



**‘Ballerinas don’t wear glasses,’ Becca cried. ‘And they especially do NOT wear patches!’ At school, all of Becca’s friends want to know what’s up with her patch. Instead of telling the truth, Becca leads her class on imaginative adventures to explain her fabulous fashion choice. But when the questions persist, it’s time for Becca to come clean about her problem.**

## Rationale

These teacher notes have been written to send students back to the text and other sources, actively engage in learning and provide a creative learning experience, where possible.

## The Patch

**By Justine Chen  
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**Illustrated by  
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**Teacher Notes  
prepared by Joy  
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Readership: Prep / Kinder  
– Year 1 (and preschool)

Class study, shared, guided  
and independent reading

Genre: Picture book (paper  
back)

## How to use

The learning activities suggested in one Key Learning Area may also be applicable to other subject areas.

## About The Patch

Becca is taken to the doctor for her vaccinations. The doctor realises that her left eye is lazy so she needs glasses and an eye patch. Becca doesn’t think that ballerinas wear glasses and patches but, with the help of her older brother, she becomes Becca the Ballerina Pirate who dances across the seven seas. Using their imaginations, she leads her crew of school friends on pirate, private eye and monster adventures. Along the way, there is interesting learning happening at school and finally, Becca’s best friend, Sophia Lou becomes a Superhero when she breaks her arm.

## Themes

Being different

Being positive

Imagination

Lazy eye (amblyopia)



## ENGLISH

### Reading and writing

**Names** Becca wrote her name at the doctor's surgery. Also write your name at the top of a long piece of paper (scaffolding/modelling may be needed). Keep writing your name in different colours down the paper for practice. More able writers can also write the names of their pets, their friends and other names of their choice.

### Letters

1. Find where letters of the alphabet are written in the book (sometimes these are on charts). Write your own alphabet chart, using lower and upper case letters. Less competent writers may need to just write some letters such as those in their name, or those the class is focussing on at the time. (A good model of how the letters are written is essential. This may be given as individual desk place-mats.)
2. Becca sees letters as 'fuzz balls'. Read these letters in the book. Then make some letters using plasticine, modelling clay or other flexible materials. Letters could also be drawn in a sand tray or sand pit, if available.

**Days of the Week** Some of the days of the week are pegged on a line in the classroom. Practise reading and writing days of the week. On each day of a school week focus on the appropriate day. Each student writes the name of the day on paper and draws and/or writes about what happens regularly on that day. This may be sport, assembly, library ... For this focus week include special events as well, such as Wet Wednesday – feature lessons on 'wet' (and dry), culminating in a craft activity using 'wet' paint. Hang everything on a line like in the book.

### Speaking and listening

**Left and Right** Becca has a lazy left eye. In pairs, students talk about which hand they use for writing and other tasks. Also talk about which leg they prefer to use, eg. for kicking a ball.

**Imagination** Imagine and talk about what it would be like to be a ballerina pirate dancing across the seven seas in search of secret treasure. Then draw, and possibly write, what is shared.

### Viewing

**Colour** Colours feature in the book, especially in the glasses and clothes. Which colours are used most? What type of colours are these? Why do you think they are used?

Read the words for the colours in the book. Then the teacher labels colours in the room (for emerging readers and writers). Students can model their own writing on these labels



by labelling other items in the classroom environment, including the glasses they make (see Craft below). More advanced writers can write an acrostic poem based on a colour. For example

Ripe tomatoes

Endless fire-engines

Dishes of raspberries

**Medium** How might the illustrations have been drawn? (It states on the last page that they have been done in 'watercolour and dip pen and India ink on Aches watercolour paper'.) If any of these materials or equivalent are available, look at how the books (or something else quite easy to draw) have been drawn in *The Patch*. Then draw these using an outline in pen or ink. Colour using a different medium.

### Shadows

1. The shadows are different from what you would expect in some parts of the book. Find these. What do they show?
2. In pairs, go outside and trace each other's shadows on the ground with chalk (in an appropriate part of the playground). Compare the shadows with your bodies.
3. On paper or cardboard, draw a picture of yourself with an unexpected shadow, like in the book. Use a range of colours for the picture of yourself but only one colour for the shadow.

## MATHEMATICS

**Shapes** Becca draws triangles, circles and squares. Students draw these shapes age-appropriately (younger students draw free-hand or trace; older students could use rulers and compasses). Practise labelling the shapes using the correct spelling. Then paste the shapes onto cardboard or paper charts cut in the appropriate shapes.

### Counting

1. Count numbers 1-10. Write the numerals for these (1,2,3 ...). Read and write the words for these (one, two, three ...). Represent these numbers using concrete materials.
2. Becca counted to seventy-seven. Try counting that far as a class. Who can count further? Some students can demonstrate. Represent 77 in concrete materials.



## SOSE/HSIE

**Our school community** Becca finds the lost jumper. Find out where the school's Lost Property is kept. Visit it as a class (also helpful for future individual reference). Check some lost items to see if they have nametags. Try to find the owners of those that do, plus some that don't.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/ HEALTH

### The Doctor

1. Becca visits the doctor to have her vaccinations. What might these vaccinations be for? Who can describe their own experiences with vaccinations or at the doctor? Why is it important to visit the doctor?
2. Becca was found to have a lazy eye. Who else has this or knows of someone with it? What is it like? What do you do to help it?

### Difference

1. Becca didn't want to be different but she turned it into a positive experience. Show how Becca felt at different times in the book by drawing a storymap. Also draw emoticons (simple faces showing expressions of sad, happy or neutral) to show how she felt at each picture on the storymap.
2. Talk about when people at school or in the community might feel different. How could class members help them to feel included?

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**Dance** Read and find the different types of dance movements or dances in the book, such as 'plied', 'jig'. The teacher or an adult or older child with dance experience could demonstrate these to the class. Students practise steps or dance types that are appropriate. This could include using mats or towels as props to represent 'hungry crocodiles'. Then the leader choreographs a brief routine that students copy and learn. Music could be incorporated. This could be performed for another class, or the school or parents.

**Enrichment** Students who learn ballet could devise their own routine and perform this as well.



black dog books

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# Teacher Notes

## CREATIVE ARTS

**Drawing** As well as drawing shapes, Becca draws heart-shaped tulips and squiggly worms. Draw these first, then continue by brainstorming other items with a descriptor for everyone to draw, such as 'jagged lightning'.

**Glasses** Make glasses (spectacles) after looking at the pictures and reading the descriptions of the glasses Becca chooses from. Make them out of coloured pipe-cleaners. Early finishers could also make an eye-patch.

## AUTHOR

Justina Chen Headley spent her childhood dreaming of being a writer. While she never wore an eye patch, amblyopia is an issue close to her heart.

## ILLUSTRATOR

Mitch Vane has illustrated many children's books. She works from her home in Melbourne which she shares with her partner, her two children, and a very lazy cat.

She loves to work with dip pen and black ink and hates to draw straight lines. She also hates it when people pick their toenails in front of the TV.

