

HENRIETTA GEE



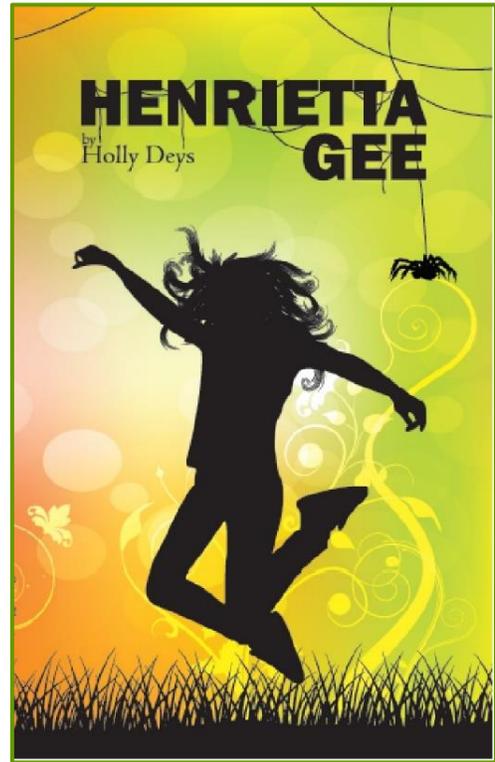
Teaching Guide

Written and Designed by Ambareen Syed

ABOUT THE BOOK

Henrietta Gee is the most upbeat kid in the sixth grade at Twin Oaks Middle Academy. But her love of her pet tarantula gets her into trouble with the meanest principal around: Cornelius Clay. He gleefully tries to crush Henrietta's dream to see the world's rarest tarantula at the upcoming school field trip to the Insectarium.

Faced with a school trip ban and bullies, Henrietta struggles to keep smiling, until things mysteriously and hilariously start to turn in her favour. A funny and touching story that teaches kids one of life's most important lessons: keeping a positive attitude in the face of difficulty and challenge.



ISBN 978-0-9937564-1-2

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ambareen Syed (pen name Holly Deys) is an author and who has won in both local and international writing competitions over the last 20 years of short story writing. *Henrietta Gee* is her first full novel, for kids between the ages of 8-12. *Henrietta Gee* was a story she came up with for her own six children, who loved it and encouraged her to write it down. *Henrietta Gee and the Dancing Cat*, the sequel to *Henrietta Gee*, was published last year. *Henrietta Gee and the Queen of Mean* was just released this year. Ambareen lives near Toronto, Canada.



VISIT THE WEBSITE

www.henriettagee.com

A great resource for the classroom,
integrated with this teaching guide!

- ★ Fun info about the creatures profiled in the book series
- ★ Online stories written by kids for kids
- ★ Games related to the story's animals
- ★ Interesting nature videos kids will love
- ★ Read previews of the next book, leave ratings and comments
- ★ Yearly writing contest with cash prizes!

...and much more!

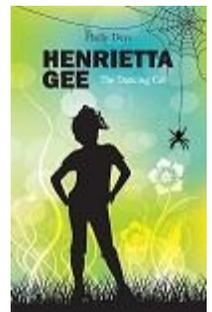
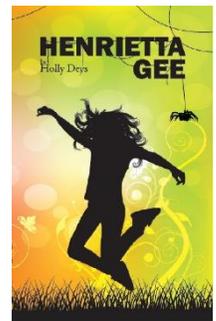


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- Bullying: What it is and What to Do
- The Importance of Creative Writing
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- Author 101: How to Write, Publish and Market Your Book
- Stay Positive, Stay Happy: Keeping Upbeat in a Crazy World!

To book a session for your class, email henriettagee@hotmail.com





OVERVIEW

In *Henrietta Gee*, the main character is faced with bullies both big and small: Principal Clay as the adult who resents and constantly tries to squash her positivity, and the Three Stooges, a group of three boys named Dean, Scott and Fred, who bully Henrietta out of opposition to her friendliness and good nature. Henrietta also has to contend with her reputation being slandered by Morta Kelly, the school newspaper editor who obtains salacious stories by her threatening behavior.



In effect, Henrietta has to face bullying from a) someone in authority over her, b) her peers, c) the media. We will examine these different types of bullying and explore strategies to overcome them through the following activities.

	Grade	Theme	Strategies	Expectations
Activity 1	4 - 6	Personal Growth & Development	Developing sense of self-respect & self-esteem	Ability to identify characteristics of healthy relationships
Activity 2	4 - 6	Knowing Your Community	Identification of support people & services	Take appropriate actions relating to personal health & well-being
Activity 3	4 - 6	Personal Safety & Injury Prevention	Benefits & Dangers of Media & Technology	Engagement with various media responsibly; understanding potential outcomes of use/abuse

HENRIETTA GEE Teaching Guide

ACTIVITY 1: “KNOW YOURSELF”

Before starting this activity, review the Guiding Notes section at the end of this guide.

MATERIALS

- Henrietta Gee
- Scissors
- Red and green construction paper
- Long popsicle sticks or dowels



OVERVIEW

This activity will see young kids agreeing or disagreeing to a mixed list of positive and negative behaviours read aloud by the teacher. Students will give examples of each behaviour from the book and have a discussion about it. They will learn how to distinguish between healthy versus unhealthy behaviours, as well as the effect on one’s self-esteem from each of these behaviours.

LEARNING GOAL

In this self-esteem building activity, students will learn to identify the signs of both healthy relationships and unhealthy ones, and to understand these signs within the context of self-respect and self-esteem.

HENRIETTA GEE Teaching Guide

ACTIVITY

- 1) Read Henrietta Gee!
- 2) Ask each student to construct a red flag using the red construction paper and popsicle sticks/dowels.
- 3) Ask each student to construct a green flag using the construction paper
- 4) Divide up the blackboard into 2 halves, with the titles “Healthy” and “Unhealthy”



ACTION

- 1) Read each entry aloud on the Relationship Action List, found in the Guiding Notes section at the end of this guide.
- 2) Ask them to raise either the red flag if they feel the behavior was negative or the green flag if they felt it was positive. Ask them why.
- 3) Ask the students after each entry to recall a moment from Henrietta Gee in which a character’s actions fits the description of the behavior read. Discuss how they thought the characters involved in that situation felt about the behavior.
- 4) Healthy relationships involve respect, kindness, and trust. Come to a class consensus about each behavior and list the behavior on the board as either “Healthy” or “Unhealthy.”



ACTIVITY 2: “REACHING OUT”

Before starting this activity, review the Guiding Notes section at the end of this guide.

MATERIALS

- Henrietta Gee
- Scissors
- Yellow construction paper
- Poster paper



OVERVIEW

In this awareness-building activity, students will learn the benefits of reaching out for help to various support people and services available to them in the community, through a craft activity and discussion.

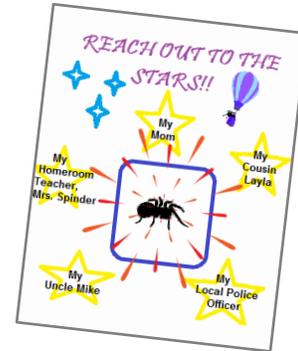
LEARNING GOAL

Through discussion, students will learn about how important it is to reach out to people and services in their community around them for help, and how reaching out for help can allow others to address and take steps to solve the problem you may be facing.



ACTIVITY

- 1) Read Henrietta Gee!
- 2) Read and discuss the **Steps to Seeking Help** in the Guiding Notes section for Activity 2 at the end of this guide.
- 3) Hand out the poster materials and ask the kids to trace out stars on the yellow construction paper and cut them out.
- 4) Ask the students to draw a large box (or cut one out of construction paper and glue it in the middle of the poster).
- 5) Tell students to put a title across the top of the poster which says “Reach Out to the Stars!”



ACTION

- 1) Use the Guiding Question for Activity 2 found in the Guiding Notes section of this guide to help you with class discussion about seeking help when needed.
- 2) Help the students to identify any supports in their community as well as in their personal lives (e.g. A favourite aunt, a supportive teacher, an older sister/brother, etc.).
- 3) Construct the “Reach Out to the Stars!” poster, in which students will glue the yellow stars to the poster, and write in each star a name/title of a support person they have identified in the community (e.g. “Mom”, “Jeanine, my aunt”, “Mr. Potts my school guidance counselor”, etc.). Ask students to draw a self-portrait in the box in the middle of the stars.
- 4) Ask the kids to put their poster in their rooms or in an accessible place.

ACTIVITY 3: “IN THEIR SHOES”

Before starting this activity, review the section on Cyber-Bullying and Guiding Questions in the Guiding Notes section at the end of this guide.

MATERIALS

- A Pack of Cue Cards, one for each student
- Markers



OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will learn about the effects of words, whether said or written down, and how the use of technology can sometimes make people use their words to hurt others anonymously.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will examine first-hand how written words make them feel, with the goal of understanding how the things they may type online or through texting and other forms of technology can affect other people in a profound way, sometimes more so than spoken words, as spoken words may fade in memory but written words are always present. The ever-present nature of technology can make cyber-bullying worse, and students will be made aware of the impact of media on the message



ACTIVITY

- 1) Hand out one cue card to every student.
- 2) Tell your class you're going to give them one minute. In that minute they have to write a mean comment on the piece of paper. Nothing violent or using any swearing – just the kind of thing someone might write on the Internet about someone they don't like.
- 3) The students are trying to write as many comments as they can on as many pieces of paper as they can in one minute.
- 4) When the minute is up say, "Stop."
- 5) When they have written something, they have to pass the cue card to the person on the right.
- 6) Tell the students to imagine they have just found a web site that has a lot of comments about them. Tell them to read the comments on the paper imagining that those comments are on this web site and are about them.
- 7) Have a discussion about how it feels to read these things.
- 8) Do the game again. Hand out another cue card per student (or turn the one they have over), but this time instead of mean and hurtful comments, everyone has to write something positive and nice.
- 9) After one minute of writing, ask them to pass it to their right again. Have them imagine they're reading all these things about themselves. Ask them the difference in how it feels for them to read the negative and positive comments and how it must feel for another person to who could be reading these comments online or on a phone.

GUIDING NOTES

ACTIVITY 1:

Relationship Action List

Listed beside each action is a corresponding event in *Henrietta Gee* which reflects this behavior, with the page numbers as well. This is just a suggestion for teachers – the students may come up with other examples they remember from the book.

“Raise either a green flag or red flag if your friend or family member:”

1. Says I love you – [Henrietta with her parents \(27-29\)](#).
2. Lies to you about where he or she is going – [The Three Stooges leaving from the group \(107\)](#).
3. Gets jealous if you talk to someone else – [Mr. Roland upset that he was interrupted \(40\)](#).
4. Constantly accuses you of stealing when you haven't – [Principal Clay's assumption \(163-164 & 166\)](#).
5. Asks and consults with you about issues – [Henrietta talking to Layla \(66-69\)](#).
6. Makes an effort to get to know your friends/family – [Henrietta's parents inviting Mike's dad \(191\)](#).
7. Cheers you on at games or competitions – [Miss Walters supporting Henrietta after trip \(130-132\)](#).
8. Puts you down – [Fred insults Layla \(94\)](#).
9. Gives you chances to succeed – [Miss Walters providing opportunities for Henrietta \(74-77 & 89-90\)](#).
10. Makes excuses for you – [Mr. Schrubbs defending Henrietta to Mr. Clay \(162-164\)](#).
11. Compliments you – [Mike complimenting Henrietta \(80\)](#).
12. Seems obsessed with you – [Principal Clay's obsession with Henrietta \(161-164\)](#).
13. Blames you for things that go wrong – [Mr. Clay blaming Henrietta for bringing Hairy at school \(4-9\)](#).
14. Defends you even you are not there – [Mr. Lorenzo's support for Henrietta \(152\)](#).
15. Makes you feel better when you're sad – [Layla cheering up Henrietta \(68\)](#).
16. Criticizes you unfairly – [Mr. Clay's rant against Henrietta \(126\)](#).
17. Insults you behind your back – [The Three Stooges talking about Henrietta \(93-94\)](#).
18. Wants to know where you are at all times – [Principal Clay trying to track down Henrietta \(102\)](#).
19. Pressures you to do things you don't want to do – [Morta cornering Principal Clay \(32\)](#).
20. Respects your opinions and ideas – [Miss Walters supporting the project on arachnids \(61\)](#).
21. Likes to see you sad or punished – [Mr. Clay punishing Henrietta unfairly \(8-9\)](#).
22. Threatens you when you don't do what he or she says – [Morta threatening Mike \(92\)](#).
23. Finds ways to annoy you – [Dean bothering Henrietta in class \(63\)](#).
24. Calls you names – [Dean calling Henrietta Spider-Girl \(64\)](#).
25. Threatens you or pushes you around – [The Three Stooges threatening Henrietta \(156\)](#).
26. Is proud when you succeed – [Henrietta's parents proud of her success \(188\)](#).
27. Thinks your interests are worth having – [Miss Walters talking to Henrietta \(108-109\)](#).
28. Dismisses what you're saying all the time – [Dean's dismissing Henrietta's defense \(31-32\)](#).
29. Hits you – [Fred hitting Mike with dirt \(157\)](#).
30. Encourages you to do good to others – [Miss Walters encouraging Henrietta \(108-109\)](#).

GUIDING NOTES

ACTIVITY 2:

Steps to seeking help:

Start by talking to a trusted adult (e.g. teacher or guidance counsellor) in your school. They will be able to help you with next steps. The better that you are able to describe and explain your concerns, the more likely that the right kind of help can be found. Think about explaining your needs by describing:

- What do you want to be different?
- What are the most serious challenges that you are facing right now?
- What or who has helped you in the past?
- What would be one thing that, if it changed, could make a positive difference for you?

All schools have access to support staff whose primary job is to help students who are struggling. Also, many community agencies exist that provide free, confidential support for young people.

There are many different kinds of counselors, therapists and therapies. Asking for help is an important first step towards finding the right fit for you. Once you have shared your concerns with a trusted adult, it will be their responsibility to help you find the right kind of support. Sometimes, you might work with a team of 2 or 3 adults to make sure that your personal and school needs are considered. But most importantly, you won't be left to deal with things ON YOUR OWN anymore.

Guiding Questions:

Below are some questions to read to your students, with possible answers in brackets:

1) Henrietta Gee goes through a lot of struggle against Principal Clay's treatment of her. At what points in the story does she confide in another person about her struggle? What kind of support does she receive? (Henrietta confides in Layla while helping to clean out Layla's terrarium, and Layla reassures her about the situation; Henrietta talks to Miss Walters about her interest in spiders, and Miss Walters encourages her to follow her interests and become a scientist; Henrietta talks to her parents about getting in trouble for bringing Hairy the Tarantula to school, and they advise her not to do so again while at the same time understanding her love of spiders).

2) Why does Mike reach out to Raj for help in dealing with Morta Kelly in particular? Can you think of a real-life scenario where a person might reach out to a stronger person than themselves for help against a threat? (Reaching out to adults for help against a school bully, telling your parents if your brother/sister hit you, calling the police for help against a criminal, etc).

3) Name at least 4 people who supported Henrietta in her struggle against bullies: (Layla, Mike, Miss Walters, Mr. Lorenzo, Ally, Morta, Henrietta's parents).

3) What do you think would have happened if Henrietta did not have any friends, family or teachers to help her in her fight against Principal Clay, Morta Kelly and the Three Stooges?

4) Can you remember a time when you reached out for help? What happened and how did you feel

GUIDING NOTES

ACTIVITY 3:

Cyber Bullying:

Cyber-bullying has become more common because of two main reasons: it's easy to send a message and it can be done anonymously. Because people can send a message anonymously, they often say things that they would never say to someone's face. They can say things that are mean and hurtful. It might be easy to say these things, but it is very hard to hear them. The messages stick and can be remembered for a long time.

It is also very easy to spread a message from person to person. In minutes, hundreds, or even thousands, of people can be giving their opinion on a subject. If people are saying bad things about one person, each person might only be saying one thing, but it can quickly add up. Remember: anything written or posted on the Internet is forever and can go immediately anywhere in the world for anyone to see.

Guiding Questions:

Below are some questions to read to your students, with possible answers in brackets:

- 1) Ask the class about cyber bullying: What is cyber bullying? Why is cyber bullying becoming more popular?
- 2) Although the book is based in a world where the internet is not featured, in what way was Henrietta bullied through other forms of media? (Morta Kelly writes a damaging article against Henrietta in the school newspaper). Do you think things would have been worse for Henrietta if the bullying was done against her on the internet? In what ways?
- 3) Henrietta Gee has to deal with the unfair and untrue accusations of other bullies in the school. Review those instances in the book and discuss how the words of her accusers must have made her and others around her feel. (Mr. Clay accusing Henrietta of releasing Hairy in class, Morta Kelly framing Henrietta, Dean Hall spreading rumors about Henrietta throughout the school, the Three Stooges threatening Henrietta and her friends)
- 4) In contrast, discuss some kind statements or words of encouragement that a character in the book has said to Henrietta or another character. (Mike telling Henrietta that their friendship is "worth it"; Layla encouraging Henrietta to be patient; Ally trying to make Henrietta feel better about her trip suspension; Henrietta's parents trying to support her despite Principal Clay's criticisms; Miss Walter encouraging Henrietta to follow her dreams and become a scientific explorer; Mr. Yellar congratulating Henrietta on having 'school spirit').
- 5) Have you ever seen or experienced negative messages being sent from one person to another on the Internet? Why do you think someone would do that?



Sources:

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