

Ezra Jack Keats Award: Book Discussion Guide

Theme: First Day of School *Lena's Shoes are Nervous: Page 1*



In *Lena's Shoes are Nervous: A First Day of School Dilemma*, the story opens on the morning of the big day! Today, Lena starts kindergarten. She is very excited. But there's just one problem... Lena's shoes refuse to go. Lena doesn't want to miss out on her first day of school, but she can't go without her favorite shoes! How can she convince them to be brave?

Discussion Questions

Characterization. Each item that Lena plans to wear to her first day of kindergarten evokes different feelings about her going to school.

- ▶ Why do you think Lena's shoes are the most nervous items in her wardrobe?
- ▶ Why is her dress excited about starting school?

Personification. In personification, we assign human feelings or characteristics to nonhuman things, like items of clothing.

- ▶ By looking at Lena's wardrobe options, what can you tell about her feelings regarding the first day of school?
- ▶ Why does Lena personify her shoes as being nervous rather than admitting that she's nervous herself?

Feelings in Words and Illustrations. After the green headband talks with the shoes about being brave, Lena still has to convince the shoes to go to school, which she does by suggesting that she might wear her slippers to school instead.

- ▶ Do you think Lena really plans to wear her slippers to school?
- ▶ How do the text and illustrations on pages 26-27 show you what Lena is thinking?
- ▶ Why do the shoes decide to go to school after Lena mentions wearing her slippers instead?

Finding Connections. On page 24, Lena's headband "reminds the shoes of other times they were all scared but decided to be brave, together." How do you choose to be brave when you're nervous or scared?

Telling Your Story.

- ▶ Why do you think there are so many books about being nervous on the first day of school?
- ▶ What other feelings might you have on the first day of school?
- ▶ How did you get ready for your first day of school?
- ▶ How do you get ready for school when you're attending remotely?
- ▶ What might you wear if you aren't physically going to school but you know you'll be seen on a screen?
- ▶ In a remote learning situation, might this be an opportunity for you to set up a cool location at home in your study space or room with a fun poster or your drawings behind you? What about a plant or a bookshelf? How would you like to set up your at-home study space?

Title: *Lena's Shoes Are Nervous: A First-Day-of-School Dilemma*

Author: Keith Calabrese

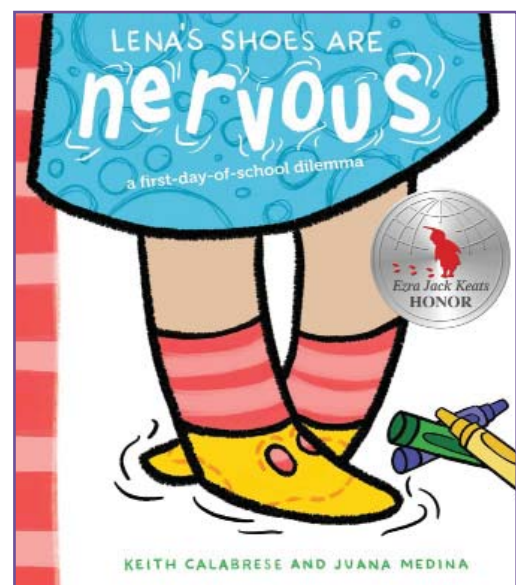
Illustrator: Juana Medina

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Award: 2019 Writer Honor

Intended Grade Level: K - 2nd

Age Range: ~5-9 Years Old



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Theme: First Day of School *Lena's Shoes are Nervous: Page 2*



Activities for *Lena's Shoes are Nervous: A First Day of School Dilemma*

Writing as Conversation: On pages 22-25, the brave headband and the nervous shoes have a conversation about going to school.

- ▶ Read Keith Calabrese's description of their conversation and look at Juana Medina's illustrations of their conversation. Then write the dialogue you imagine is taking place between the headband and the shoes.
- ▶ What are they actually saying to one another?
- ▶ Use speech bubbles or quotation marks to show what each character is saying in the conversation.

Drawing to Connect: Lena personifies her clothes by assigning different human characteristics to different items, and she has to convince her shoes to be brave and go to school.

- ▶ Draw your bravest piece of clothing.
- ▶ Then write about what makes this piece of clothing so brave.

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Theme: First Day of School

Edda: Page 1



In *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School*, we meet Edda, who lives in a magical land, but without friends her age. Edda's papa thinks she'll find friends in a place called school on the planet Earth. School is strange and Edda doesn't like it until she remembers she's a brave little Valkyrie. With great courage Edda asks someone to play and she discovers she's even stronger than she thought.

Discussion Questions

Focus on Setting. Edda attends school on Earth for the first time and compares her school experiences with her experiences of being home in Asgard.

- ▶ What comparisons does she draw between school and home?
- ▶ Why isn't school more like Asgard? What can she learn at school that she can't learn in Asgard?
- ▶ How is school also "a land full of magic and adventure" (page 5), even though very different from Asgard?

"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." This common expression means that people often think it looks like more fun to be doing what other people are doing than what they're doing. This can also refer to a place where people think it looks like more fun to be than where they are at a given time.

- ▶ How does this expression relate to Edda's comparisons between school and Asgard?

Persuasion.

- ▶ What do you think Edda and her new friend say about school that makes "some of the creatures think it sounds wonderful" (page 33) and motivates Dragon to go to school the next day?

Finding Connections. First Edda and then Dragon have to be brave to go to school and have new and different experiences.

- ▶ Does Edda's new friend have to be brave to visit Asgard?
- ▶ What new and unexpected things might he find in Asgard?
- ▶ When's a time you had to be brave?
- ▶ What new experience were you afraid of but then found to be fun?
- ▶ If you're learning remotely, how is seeing your teacher and classmates through the computer different than going to school?

Title: *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School*

Author: Adam Auerbach

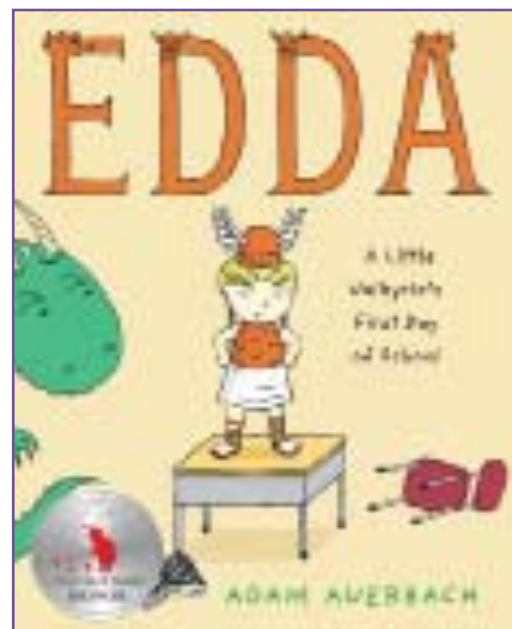
Illustrator: Adam Auerbach

Publisher: Christy Ottaviano Books

Award: 2015 Writer Honor

Intended Grade Level: K - 2nd

Age Range: ~5-9 Years Old



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Theme: First Day of School

Edda: Page 2



Activities for *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School*

Compare and Contrast

- ▶ Create a chart with columns for
 - ▶ Edda's land (Asgard)
 - ▶ A place you visit often (some examples: school, the library, a relative's home, or the park)
 - ▶ Your land (home)
- ▶ List the aspects of each place that make it special or "a land full of magic and adventure" (page 5).
- ▶ Alternately, draw a picture of each place and describe the things that make it special.

Point of View

- ▶ Author Adam Auerbach gives us Edda's perspective on her first day at school on Earth.
- ▶ Write and illustrate a story that shows Asgard from the perspective of Edda's new friend.