. **p. 5** After reading, discuss the authors' dreams vs. reality. "Do you think they are disappointed, or did reality end up exceeding their dreams?"
6. **pp. 6–7** Give students a purpose for listening. Ask them to listen for four examples of routes to employment. While reading, point out examples of textboxes, headings and subheadings, and add these features to the chart. Optional: Use sticky flags to label the features in the book. After reading, see if any students can recall the meaning of the word *philosophy*, and ask what else students found interesting. Add *definitions* to the chart of Informational Text Features.
7. **pp. 8–9** Tell students that, when reading informational text, it is not necessary to read the page in left to right, top to bottom order. Introduce them to the terms *sidebar* and *bulleted list* and invite them to suggest which section they'd like you to read first. You can model this, if necessary, by asking, "Shall I read the 'Pro Tip' sidebar first, or the bulleted list of spin-off jobs?" "Shall I read the text box about 'Living the Dream' or the main body of the text?" Point out in passing that the headings are important because they tell us what a section will be about. Add the terms *sidebar* and *bulleted list* to the chart. When reading the main body of text, point out the words in bold. Explain that the bold text is a sort of low-tech hyperlink to the glossary at the back. Find the words *scientific method* and *data* in the glossary, and read their definitions. Add the terms *glossary* and *bold text* to the chart. Also point out the quote at the top. "How does having a quote from the person enhance the experience for the reader?" Add *interview quote* to your chart.
8. **pp. 10–11** Read the headings aloud. On this and future pages, invite students to choose a section, sidebar, or text box that interests them, for you to read first. After reading, invite brief discussion. If a student suggests starting a social justice club at school, for example, respond that it sounds like a great idea and write a reminder (e.g., "Let's start a social justice club") in a prominent place in the room. You may have planned this activity anyway, but it's even better if students suggest it.

9. **pp. 12–57** Before reading each spread, invite students to listen for particular facts, and to choose which section they'd like to hear about first, encouraging them to name specific text features. During reading, point out any bold words and have students remind you what to do with them. Turn to the glossary and read the definition. Continue to build a list of "Pro Tip" and "Why not try" suggestions that students are interested in pursuing. If students find an interview quote particularly inspiring, discuss that. Make a list of websites you'd like to visit. Discuss any social justice issues that arise.
10. **pp. 58–59** Read and discuss. "What other jobs might there be in the future that do not yet exist?"
11. **p. 60** Read and discuss.
12. **p. 61** Before reading, ask students to listen for other jobs that are mentioned here.
13. **pp. 62–63** Do students still remember how to use the glossary?
14. **p. 64** "What is an index for?" "When would you use it?" "Why is it in alphabetical order?" Add *index* to the chart.

After Reading

15. Read other informational texts, and add to your chart other informational text features that do not appear in *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It* (for example, labeled diagrams).
16. Student Assignment: Interview an adult with a job. Create a two-page spread based on their job or career, including a heading, subheading, quote, and photo, as well as sidebars and text boxes similar to the ones in *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It*.

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