

# THOSE SHOES



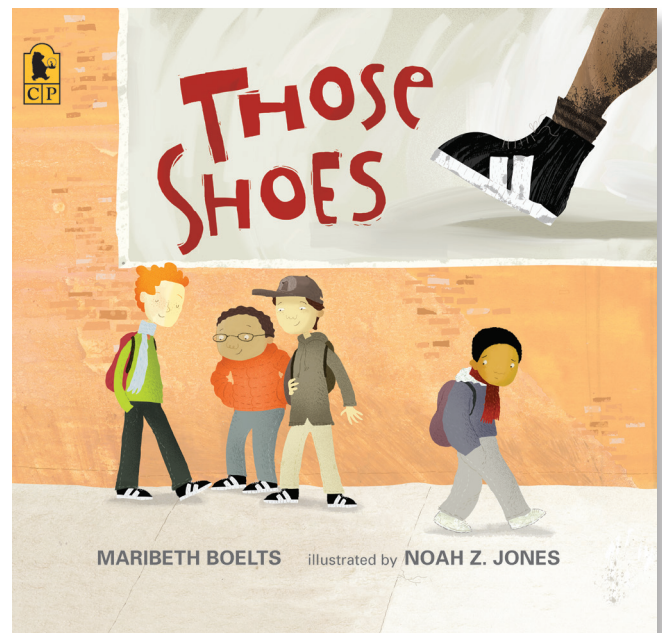
by Maribeth Boelts  
illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Picture books that celebrate everyday heroes offer children age-level role models, insight, encouragement, and hope. They provide windows to positive, healthy, and meaningful ways to solve problems. The best of these books convey their messages subtly.

*Those Shoes* is one such book. In this story that explores needs versus wants, young Jeremy comes to understand that a loving caregiver, sturdy boots, and a true friend have value that far outlast fads. Author Maribeth Boelts based this touching and telling story on personal experiences. In elementary school, she longed for a pair of high-top sneakers fashioned after the hit TV program *Starsky & Hutch*; in college she witnessed a young boy being teased for wearing “Mr. Alfrey” shoes; and as an adult volunteer in a school, she helped a youngster choose a “cool” new pair of shoes from a clothes closet set aside for children in need. Says the author, “I wanted this story to go beyond a child’s desire for the latest fad. I wanted to get into what it’s like to sacrifice something precious for a friend. Jeremy may have given up what he thought he had to have, but he got what he truly needed: a growing friendship.”

This Reading Plan was created by Judy Bradbury. Judy Bradbury is a literacy specialist, author, and professional development consultant. A version of this article originally appeared in *LibrarySparks*, March 2013 © Demco, Inc.



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### COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Common Core Connections listed in this guide are from the English Language Arts Standards and relate to Reading Literature (RL), Reading Informational Text (RI), Writing (W), Speaking and Listening (SL), and Language (L) for grades 1 to 3. For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).



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## PREPARATION FOR READ-ALOUD

Locate a once fashionable and trendy but now humorously outdated piece of clothing, accessory, or gadget to use as an attention-grabbing prop for the read-aloud of *Those Shoes*, such as a women's blazer with sizeable shoulder pads, a men's jumpsuit, an oversize faux fur and leather jacket, clunky-heeled platform shoes, or an early model cordless phone or cell phone. Prominently display the item or a photograph of one to generate interest in the read-aloud.

### BEFORE READING

1. Tell the class about the outdated item you brought. Consider modeling it! Explain that this item was a fad at one time. Ask, "What is a fad?" (A fashion, notion, or behavior that is followed enthusiastically by a large number of people; a trend; a craze.) Ask your students for examples of current fads. These can be toys, activities, or technological devices as well as clothing. Compare current fads with past trends. Ask, "What makes something popular or trendy? Is there something popular you wish to own? Why do you want it? How do you feel when you don't have or aren't able to buy something that is popular?" **[Common Core Connections: SL.1-3.1, SL.1-3.1.B, L.1-3.1]**
2. Discuss the difference between needs and wants. Ask children to name things they need. List needs in a column on chart paper or the whiteboard. In a parallel column, list wants that the group suggests. **[Common Core Connections: L.1-2.5, L.1.5.C; L.2.5.A]**
3. Share with the students that Maribeth Boelts, the author of *Those Shoes*, wanted a pair of trendy blue-and-white-striped sneakers made popular by a TV show when she was in sixth grade. Her parents couldn't afford to buy them, so she got a pair of knockoff shoes instead. She hoped her classmates wouldn't notice that they weren't those shoes, but they did. The memory of that experience helped spur the writing of *Those Shoes*.
4. Show the class the cover of the book. Read the title aloud. Draw attention to the four boys on the cover and the shoe adjacent to the title. Note the facial expressions of the four boys. Ask, "Who do you think is the main character of this story? Why? What do you think the title means? What do you think this story is about?" **[Common Core Connections: L.1-3.4.A, L.1-3.6, RL.1-3.7]**
5. Open the book to the front endpapers. Ask, "What season is it?" (Fall.) Flip to the back endpapers. Ask, "What season is it?" (Winter.) "What do you think the endpapers tell us about the story? Let's think about this as we read." **[Common Core Connections: RL.1-3.7]**
6. Turn to the title page spread. Ask, "Where does this story take place? What is the setting?" (A city.) "How do we know?" (Tall, large buildings, expanse of concrete.) **[Common Core Connections: L: 1-3.6, RL.1-3.7]**
7. Tell the class that you will read to find out more about the boy on the cover and why he is frowning. **[Common Core Connection: RI.1.7]**

### WHILE READING

1. Show the first full-page spread. Ask, "What is the main character looking at?" (A billboard.) Read the billboard out loud. **[Common Core Connections: RL.1-3.7]**



2. As you read the story, ask students to describe how Jeremy is feeling. Encourage use of synonyms for common words, such as *frustrated*, *sad*, *embarrassed*, and *left out*.  
**[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.7]**
3. After reading about the day when Jeremy first wore his Mr. Alfrey shoes, ask what clues in the illustrations help us understand how Jeremy is feeling, like facial expressions and his hunched shoulders at the door to the classroom. Then ask what clues there are in the text, such as “my grip is so tight on my pencil I think it might bust.” **[Common Core Connections: RI.1.6, L.3.5, RL.1–3.7]**
4. Discuss with the class how they would feel if they were Jeremy. What descriptions might they use to help others know what they were feeling? **[Common Core Connection: RL.3.6]**
5. After reading about Jeremy and his grandmother shopping, have the students talk about how it would feel if they were Jeremy and realized that their grandmother thought “those shoes” were too expensive. **[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.2, L.1–3.1]**
6. Ask if the class knows what a thrift store is. **[Common Core Connections: L.1–3.4.A]**
7. Ask, “Do you think Jeremy made a wise decision buying ‘those shoes,’ even though they are too small for his feet? Have you ever bought something you later regretted?”  
**[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.1, L.1–3.1]**
8. When Jeremy thinks to himself, *I’m not going to do it*, ask students what it is that he doesn’t want to do. Discuss his thoughts and actions. **[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.1, RL.1–3.3]**
9. When Jeremy feels both happy for Antonio and mad about his own Mr. Alfrey shoes, ask, “Have you ever felt both happy and sad at the same time?” Encourage children to cite personal experiences of tough decisions that made them both happy and sad.  
**[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.1, SL.1–2.2, L.1–3.1]**
10. After you finish the story, discuss the resolution. **[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.1, RL.2–3.3]**
11. Return to the endpapers at the front and back of the book and ask why they were illustrated this way. (To convey the passage of time through the story.) **[Common Core Connection: RL.2.5]**

### AFTER READING

1. Return to the class-generated list of needs and wants. Ask the children to identify Jeremy’s needs and wants as we know them from the story, and add them to the list in a different color. **[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.2]**
2. Discuss the friendship between Antonio and Jeremy. Ask, “Do you think their friendship will grow? Why?” **[Common Core Connections: RL.1.9, RL.2–3.3, SL.3.1.D]**
3. Have the class list some qualities of true friends. **[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.4]**
4. Talk about what the students think a hero is. Would they consider Jeremy an everyday hero? Why or why not? **[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.4, RL.2.3]**
5. Ask, “Do you know someone who is an everyday hero?” Invite students who say yes to explain why this person is an everyday hero. **[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.4]**



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Read about children in other parts of the world who are less fortunate and discuss their needs. Explore ways in which we can be everyday heroes by helping others.  
[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.1, SL.3.1.A, SL.1–3.1.B, SL.1–2.1.B]
2. Have students interview their parents about a fad they remember and report back to the class. Encourage them to bring in the trendy item or a photograph of it, if possible.  
[Common Core Connections: SL.1–3.4, SL.1–2.5, L.1–3.2]

## WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Cut out patterns of high-top sneakers from lined paper. Have children write about an important need they would like to satisfy for someone and how they might accomplish it.  
[Common Core Connections: L.1–3.1, L.1–3.2, W.1–3.1, W.1–3.2, W.1–3.5]
2. Pair students to interview each other about their most precious wants. Direct students to ask who, what, where, when, and why questions and include pertinent answers in a feature story written in complete sentences. If possible, have students illustrate their feature stories with captioned photographs. Display on a wall banner made of newspapers or a bulletin board covered with newspaper as a background for the students' work.  
[Common Core Connections: W.1–3.3, W.1–3.5, W.1–3.6, L.1–3.1, L.1–3.2, SL.1–2.5]
3. The shoes that Maribeth Boelts longed for when she was in sixth grade were made popular by the TV show *Starsky & Hutch*. Have students team up to research what *those* "those shoes" looked like and other details about the fad. Teams should identify a specific question to answer before research begins and report their findings to the class. [Common Core Connections: W.1–2.7, W.1–2.8, L.1–3.1, L.1–3.2]

## MORE, MORE, MORE!

### POETRY

Included in *A Foot in the Mouth: Poems to Speak, Sing, and Shout* selected by Paul B. Janeczko and illustrated by Chris Raschka, "Favorite" is a poem by George Ella Lyon that offers a fun look at a favorite coat. Read this poem before or after the read-aloud of *Those Shoes* as a prompt for a related writing activity in which children write a poem about their favorite item.

[Common Core Connections: RL.1–3.10, W.1–3.5]

### WHAT A PAIR!

Follow up the read-aloud of *Those Shoes* by reading *Olive and the Embarrassing Gift* by Tor Freeman, a picture book suitable for primary students that considers how we might respond when faced with a dilemma that impacts friendship. On the flap copy, the author-illustrator recalls a personal experience that inspired the writing of the book. Sometimes a small act of bravery can save someone from hurt feelings. Discuss the similarities and differences between that book and *Those Shoes*.

[Common Core Connection: RL.1.9]

Look for Maribeth Boelts and Noah Z. Jones's second collaboration, *A Bike Like Sergio's*

