

WORLD
BOOK
DAY

AGES
9+

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MASTERCLASSES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

SPONSORED BY

NATIONAL
BOOK
tokens

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

SHAPES
for schools

EmpathyLab

EOIN COLFER: FAMILY MATTER



BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

GET IN THE ZONE!

In his film, Eoin talks about Myles and Beckett being ‘chalk and cheese’ even though they are twins born into the same household with similar upbringings. Yet, despite their differences, they still ‘love each other dearly’.

Ask students to discuss why Eoin Colfer uses the expression ‘chalk and cheese’ to describe the twin protagonists in his book? What does it mean? Can they think of any other phrases that mean the same thing?

Ask students to think about their own family. How are they and their brother(s), sister(s), cousins, or anyone else they are close to different, even though they are part of the same family? Can they think of

any other family members they would describe as being like ‘chalk and cheese’?

Encourage students to talk about these relationships together, focusing on why or how we can still be close to or love someone even though they are very different to us in lots of ways. Students who are confident can feedback their ideas to the class.

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

Taken from pages 1–39 of The Fowl Twins (you can download the extract at worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses/family-matter).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the first line of chapter 1 create suspense? Highlight key words.
2. What do we find out about Lord Teddy’s character on pages 3–6? What is his ultimate goal?
3. Who stands in Lord Teddy’s way on page 10? What do you know about this character already?
4. How are Myles and Beckett described as both similar and different on pages 10–12?
5. By bidding ‘the dolphin farewell’, how does Beckett change the course of events on pages 19–20?
6. How are fairies, humans, and trolls all connected on pages 20–21?
7. How do the twins work together to temporarily escape danger on pages 29–34?
8. Why do you think the fairy made the wrong decision? What do you think will happen next in the story?

FUN ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Eoin explains the different perspectives of his characters. Myles is 'studious' and 'loves to read' whereas Beckett is 'an outdoors guy' who would rather spend his time climbing a tree instead of being on a computer.

- Listening to Eoin's descriptions of the twins again, note down what their behaviour, personality traits and hobbies tell us about them. How are they different from each other?
- Choose which of the twins you are least like and try to write a paragraph from their perspective.
- Consider why might it be tough to have a twin sometimes. How does your chosen character empathise with his twin? What feelings might your chosen character have about the things that make him different? Why might he find it hard to fit in at times?
- Create a conscience corridor in which one side of the room reads their paragraphs in role as Myles, and one side reads in role as Beckett. What can you learn from this exercise?

ACTIVITY 2: CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

Eoin explains that 'the Fowl twins celebrate difference and diversity in many ways' and that he tried to write about 'characters that would not be considered perhaps normal - whatever that word means!'

- In groups of 2 or 3, think about some of the role models in the public eye who you look up to. Try to think of people of different ages, gender, race, and cultures - from different jobs or industries - who are successful but have met challenges along the way because of being different.
- For each of these people, research and discuss what is different about them. How have their differences helped them to reach their goals? Feed back your ideas as a class reflecting on why difference can sometimes be an instrument of power rather than a drawback.

ACTIVITY 3: UNIQUE TALENTS

Eoin explains that he has created a fairy character who is a hybrid meaning she is 'neither elf nor pixie, she is somewhere in the middle'. It is because she is different that the fairy is 'special' and 'has unique talents'.

- Design your own hybrid character who will help Eoin's fairy to face the challenges that lie ahead. Your character could be part elf and part pixie too, or you could come up with a completely different make-up for your character.
- Label and annotate your drawing to show what your character's unique talents are. Finally, add a few notes about their relationship with the other characters in the story. What brings them together in spite of their differences? How and why do they emphasise with each other?

SHARE A STORY

Create a poem or short story about your family. In it, describe the different personalities that exist as well as the relationships between these personalities. How is your family unique? Why should we celebrate different types of families? Share your poems or stories with your classmates, friends and - yes - even your family!

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION...

AN INSPIRING SHARE A STORY CHALLENGE FOR YOU from Eoin Colfer...

Find someone in your class or at home who you think is the most different to you. Come together and have a chat about your different interests, backgrounds, beliefs, or anything else that you like. Write a description of one another separately, then read them and stick them together on display to remind you: recognise your differences as **STRENGTHS**.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more brilliant Masterclass films and resources featuring amazing authors and illustrators over at worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses. Don't miss out, download them today!