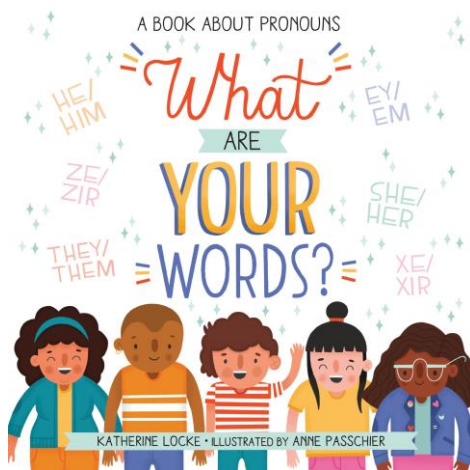


Book Resume: What Are Your Words?



***What Are Your Words?: A Book About Pronouns* by Katherine Locke, illustrated by Anne Passchier**

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2021

ISBN: 9780316542067 (hardcover)

*Age Range: 4-8 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: PreS-Gr 3 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Follow Ari through their neighborhood as they try to find their words in this sweet, accessible introduction to gender-inclusive pronouns that is perfect for readers of all ages.

Whenever Ari's Uncle Lior comes to visit, they ask Ari one question: "What are your words?" Some days Ari uses she/her. Other days Ari uses he/him. But on the day of the neighborhood's big summer bash, Ari doesn't know what words to use. On the way to the party, Ari and Lior meet lots of neighbors and learn the words each of them use to describe themselves, including pronouns like she/her, he/him, they/them, ey/em, and ze/zir. As Ari tries on different pronouns, they discover that it's okay to not know your words right away—sometimes you have to wait for your words to find you.

Filled with bright, graphic illustrations, this simple and poignant story about finding yourself is the perfect introduction to gender-inclusive pronouns for readers of all ages.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "An affirming, conversational picture book that models the ease with which our language can adapt to gender diversity and pronoun use. A recommended first purchase for all libraries." —*School Library Journal*, starred review

"Awesome, insightful, powerful, necessary, relevant and woke.... The variety of adjectives used throughout Ari's journey to find their words will delight Language Arts teachers and can serve as a teaching text." —Cicely Lewis, *School Library Journal*

Updated 7.9.2024

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

Childrenspublicity@hbgusa.com

“Locke's simple narrative...seamlessly incorporates the appropriate pronouns for each person, demonstrating the ease with which language can change to accommodate pronoun diversity.... A sweet, affirming introduction to the language used to communicate a range of gender identities.” —*Booklist*

“A capable celebration of the rich range of pronouns.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“Through Ari's story, children are gently versed in different identifiers. The ultimate lesson: how to champion yourself.” —*Entertainment Weekly*

“This story offers lots of opportunities for exploring beyond the binary.” —*The Horn Book*

“An influential addition to gender literature, this educational feel-good book highlights the marvelous distinctiveness of humanity.” —*Midwest Book Review*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- ALA Top Ten Rainbow Book 2022

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [What Are Your Words? Teaching Tips](#)
- [Katherine Locke Presents WHAT ARE YOUR WORDS](#)
- [Professor Kindred – What Are Your Words? \(Read Aloud\)](#)
- [Children’s Book World - Katherine Locke - What are Your Words?](#)
- [Pride and Less Prejudice - Interview with Katherine Locke, Author of “What Are Your Words?: A Book About Pronouns”](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books - Q&A With Katherine Locke and Anne Passchier, What Are Your Words?](#)
- [Publishers Weekly - LGBTQ Kids’ Books 2021: Q & A with Katherine Locke](#)
- [TeachingBooks - What Are Your Words?: A Book about Pronouns](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[‘Get over it’: Suffield's removal of LGBTQ book about pronouns from display sparks debate \(Suffield, CT\)](#)

[CT library adopts new policy after town leader’s decision to pull transgender themed book from display](#)

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR STATEMENTS

KATHERINE LOCKE

I didn’t know where I fit as a kid. I tried on friend groups and hobbies and personalities like I was trying on clothes (which I also tried on). Nothing fit. I lived life for twenty plus years thinking there was something fundamentally

Updated 7.9.2024

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
Childrenspublicity@hbgusa.com

wrong with me, until in my mid-twenties, I was given the words for nonbinary and genderqueer identities, including pronouns that finally felt like they captured me. It's no coincidence that starting to embrace my own identity also helped me break free of self-destructive patterns. I no longer needed to self-destruct to fit into the only box I thought available to me. I had more options, more words, more freedom to be who I was, and who I could be.

I dream of a world where no kid spends decades self-destructing—or succeeds at self-destructing—because they lack the words for their own identity. I dream of a world in which children are loved exactly for who they are, from the very beginning, by parents, guardians, teachers, librarians, and other adults who are educated enough to have the words to gift to kids who need them.

What Are Your Words?: A Book About Pronouns was born out of that dream. In *What Are Your Words?* the protagonist, Ari, exists in a world where adults know their words, and support a child's discovery of that child's words, whatever they may be, even if they change like the weather. This book imagines a world where every adult in a child's life is supportive, empathetic, and curious, traits that children have but I'm afraid we often lose as we grow up.

I have heard from parents, teachers, and librarians across the country that this book helped their kids find their words—not just pronouns, but other descriptors too—and helped give adults the tools to have these conversations with kids about their own identities, or the identities of other kids in their families, classrooms, and communities. And even more importantly, I've had kids come up to me with this book in their arms, and they ask me, "How did you know?"

I know because I was that kid. I felt squiggly and squirmy when people called me girl, and I didn't hate it as much as I knew I should when people made fun of me for being a tomboy. But I didn't feel like a boy either. And my journey to my words was painful and fraught.

It doesn't have to be. We can give kids the language to explore their identity and who they want to be, and the space for that language and identity to change and bloom as they grow. We can see a world where so many more kids make it to adulthood happy, healthy, and well-adjusted, with greater empathy for the people around them.

I want *What Are Your Words?* to be a part of that world. I believe that it is an essential tool for creating that world: a world where children are loved and seen and heard for who they are.

My words today are: they/them, hopeful, optimistic, and expectant. What are your words?

ANDY PASSCHIER

In a time where there is so much misinformation being spread about gender identity, trans people, and pronouns, I believe it is imperative to have resources that provide accurate and compassionate information on these topics. This book presents a wonderful and approachable introduction to pronouns. It defines pronouns as an important set of words people use to represent themselves, while also equating them to other descriptors someone may consider significant. As the illustrator of this title, for example, my words would be "they/them", but also "artist, baker, book nerd, and cat lover". My hope for this book is that it provides kids with easy language to understand themselves, as well as the information to approach others with empathy, curiosity, and understanding, rather

Updated 7.9.2024

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

Childrenspublicity@hbgusa.com

than apprehension. We're all just humans, and we all use different words that should be taken into account and respected.

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

Updated 7.9.2024

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

Childrenspublicity@hbgusa.com