

A Teacher's Guide to

Barry Is Terrific

A Wilderwhim Woods Story by Debi Black Vandiver · for Grades K–2

About the Story

When Elliott chases his runaway tree frog into Wilderwhim Woods, he meets a gentle bear named Barry Goodwon who answers every "How are you?" the same way: "*Terrific!*" Through a surprise birthday, a hurt friend, and a shy snake who thinks she isn't welcome, Barry and the friends of the Woods discover that being terrific doesn't mean being the biggest or the bravest — it means being kind.

Themes: kindness · belonging and inclusion · friendship · self-worth

Inside This Guide

1. Read-aloud discussion stops (before, during, and after reading)
2. The Writing Corner: expository prompts on kindness and inclusion, leveled for K–2
3. Word-choice and grammar mini-lessons built on the author's own sentences

Pair it with the free student printables — coloring pages, a seek-and-find, mazes and puzzles, an explorer hat craft, and an award-ready Kindness Certificate — at wilderwhimwoods.com.

Read-Aloud Discussion Stops

Pause a minute or two at each stop to practice predicting, inferring, and naming feelings.

BEFORE READING

Look at the Cover

- What do you think the word *terrific* means?
- What might a bear named Barry be like?
- What do you predict will happen in Wilderwhim Woods?

DURING READING

Into the Woods

Stop when Elliott chases his tree frog into the Woods.

- What do you predict Elliott will find there? What makes you think so?

DURING READING

Follow the Butterfly

Stop when the monarch butterfly appears.

- Where do you predict the butterfly is leading? Someplace *special* — what could it be?

DURING READING

Always "Terrific!"

Stop after Barry answers "How are you?" with "Terrific!"

- Why do you think Barry always says that? How does it make his friends feel?

DURING READING

Sssylvia Hides

Stop when Sssylvia hides in the grass.

- How is Sssylvia feeling? How can you tell?
- What could the friends do so she feels welcome?

AFTER READING

Check Your Predictions

- Was your prediction right? What surprised you?
- What made Barry terrific in the end — being big and brave, or something else?

The Writing Corner

Expository writing, sized for little writers.

Prompt 1 • Why is kindness important?

Barry believes being terrific means being kind. Ask students to explain why kindness matters.

Kindness is important because ____.

One kind thing I can do is ____.

Prompt 2 • Why is it important to include others?

Sssylvia hid in the grass because she thought she wasn't welcome. Revisit the moment Barry showed her that everyone belongs, then write.

I can include a friend by ____.

When everyone belongs, ____.

One Prompt, Three Ways

- **Kindergarten:** draw a kind moment from the story and label it with a word or phrase.
- **First grade:** share the pen — compose one or two sentences together in interactive writing.
- **Second grade:** write a three-sentence paragraph: a topic sentence, a reason, and an example from the story or from real life.

Celebrate the Writing

When a student's writing (or actions!) show real kindness, award the printable Kindness Certificate from wilderwhimwoods.com — signed by Barry Goodwon himself.

Word-Choice & Grammar Mini-Lessons

The author chose her words carefully — use them to teach author's craft.

"The monarch butterfly floated ahead dipping and dancing as though it were leading to someplace special."

— from Barry Is Terrific

Mini-Lesson 1 • See It in Your Mind (visualizing)

Read the sentence aloud while students close their eyes. Then ask:

- Which words did the author use to help you visualize what is happening in the story?
- Circle them together: *floated, dipping, dancing, someplace special.*
- Invite students to draw what they pictured, then compare drawings — the same words can paint different pictures!

Mini-Lesson 2 • Better Than "Went" (vivid verbs)

The butterfly didn't just *go* — it *floated, dipped, and danced.*

- Act out the difference between *went* and *floated*.
- Build a class chart of plain verbs (went, said, looked) and vivid verbs that could replace them.
- Challenge: rewrite "The frog went into the woods" with a vivid verb.

Mini-Lesson 3 • Words You Can Hear (word sounds)

- Why does *Sssylvia Hissabell* start with *sss*? Say it like a snake!
- Listen for the repeated *w* in *Wilderwhim Woods*.
- Send students on a hunt for their favorite-sounding word in the story, and let them tell a partner why they picked it.