

Grab and Go Lesson Plan

Your Voice Matters!

Objective

Students will explore the idea of agency: the belief that they have the power to make change. Through read-aloud, discussion, and examples of real young changemakers, students will consider issues that matter to them and brainstorm ways they can “say something” to make a difference.

Materials

- **Say Something** by Peter H. Reynolds (anchor text)
 - Chart paper or whiteboard & markers (for brainstorming student ideas)
 - Student journals or blank paper
 - *Say Something* Student Activity Sheet (printable)
 - Young Change Makers Extension Sheet (printable)
 - Access to video clips (included) of youth changemakers (optional)
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1. Introduction

Set the Context:

- Tell the students you are going to be spending some time talking, reading, and thinking about something called “student agency”. Ask students what they think that term means. Explain that student agency means that every student believes in themselves and feels valued. *“An important part of believing in yourself is believing you can make a difference - a difference to yourself, others, and the world. And that is what we are going to focus on today - making a difference.”*

Discussion Prompt:

- Tell the students that sometimes, we might notice things that we feel might be unsafe, unfair, or unkind. Maybe you notice something at school, or at home, or around your community. *“What are some things you notice that feel unsafe, unfair, or unkind?”* Brainstorm and record responses (e.g., bullying, littering, mistreatment of animals, cutting down trees, not including others, some kids getting more time on the playground, not using bicycle helmets).
- Ask: *“When you see something that’s not right, what can you do?”* (tell someone, speak up, write a letter, etc.) Discuss how it’s important to speak up, but that it’s not

always easy to do. *“Sometimes, it’s not easy to speak up. We might feel embarrassed or scared to say something.”*



2. Read Aloud

- Show the cover of the book **“Say Something”** by Peter. H. Reynolds.

“Today, I’m going to read a book called “Say Something.” The title says “say something” - which makes me think about “speaking” or “telling”. But this book shows us DIFFERENT ways we can “say something” besides using your voice. While I’m reading, I would like you to pay attention to all the different ways the author shows us we can “say something” to make a difference.”

During the reading

Read *Say Something* aloud, pausing to notice the many ways characters “say something” (through words, art, kindness, action, etc.)

After reading

- Invite students to turn and talk: “What were some of the ways the book showed us how we can “say something”. (words, art, kindness, action, etc.)
- Ask students: “What message do you think the author wants us to think about?” (*that it’s important to say something but there are different ways we can do that*)
- Read the last two pages again. Ask students why they think the author ended the story that way? (believe in ourselves, “say something” to make a difference, etc.)



3. Activity: Say Something

- Tell the students that they will be working on a “SAY SOMETHING” activity. Explain that *“first, you will need to decide WHAT you want to say, and then decide HOW you want to “say” it.”*
- Revisit the brainstorm list. Ask: *“Which of these issues matters to you most? What would you say, and how would you say it?”*
- Pass out **Say Something - Student Planning Sheet** Students can work in partners or alone to plan what they are going to say and how they are going to say it.
- Allow time for students to create their own “Say Something” response (drawings, slogans, short speeches, letters, posters, poems, acts of kindness).
- Invite students to present their “say something” activity to a partner or the class.
- Depending on your time frame and grade level, you may choose to show examples of youth who have felt strongly about an issue or topic and the different ways they “say something” to make a difference. These could be shown

over a few days students are working on their “Say Something” activity. You can create a large chart to record information about each person. (see “Say Something - Young Change Makers” sheet)

- Below are some examples of youth who “said something” about an issue that was important to them. Video clips are included.
- You will also find other examples of true “change makers” in the *Student Agency* book list at the back of this handout.

Click [here](#) for PowerPoint slides.

- [With words](#) – Greta Thunberg (climate change)
- [With kindness](#) – Thai Man (supporting neighbours) *
- [With music](#) - Emma Stevens (Indigenous language extinction)
- [With creativity](#) – Boy who harnessed the wind (irrigation for his village)
- [With words and marching](#) – Autumn Peltier (access to clean water)

(* This is not a true story - it’s a commercial for a bank - but it’s an excellent example of “saying something” with kindness. You may want to stop the video just at the end before the actual commercial comes on.)

NAME	WHAT they cared about	HOW they “said something”
Greta Thunberg	Climate change	Spoke at the UN conference, climate strike
Thai man	Supporting his neighbours	Kindness
Emma Stevens	Her Indigenous language	Wrote and sang a song in her language
William Kamkwamba	Drought in the village	Built a windmill
Autumn Peltier	Access to clean water	Spoke and marched

4. End the Lesson

“We’ve been learning about how important it is to stand up for something you believe in. No matter how small, your voice is important and it matters! We have seen real examples of young people who have found different ways to “say something” - speaking,

singing, creating, marching. Never forget - it only takes one voice to make a difference. And that one voice can be yours!"

- Write the word "IMPOSSIBLE" on the board. Say: "And if you are thinking that it's impossible to "say something" to make a difference - remember, it's not IMPOSSIBLE, it's I'M POSSIBLE!"

IMPOSSIBLE
I'M POSSIBLE!

Extension Activities (Optional)

- Create a **Change Makers Wall** where student ideas are displayed. Continue showing clips of youth activists to spark further conversation.
- **Writing extension:** students draft a letter to the principal, mayor, or local organization about an issue that matters to them.

Modification for Primary Students

- While some parts of this lesson may be too complex for younger learners, the idea of "saying something to make a difference" is both powerful and important to introduce early.
- For primary classrooms, focus the discussion on school issues rather than global ones. Invite students to brainstorm things they notice in their school that feel unsafe, unkind, or unfair, or things they'd like to change or add to make school a better place.
- Using the **Say Something (Primary) template**, have students think about:

WHAT they want to say about something important to them (at home, school, community, or world).

HOW they might "say" it.

- You may wish to end the lesson here, rather than moving into a full "HOW" activity. Another simple option is to have students draw a picture of something they'd like to change, instead of generating multiple ways to "say something."
- Other books to support this idea with younger students:

Speak Up! — Miranda Paul

A Big Guy Took My Ball! — Mo Willems



Student Agency Book List - Your Voice Matters!

[I Am a Warrior Goddess](#) - Jennifer Adams

A gentle, empowering reminder that strength looks like courage, kindness, and everyday choices.

[Stacey Speaks Up!](#) - Stacey Abrams

A child-friendly nudge that using your voice matters—especially for fairness and voting.

[Sometimes People March](#) - Tessa Allen

A beautiful look at communities coming together to stand up for change.

[I Can Do It Too!](#) - Karen Baicker

An affirming celebration of growing confidence in everyday life. Great for K-1.

[If You're Going to March](#) - Martha Freeman

A positive, child-friendly description of how to participate in a protest and/or march.

[Be Strong](#) - Pat Zietlow Miller

Introducing young readers that strength can happen both on the outside and the inside of a person.

[Speak Up!](#) - Miranda Paul

Practical ways kids can raise their voices for kindness and justice.

[Rise Up and Write It](#) - Nandini Ahuja

A playful, interactive nudge to organize, persuade, and make your voice heard.

[Say Something](#) - Peter H. Reynolds

An empowering story about finding your voice and using it to make the world a better place.

[The Artist](#) - Nikkolos Smith

How creativity becomes a tool for advocacy and change.

[Rocket Says Speak Up!](#) - Nathan Bryan

Rocket rallies her community to protect what they love—kid passion turned into action.

[You Can!: Empowering Kids](#) - Alexandra Stick

Joyful encouragement that kids are capable of more than they think.

[A Big Guy Took My Ball!](#) - Mo Williams

A light, kid-friendly springboard to talk about fairness and solving problems.



True Stories of Young Change Makers

***Free as the Wind* - Jamie Bastedo**

A Canadian boy writes a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, asking him to stop the slaughter of wild horses on Sable Island.

[Follow the Moon Home](#) - Philippe Cousteau & Deborah Hopkinson

A true story of children organizing to save sea turtles, showing that young voices can spark real change.

[Mamie Tape Fights to Go to School](#) - Tracie Huahn

A child challenges unfair rules about who is allowed to attend school.

[The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#) - William Kamkwamba

Inspiring true story of a Malawian boy who built a windmill to bring electricity and water to his village.

[Autumn Peltier – Water Warrior](#) - Carole Lindstrom

Celebrates the courage of an Indigenous youth activist fighting for clean water.

[A Voice for the Spirit Bears](#) - Carmen Oliver

Tells how Simon Jackson spoke up to save the rare white spirit bears of British Columbia.

[Malala/Iqbal](#) - Jeanette Winter

A back and front picture-book biography of Pakistani child activists Malala Yousafzai and Iqbal Masih

[Our House Is On Fire](#) - Jeanette Winter

The story of Greta Thunberg's climate strike that sparked a global youth movement

This list may contain affiliate links

Say Something

Name: _____

1. What do you want to say? What issue or cause do you care about?

2. Why is this important (to you, to the school, community, earth, world?)

3. How will you say something?

- Use my words (speech, poem, letter, song)
- Create art (poster, drawing, painting)
- Show kindness (include someone, help a friend, share)
- Take action (plant a tree, pick up garbage, join a march)

Other: _____

4. My 'Say Something' plan:



Say Something

Name: _____

WHAT I want to say...	HOW I want to say it...
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Say Something - Young Change Makers

Name: _____

Instructions:

When you hear about young people making a difference (from videos, books, or class discussion), record their ideas below:

Name	WHAT are they saying?	HOW are they saying it?
Greta Thunberg	Climate change is happening and we must do something to stop it!	She gave a speech at the UN Climate Change conference when she was 14 years old.