

Teaching Notes & Resources

For students age 9+

The activities included here are suitable for the classroom or library sessions

Explore Themes of: Overcoming challenges | Big emotions | Dyspraxia | Relationships | Family and friendship | Empathy | Identity | Being true to yourself

Subject Checklist: English | PSHE/RSE

[Purchase When I Feel Red](#)



SCAN ME

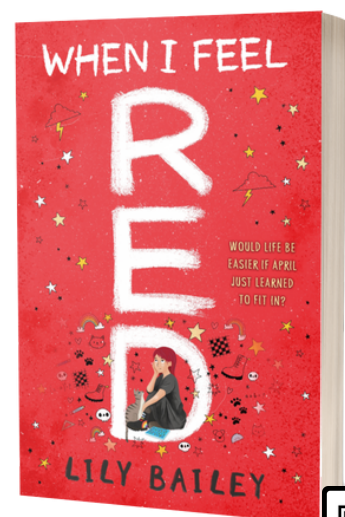
About *When I Feel Red*

'I feel like I'm always ... last. Like I'm running to try and keep up with everyone but it's no good.'

April has always marched to the beat of her own drum, but would life be easier if she learned to fit in? Now that she's in Year 8, things have got even worse. She's much more likely to be trying to rescue an animal in need than worrying about who's dating who at school, which April just finds BORING. Plus, her lessons feel like they're in a foreign language, and it suddenly seems impossible to make it through the week without landing in detention.

As family worries and classroom romances ramp up, it feels like everyone around her is pulling away - even her best friend Ben. But when the pressure's on, can she find a way to fit in and still be true to herself?

An empowering follow up to *When I See Blue* about finding your place in the world from the inspiring author and mental health activist, Lily Bailey. Perfect for fans of Elle McNicoll.



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Contents

Theme 1 – Getting to Know April

Activities: Create an ideas-map about April.

Objectives: Make inferences about a character based on details stated and implied.

Theme 2 – Learning About Dyspraxia

Activities: Complete an 'about me' sheet.

Objectives: Gain a basic understanding of dyspraxia and how it may affect different people; consider personal strengths and learning needs; recognise that everyone is unique and has different needs.

Theme 3 – Friendship and Kindness

Activities: Retrieve information from the text and contrast April and Ben's perspectives.

Objectives: Consider how and why a character's feeling change; reflect upon the power of thoughtful, kind words to change how somebody feels about themselves.

Reflection Activities



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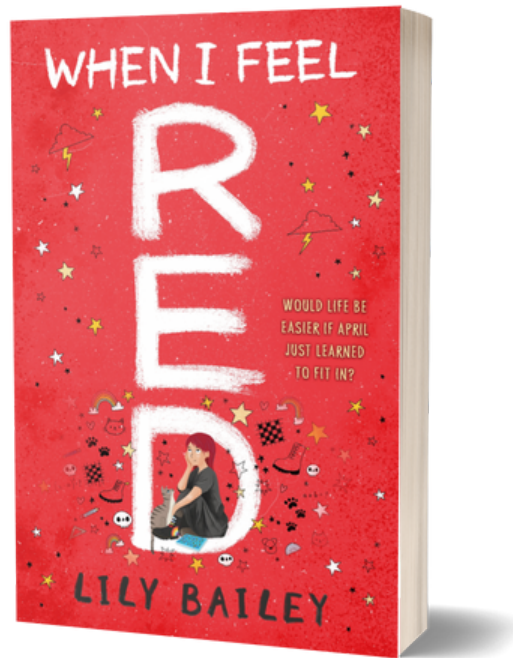


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Book Cover Prompts



- What do you think it might mean to 'feel red'?
- Can you think of three questions about the book based on the front cover?
- Can you predict what might happen in the book?

Discussion Questions

Some questions to consider as you read the novel:

1. When and why does April 'feel red'?
2. Anger is an emotion that often has lots of other emotions beneath it. What emotions do you think are beneath April's anger?
3. Which characters do you think show empathy?
4. What do you think April learns during the course of the novel?



Theme 1: Getting to Know April

Read extract 1 and then consider the following questions

Discussion Questions

1. From what you have read so far, how would you describe April?
2. What do you think it means to 'click' with someone?
3. Read the paragraph that describes April's room then close your eyes. Can you picture April's room? What do you see?
4. Imagine you are April and describe how you feel about school.
5. How would you describe the style of writing in the novel so far? As a reader, how do you feel about the style? In what ways do you think the experience of reading the book might feel different if it was written in third person rather than first person?

Think about everything you have learnt about April from extract 1 and the story so far. Now, consider the questions on Activity Sheet 1. You could write down your ideas or draw pictures. There are no right or wrong answers!

When you have finished, explain your answers to a partner. Are your ideas similar to your partner's ideas or different?



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Extract 1

I grab my phone from my desk, about to shove it in the pocket of my school skirt, when I see I have one message from Ben:

EARTH TO APRIL! Are you awake?! See you soon!

Clearly no one thinks I'm able to wake up on my own. But still, I smile. Ben really is the best thing about school. We met last year when he joined Hilltown Secondary in Year Eight. I'd been at Hilltown Junior School since Reception, before he got here, and honestly, I don't really know how I made it through without him. Even though it was only Lauren, Aliya and Michelle (AKA, The Squad), who made my life difficult, I'd never really found anyone I properly clicked with.

Basically, I was a bit of a loner.

And I thought I was fine with that, really. But then along came Ben, and even though we are different in lots of ways, it was like we were destined to be best friends. I text back:

HELLO HELLO HELLO
PREPAR URSELF FOR THE
AMAZING, THE INCREDIBLE APRIL
WILL I CATCH THE BUS IN
TIME? WILL THE BUS EVN
COME? WHO CAN SAY! STAY
TUUUUNED

April, stop texting me and leave the house.

I sigh and take a look around my room. Every inch of wall space is covered with all the things I love. The ticket stubs from any film I've ever seen, and from any place I've ever been. The drawings I've done that I especially love. The dogs, cats, exotic birds and fish I've cut out of animal and wildlife magazines and collaged onto the walls. And of course, my now pretty faded postcard of good old St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. Mum and Dad sent me it the only time I ever remember them going away on holiday without me. (Yes, they went on a group tour with other people from their church to look at, you guessed it, even more churches).

I love my room. I feel so safe here. I don't really want to leave. I wish I had just a few more days before it was time to go back to school... OMW!! I text Ben.



Extract taken from page 30 31 of *When I Feel Red*

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Activity Sheet 1



If you were to plan a perfect day out for April, what would it be?



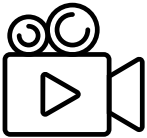
What do you think April's most-used emoji is?



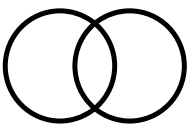
It's April's birthday and you are going to buy her a present. What do you buy her?



If April started a YouTube channel, what might it be called and what might her videos be about?



What do you think April's favourite film might be and why?



What do you have in common with April?



What do you think April might be when she is older? Why?



How do you think Ben would describe April?



Theme 2: Learning About Dyspraxia

Read extract 2 and then consider the following questions

Discussion Questions

1. Can you describe five ways that dyspraxia might affect people?
2. How did the specialist at Great Ormond Street Hospital help April when she was younger?
3. How do you think April feels about having dyspraxia?
4. Do you have any further questions about dyspraxia? How could you find the answers?
5. How do you think April feels at the end of the extract? Why?

Activity: All About Me

April tells Mr M about her dyspraxia so that he can understand her better and support her in school. What would you like your teachers to know about you? Fill in Activity Sheet 2. You can write your answers or draw pictures. The most important thing is that you help your teacher get to know you better so that they can help and support you!

Everybody in your class is unique and will have different strengths and different needs. You might like to share your answers with your classmates too so that you can help and support each other!



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Extract 2

Mr M was pretty great at checking in with Ben and making sure no one gave him a hard time. So great that it made me feel like I could talk to him about my dyspraxia. In case you don't know, dyspraxia is a condition that affects your movement and co-ordination. It affects everyone differently, but if you are dyspraxic, you'll probably seem quite clumsy, and struggle with carrying out movements that other people find easy. It can be hard to really organise yourself and your thoughts. You might lose things a lot, or find it hard to get to places on time - or even find where they are. Presenting stuff neatly and making your handwriting readable can also be really, REALLY hard. You might notice that when other people in your class solve problems in lessons they seem to go from A to B, whereas your brain takes a trip via C, D and elephant.

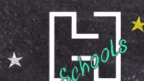
Mum and Dad realised I was probably dyspraxic when I was little, because I didn't learn to crawl like other children. Apparently, I just dragged myself from place to place on my butt and got reeeaaally muddy (which must have driven Mum mad, since she always dressed me in the daintiest, frilliest outfits). Then, when I didn't learn to walk by myself, we had to go and see a specialist, and I had to have some physiotherapy at Great Ormond Street Hospital (which is a special children's hospital in London) to help with my balance, co-ordination and muscle strength.

I've always been a bit embarrassed about my dyspraxia and don't really like talking about it. But I'd already told Ben, and I knew Mr M probably knew anyway, since if you have a learning difficulty it gets added to your school file. So when I saw how great he was with Ben, I decided to drop it into conversation with him one break time. And guess what? Mr M didn't bat an eyelid. He just told me his brother was dyspraxic too, and that if there was ever anything he could do to help, I should ask him and he'd do whatever he could.

Extract taken from page 35 - 36 of *When I Feel Red*



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Activity Sheet 2

Name:



My strengths



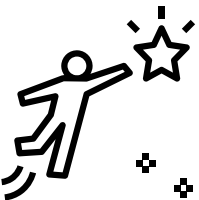
My interests and hobbies



Things I find difficult



Things that help me learn



My goals and ambitions

Is there anything else you would like your teacher to know?



Theme 3: Friendship and Kindness

Read Extract 3 and then consider the following questions

Discussion Questions

1. Can you highlight all the words April speaks in one colour and all the words Ben speaks in another colour? Practise reading the dialogue with a friend. How will you use your voice to show how your character feels?
2. Why do you think April looks away from Ben when she is speaking?
3. Why do you think Ben starts to chuckle?
4. Can you think of three words to describe Ben?
5. What do you like about April and Ben's friendship?

Activity: How do April's Feelings Change?

For this activity, you will need Extract 3 and Activity Sheet 3.

1. Begin by thinking about how April feels at the start of extract 3. What thoughts does she have about herself and what words does she use to describe herself? Using a coloured pen, write down a phrase to describe how April feels about herself in each of the strips labelled 'April'. For example, you might write, 'I'm babyish and immature' and 'I don't fit in, I'm different to everyone else'.
2. Next, turn your paper the other way up and think about how Ben sees April. In a different coloured pen, write down one a phrase to describe how Ben sees April on each of the strips labelled 'Ben'. For example, you might write, 'You do your own thing no matter what others think' and, 'You are kind and you always help others'.
3. Now, fold along the dotted lines so that your piece of paper is folded into a concertina. From the side, your piece of paper should look like this:



4. Hold your piece of paper up so that you can see all the things April feels about herself. Put yourself in April's shoes and read these words to yourself. How do you feel as you read these words? Can you show with your face and body how you feel?



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Theme 3: Friendship and Kindness

5. Now, turn your piece of paper the other way around so you can see Ben's words. How do you feel as you read these words? How might your facial expression, posture and body language change to reflect how you feel now?



6. Can you describe how April's feelings change as a result of her conversation with Ben? What do you think April means at the end of extract 3 when she says, 'you can spend so long looking at things one way you don't see any of the other stuff'?

Extra Activity Idea

Ben helps April see all the positive things about herself that she has forgotten. We can all help our friends see the things that make them unique and special. Why not try this today with your class? Your teacher will give you each a piece of paper. Write your name in the middle of this piece of paper. Then, when everybody is ready, pass it to your right. Think about the person who is named on the piece of paper you receive and write down something positive about them. For example, you could write, 'your artwork is amazing', 'you always have good ideas' or, 'I like the way you encourage others.' Continue passing and writing positive notes 6-8 times, then pass the pieces of paper back their original owners. How do you feel when you read the words your classmates have written about you? Perhaps you could remember these words when you are feeling down or low in confidence as April was at the beginning of Extract 3?



Extract 3

"There is something I want to ask though," he starts. Oh God, oh God. "Why did you want to go on a date with me? If you were just going to shout at me and get cross when we did. It was ... confusing."

'I guess I ... I... just wanted to fit in - to be like everyone else,' I stammer.

"Yeah," he says. "I get that."

Will I leave it there? Is that all that needs to be said or should I tell him, my best friend in the entire world? 'It's just...'

'Yeah...?'

'I feel like I'm always... last. Like I'm running to try and keep up with everyone but it's no good. Everyone's suddenly obsessed with dating, but me? Honestly, I kind of just want to play with my toys and draw. And I started to get so worried about it. I guess I didn't want to be left behind... again.?

I realise I've been looking away from Ben the whole time I've been speaking, because I'm so scared about how he'll respond. I raise my eyes up from my boots to meet his. I notice that the corners of his mouth are twitching I think this look is what would be called 'quizzical' (thanks Bertha). Then he starts to chuckle a bit, and I feel myself start to get all hot and embarrassed, because that must mean my fears are true - I'm just a baby, I need to grow up, I'm such a loser, I-

'April, you're literally the most mature thirteen- year-old I know,' grins Ben.

Ok. I was not expecting that.

Extract taken from page 277 - 278 from *When I Feel Red*



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Extract 3

"You always do your own thing, no matter what other people think and I know you've been distracted by Lauren, Aliya and Michelle the last few months, but seriously, you're the one who taught me how to be better at not caring what people think,' he carries on. 'You know how to cook yourself food, dye your own hair and you always help people if you see them struggling. You can draw pictures that are so good people actually want to pay you for them, and you were the first person in our year to be allowed to get the bus home by themselves. What more can you want?!"

Now I'm the one who's smiling. Firstly because I always laugh awkwardly if anyone says something nice about me, but also because it's funny; I guess you can spend so long looking at things one way you don't see any of the other stuff. Maybe I am quite grown up in some ways.

Extract taken from page 277 - 278 from *When I Feel Red*



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Reflection Activities

On page 126, April feels embarrassed about needing extra help. Mr M reminds her that asking for help is a brave thing to do. As a class, what could you do to make sure that everybody feels comfortable asking for help when they need it?

Why do you think Lily Bailey chose the title 'When I Feel Red'? When do you feel 'red'? How does it feel in your body? Create a piece of art or write a poem with the title, 'When I Feel Red'. Alternatively, explore the emotions you associate with different colours and create a piece of art or a poem about a different colour/emotion.

When I Feel Red is the follow-up to Lily Bailey's novel When I See Blue, which is written from the perspective of Ben. When I See Blue follows Ben's journey as he learns to manage his OCD. If there were to be a third novel in this series, which character's perspective do you think might it be written from and what might it be about? Are there any characters you would like to know more about?



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Activity Sheet 3

April:	
	June
April:	
	June
April:	
	June
April:	
	June
April:	
	June



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