



# Of Course You Can!

by Karen Hinge

Illustrated by Nicky Sievert

nā Ngaere Roberts i whakamāori

## About the author:

**Karen Hinge** is a New Zealand trained primary school teacher. She has more than 20 years experience teaching Year 7 and Year 8 students. Her particular areas of interest are teaching literacy and using Google and on-line tools in the classroom. Recently she left the classroom to pursue these interests further by taking up a position running a school library and providing eLearning support to teachers.

*Of Course You Can* is Karen's second children's book, her first was *Elephant Trouble* published in 2017, and she hopes to write more in the future.

**Nicky Sievert** was born in Hawkes Bay and studied art in Wellington. While growing a family she worked on her drawing and illustration skills and *Of Course You Can* is the first picture book she has illustrated.

Her illustration goals are to capture the exciting, funny, playful and challenging world of kids and families. She likes exploring the ideas of same and different; people connecting around shared ideas and moments where they show their difference. Nicky's goal is to work on projects where all children are represented and make books that show a world where everybody lives.

**Ngaere Roberts** is a fluent speaker of te reo Māori, which she regards as her first language.

Having trained as a primary teacher Ngaere taught in several Auckland schools before becoming a Māori Immersions lecturer from 1993-2005. During this time, as a lecturer and senior lecturer at the School of Education, University of Waikato, Ngaere developed and taught, through the medium of Māori, a wide range of courses (undergraduate to Masters level), oversaw teaching practice for trainee teachers working in Māori-medium settings, and acted as departmental chairperson (School of Education) and coordinator of Masters-level research (School of Māori and Pacific Development).

Ngaere has contributed to the evaluation of a range of academic programmes throughout New Zealand, played a role in the development of a number of Ministry of Education curriculum documents, was a member of a number of Ministry of Education committees and contributed to several externally



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funded research and development contracts.

Ngaere has been involved in drafting curriculum, writing textbooks for young learners and continues to be a strong advocate of the language.

## Synopsis:

This book tells the story of Jeremy as he starts a new school. He is nervous. Initially it is not apparent to the reader that Jeremy uses a wheelchair. The word 'wheelchair' does not feature in the story.

The children in the class help Jeremy to participate in all school activities by adapting the activity to suit his needs. This is done naturally, with empathy and friendship, and without any focus on his disability. Eventually however, when it comes to swimming his classmates can't see how he could possibly manage and they become concerned for his safety.

Having gained confidence throughout the story, Jeremy proves them wrong as he splashes into the pool with his peers.

## Themes - Issues:

- Acceptance of others regardless of ability
- Differentiation for success
- Altruism and kindness
- Feeling nervous

## Suggested Learning Opportunities:

### Prior to Reading:

Discussion around feeling nervous.

Who can share about a time when they felt nervous? Who has had a funny feeling in their tummy when they've been nervous? Can you describe how it felt?

If somebody new came to our class and was feeling nervous, how do you think we could help them to feel more comfortable?

This book is about a boy who was feeling nervous about starting a new school.

### Shared Book Reading Strategies:

**Prediction:** Discussion: ask students for their story predictions from the title and first image of the book without revealing the wheelchair.

When it is revealed that Jeremy is in a wheelchair, ask the students to revise their predictions. Does it make a difference to what you think might happen in the story? Why?

Pg 28 / 29 Ask for a final prediction before Jeremy goes swimming.

**Using context clues:** Pg 14/15 Discuss: If we don't know what a word means, sometimes we can tell from the words around it. What do you think Ben and the caretaker did with the ramp? How do you know? So what does this tell us about the meaning of the word 'manoeuvre'?

Did Jeremy like being in the kapa haka team? How do you know? So can you guess the meaning of the word 'enthusiastic'?

**Inference:** Discuss: The author never specifically said that Jeremy enjoyed soccer / kapa haka / board games / swimming, so how do we know how he felt about these activities? What can we infer from the words? What can we infer from the pictures?

What do you think of the other children? How did you infer that from the story?

Can we use our inference skills to find in the text the te reo Māori word that means (pick a word).

### Building Vocabulary and Comprehension:

Discussion and definition of various key words eg: goosebumps, manoeuvred, enthusiastic, heaved, launched, chuckled.

Skimming and Scanning: Collect alternative words for 'said'. See activity under 'Exploring Language'.

**Summarising:** After Jeremy participates in each event ask students to verbalise a summary of the key points.

Summarise the story.

### After Reading:

#### Discussion

1. When we first started reading this book, we never knew that Jeremy was in a wheelchair. Why didn't the author tell us that Jeremy is a wheelchair user?
2. The word 'wheelchair' is not in the story. Why? (The wheelchair is not important - the person is important.)

3. What changes do you see in Jeremy over the course of the story? Compare his responses to Mum's daily question, 'How was your day?'. Why did this change occur?
4. What do you think this book is really about? Why is it important?
5. Why did the author write this book?

## Exploring Language

### English

Re-read or skim read the book collecting the words that the author uses instead of said: grunted, suggested, enquired, mumbled etc. Discuss or role play the effect of using these words in our writing. Display collected words in the classroom.

Onomatopoeia: 'THWACK', 'giggled', 'Ker-splash,' discuss and brainstorm other examples.

Pg 14 /15 Vocab extension. Can you use the word 'manoeuvre', or enthusiastic in a sentence? Select other appropriate words for further discussion and practice.

### Te Reo Māori

Specific vocabulary learning: identify and practice learning te reo Māori words from the text.

Create a glossary of some of the key te reo words and use the on-line Māori dictionary (<http://maoridictionary.co.nz>) to find their meaning.

Collect, display and use te reo Māori phrases in the classroom.

### Suggested follow up activities:

As a class, play an adapted sport such as goal ball or noodle hockey. Discuss: Was it fun? Was it challenging? Did it meet fitness goals? Why would we play adapted games?

Discussions / practice activities around kindness and empathy. Eg blindfold walk.

### Curriculum Links

**English:** Listening, reading and viewing. speaking, writing and presenting.

**Health and P.E:** Relationships with other people, identity, sensitivity and respect, interpersonal skills.

**Social Sciences:** Understand how belonging to groups is important to people. Understand that people make choices to meet their needs and wants.

**Learning Languages:** Te reo Māori, building comprehension and vocabulary.

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