

WHEN I SEE

B L U E

NEW TOWN,
NEW SCHOOL,
BUT THE BULLY
IS IN BEN'S HEAD.

SCHOOL
RESOURCES
FOR KS2/KS3

LILY BAILEY

WHEN I SEE BLUE



LILY BAILEY

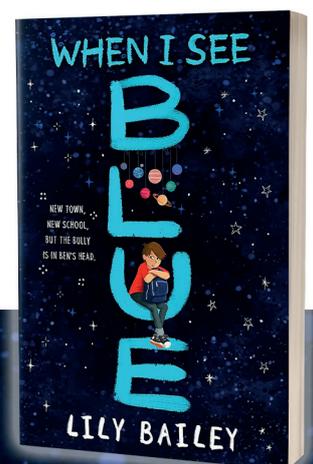
AGES 9+

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

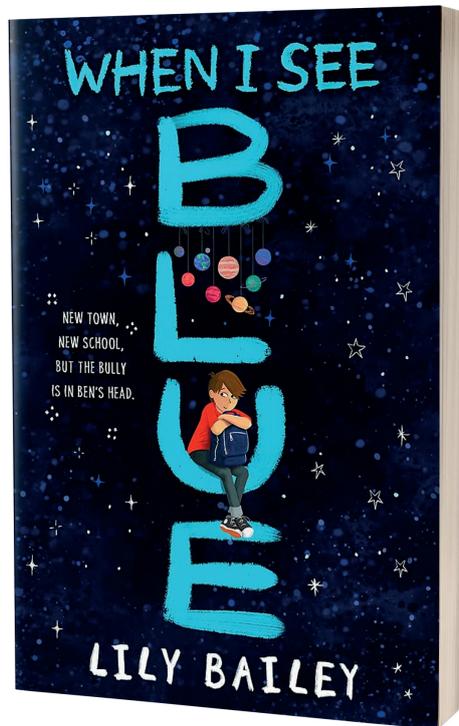
Explore Themes of: Mental Health / OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) / Empathy / Friendship / Family / Overcoming Challenges

Subject Checklist: Literacy / PSHE

The activities included here are suitable for the classroom or library sessions.



ABOUT THE BOOK



New town, new school, but the bully is in Ben's head ...

There are 4 things you should know about Ben:

1. He's 12 years old
2. He's the new kid at school
3. His special number is 4
4. He has a bully in his brain

Sometimes Ben's brain makes him count to 4 to prevent bad things happening. Sometimes it makes him tap or blink in 4s. Mostly it makes the smallest things feel impossible. And with a new school, a moody big brother, an absent dad and a mum battling her own demons, Ben feels more out of control than ever. But then he meets April, and with his new friend, Ben might finally figure out how to stand up to the bully in his brain, once and for all.

Heartfelt and unforgettable, *When I See Blue* explores living life with OCD and the unique power of friendship. Perfect for readers of *A Kind of Spark* and *The Goldfish Boy*.

CONTENTS

Theme 1 – Empathy and Understanding

Objectives: Infer a character’s thoughts and feelings from their words and actions; discuss how a character shows empathy; build and strengthen friendships with classmates.

Activities: Make and use a conversation dice.

Theme 2 – Friendship

Objectives: Know that good friends support each other with problems and difficulties; understand the impact kindness can have on how somebody feels.

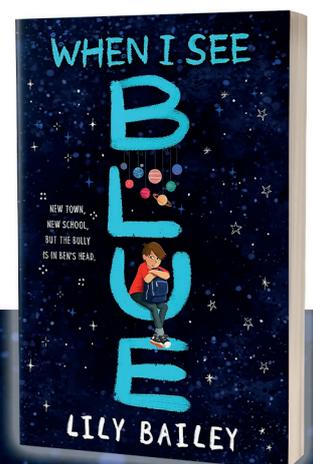
Activities: Write a supportive note for a friend based on the note April writes for Ben.

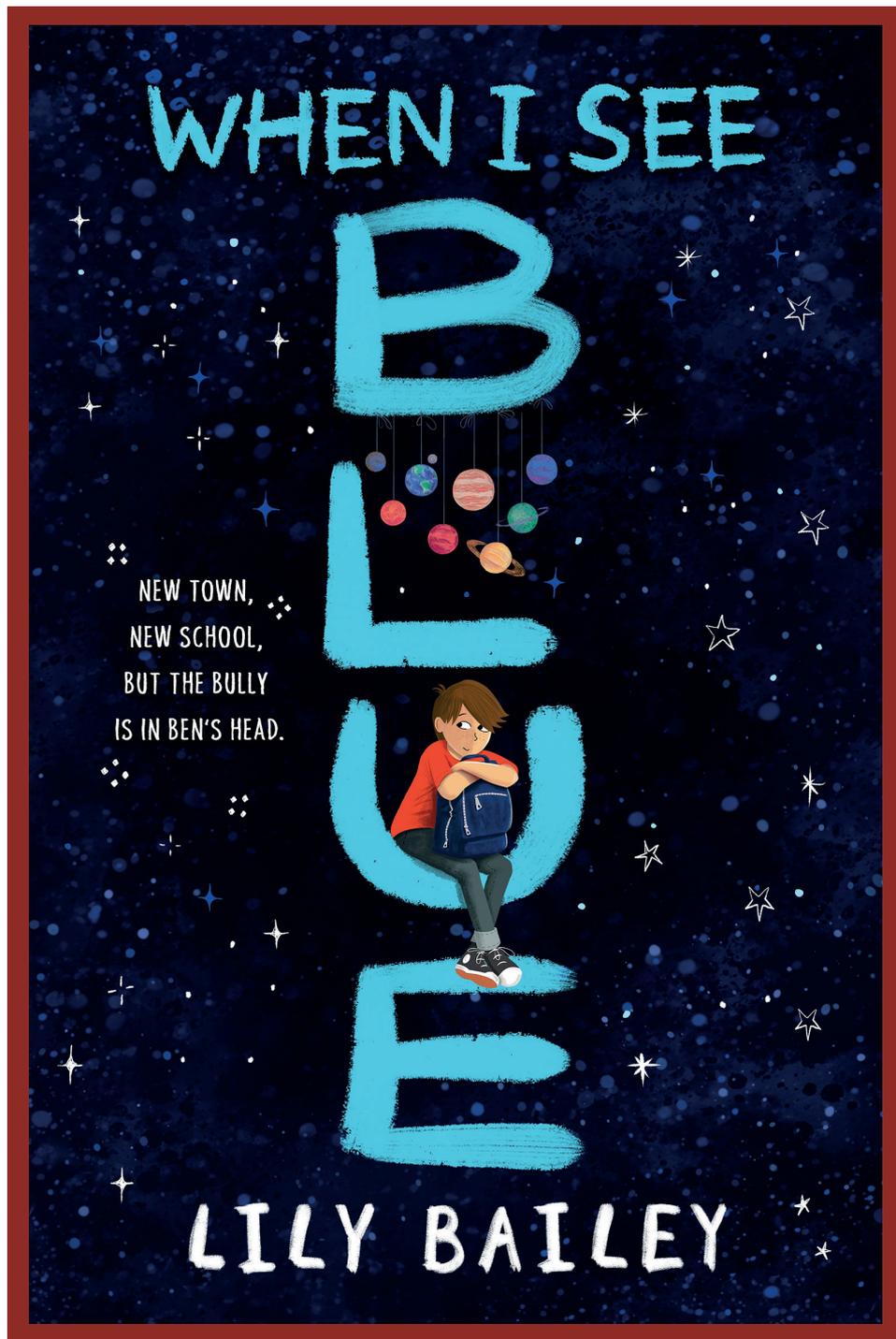
Theme 3 – Overcoming Challenges

Objectives: Understand the effect OCD can have on a person’s life; know that with help and support, people with OCD can learn to manage their condition.

Activities: Write some messages for Ben; make a certificate to celebrate Ben’s success.

Reflection activities





BOOK COVER PROMPTS

1. What do you notice about the front cover?
2. What genre do you think the book is?
3. What can you infer about the main character of the book based on the front cover?
 4. Can you make any predictions about what the book might be about?
5. What does the title of the book make you think about? Does it give you any clues about the story?
6. Can you think of 3 questions about the book based on the front cover?

THEME 1: EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

In this extract, Ben and April are at art club.
Miss Ruiz is showing them how to make an origami box...

She grabs a square piece of card spinning it round in her hands and folding bits in and out, creasing it into different shapes triangle, rectangle, pentagon, rectangle, and then, finally, box.

'Do you want to have a go?' asks Miss Ruiz.

'I'm not sure,' I say.

'What would make you want to do it?'

'If it didn't have the triangle and pentagon inside.'

'What's wrong with the triangle and pentagon?'

'They aren't squares.' Shoot. If I were in a movie I would cover my mouth with my hands. Miss Ruiz's voice is kind of soft and relaxing, and I think I forgot where I was for a moment.

At exactly the wrong moment.

April is looking over.

'Hey,' she says. 'Make it for me. Like I made you the bat. Then triangles and pentagons will be in my house and they won't be able to hurt you.'

I don't want to I don't want to I don't want to I don't want to.

'You owe me a present,' she grins.

'Fine,' I say. 'I'll make the stupid box.'

I whizz one out just like Miss Ruiz showed me fold flip spin, fold flip spin.

'OMG,' say the girls who sit with Priya. Priya herself is gawping, a biscuit suspended halfway into her mouth. I turn to April - her forehead is creased like she's trying to understand something complicated, and then she cracks up, laughing really hard.

'I knew it. I knew you were a genius. Hey, thanks for helping with my crane, not. Guess you didn't want to share your smarts around? Oh, awesome. Make more, please, please.'

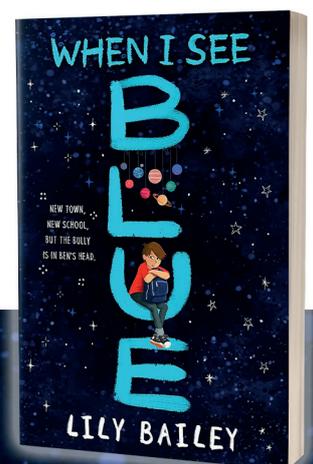
'Pleeeeeeeeeasssse!' says Priya. 'You're quicker than Miss Ruiz. It's like a magic trick.'

'OK,' I say, and I make another, and another. Soon everyone wants a box.

So I make everyone a box. And it feels pretty great.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At first, why doesn't Ben want to make a box?
2. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of somebody else. How does April show empathy in this extract?
3. In what ways does April help Ben?
4. Why do you think some words are written in italics?
5. How do April, Priya and the other children react when Ben makes the box?
6. How does Ben feel at the end of the extract?



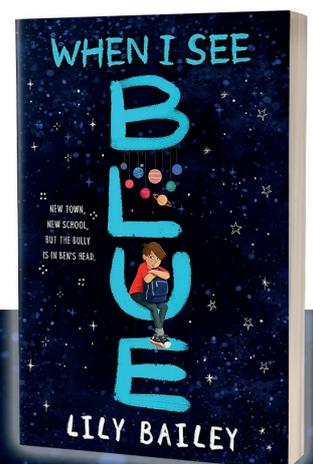
ACTIVITY 1: Make a Conversation Dice

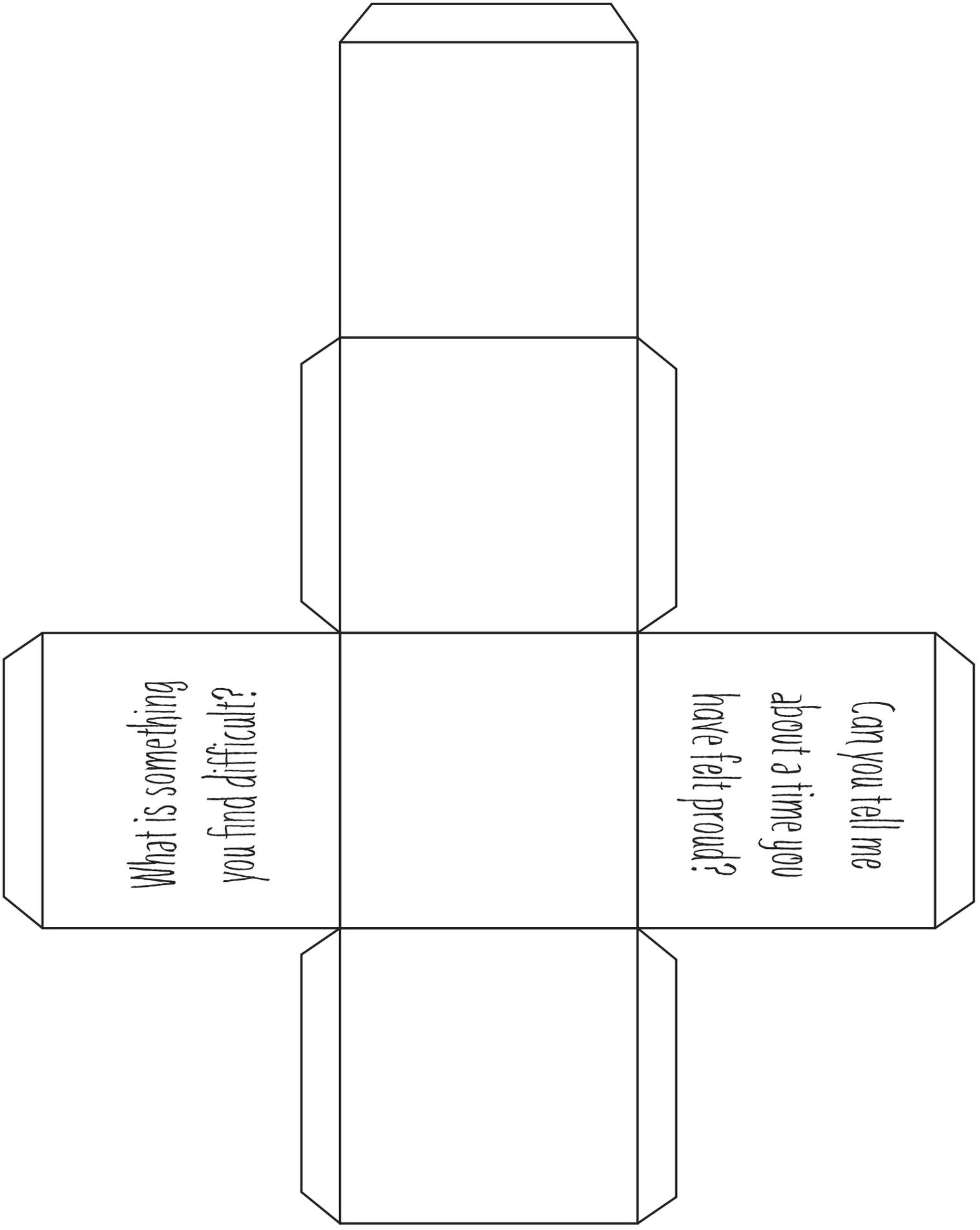
Make a Conversation Dice to help you to get to know other people in your class! The better you know your classmates, the better you will be able to support each other, just as April supports Ben!

Have a look at the net of a cube on the following page. You will see two of the faces already have a question written on them. Can you think of four more questions you could add? Your questions should help you get to know somebody better. For example, you could ask about interests, hobbies, favourite things or ambitions. Write your questions on the blank faces.

Now, cut the net out and fold along the straight lines. Glue the tabs down to make a cube. This is your conversation dice!

Find a conversation partner. Take turns to roll your dice and ask your partner the question it lands on! What will you learn about your partner that you didn't know before?





Please make sure an adult is present when using scissors



THEME 2: FRIENDSHIP

When Thursday comes around I can't concentrate on ANYTHING at school. April asks what has got into me and I whisper to her that I've got my counselling session this evening.

'Oh,' she whispers back. 'Fair.'

When it's finally time to walk home from school, April comes too, and says we don't have to talk about anything. She says good luck and presses a folded note in my palm and tells me to open it just before my session. And then she is gone.

Mum meets me at the end of the road from school. She has even put some purple lipstick on and tied back her hair, because obviously purple lipstick totally screams 'responsible mother'. We get the bus back to the waiting room with eleven chairs, where the dinosaurs still look sad and lonely. There are no other kids here at the moment.

'You could play with the abacus if you like Benny,' says Mum. 'There's no one to see.'

My fingers twinge but I shake my head. I don't want Dinesh to walk in and think I'm even weirder.

I reach into my pocket and unfold the note from April. It is a cartoon picture of the two of us, surrounded by stars and planets. Underneath, April has written:

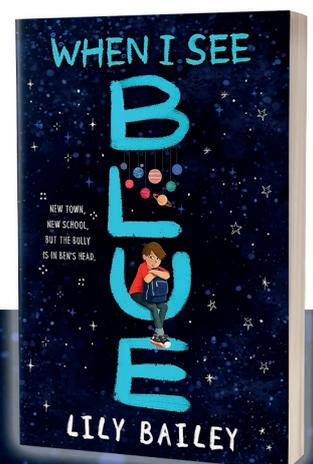
B IS 4 BEN.

B IS 4 BRAVE.

My throat feels tight - not in the gulpy way. Like I might cry but not because I am sad. I fold and unfold the note four times and put it neatly back in my pocket.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does April support Ben in this extract?
2. Can you think of 3 words to describe April?
3. How do you think Ben feels when he opens April's note?
4. Can you find evidence in the text to support your answer?
5. April thinks Ben is brave. Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer.
6. Can you think of a time when a friend has supported you, or when you have supported a friend?

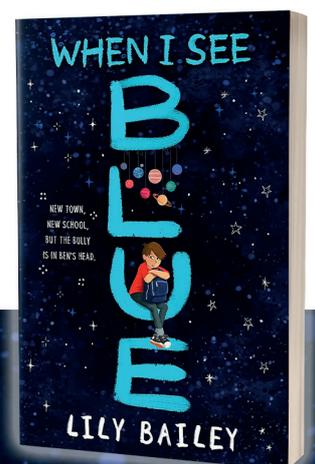


ACTIVITY 2: Write a Supportive Note to a Friend

April's note helps Ben feel supported. Write your own supportive note to give to a friend or a classmate! First, think of a positive word to describe your friend that starts with the first letter of their name. Fill in the gaps on the template below. Next, decorate your note with pictures. You might like to draw some of your friend's favourite things and a picture of the two of you together, just as April does. You could give your note to your friend straight away or save it to give to them at time when you think they might need a bit of extra support or encouragement.

..... is 4

..... is 4



THEME 3: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

I wake up with a terrible feeling in my stomach - like some creature in my belly is trying to claw its way out.

And then I remember: the T-shirts.

Today I am going to wear a different coloured T-shirt to school.

I open the door to my cupboard, where Mum helped me hang the five new T-shirts up last night.

I'd decided I would just grab the one nearest to me, but the nearest one is red! The one I'm most scared of wearing. I guess at least if I wear that one first then nothing after can be so scary.

I reach in and grab it. I put it on and try to breathe like a normal human and not do the gulpy thing. I stare at myself in the mirror. It doesn't look too bad. Maybe even looks good? But then I hear The Thoughts:

If you wear this top, Mum and Dad will be angry with each other for ever, and Dad will never come back.

I pull it off over my head before I can even think what I'm doing. It's next to me, crumpled on the floor. I sit still and breathe hard, pressing my teeth into my knees so deep they make deep angry marks.

I have never wanted and not wanted to do something so much.

Come on, I tell myself. *You're not a superhero. You have no control over anything Mum and Dad do. What would Dinesh say?*

Wear the top, Ben

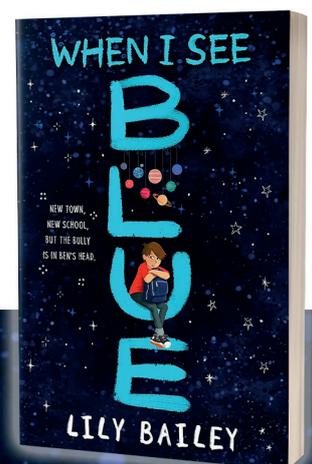
I slowly put it back on. This time instead of looking in the mirror I get out of the room as soon as possible. Kyle is eating cornflakes and checking his Snapchat at the table in the kitchen, and I think Mum is still asleep. I also think she might have told him about the T-shirt challenge, and not to say anything, because usually he just says, 'Morning,' or nothing at all, but today he looks at me for a little bit longer than usual and smiles a tiny bit, and normally Kyle doesn't smile before midday.

The Thoughts are screaming to go back and change.

Instead I grab a BLUE bowl and fill it with Coco Pops. My hands are shaking and I spill the milk a bit. But it's OK, I've done it, and somehow I manage to sit and eat it. And by the time I get to the end it doesn't feel quite so bad. In fact, I feel, kind of.. powerful? It's weird.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

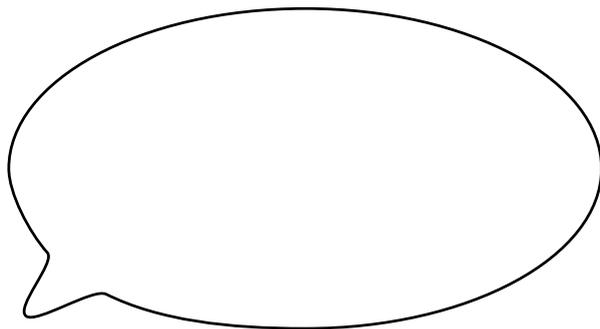
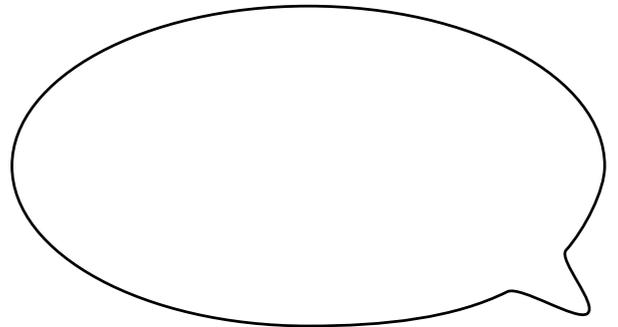
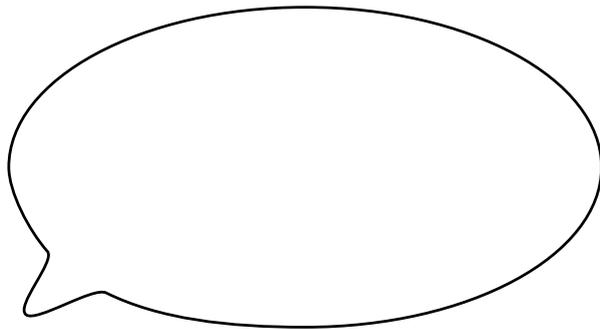
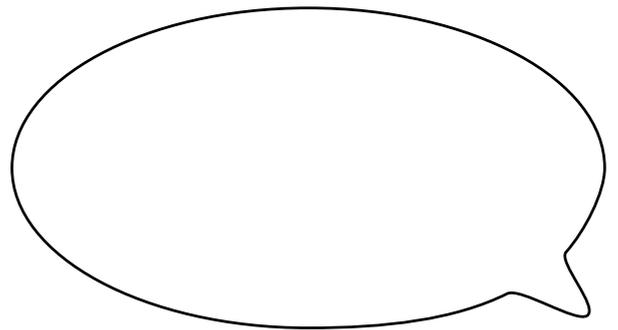
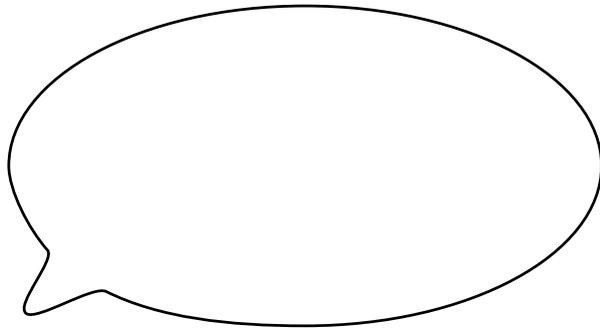
1. Why does Ben wake up with a horrible feeling in his stomach?
2. Why do you think Dinesh has suggested that Ben try wearing a different coloured T-shirt to school?
3. What do 'The Thoughts' say when Ben looks in the mirror wearing his red T-shirt?
4. What emotions do you think Ben experiences during this extract?
5. What personal qualities does Ben show in this extract?
6. What do you admire about Ben?



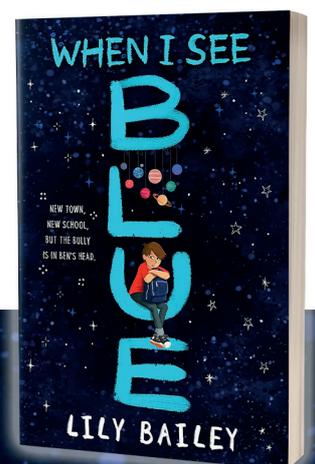
ACTIVITY 3: Celebrating Ben's Successes

If you could speak to Ben at this point in the story, what would you say to him?

Write your ideas in the speech bubbles below.



It was a real challenge for Ben to wear the red T-shirt and use the blue bowl, but he managed it. We all have different skills and different things we find challenging. Why not make a certificate for yourself to celebrate a small achievement of your own? Or perhaps you could make a certificate for a friend who has managed to do something they find difficult?



REFLECTIONS

Activity ideas for when you have finished the book!

- Ben and April love comics! Can you make a comic strip showing an instance when Ben is challenged by his OCD and then successfully manages it?
- Imagine Ben receives a letter from another child who is really struggling with OCD. What might Ben say to them? What advice might he give? Can you write a reply from Ben to this child?
- Write a text conversation between April and Ben a year from the end of the story. What might they be up to? How do you think their lives might have changed?

