

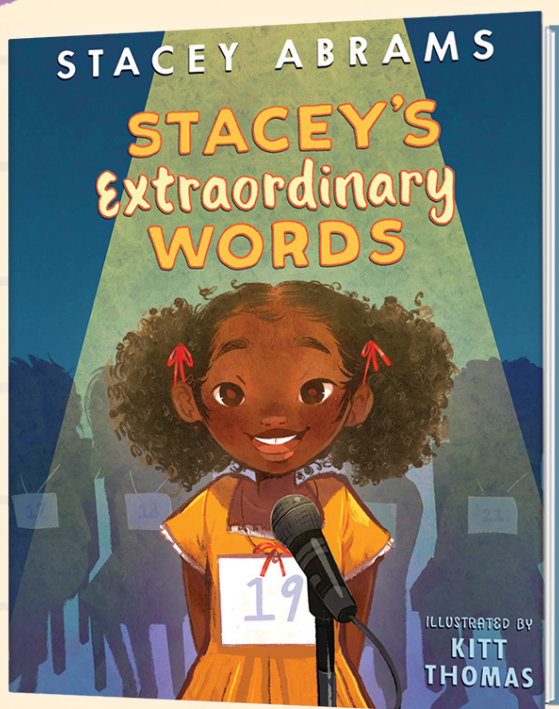
STACEY ABRAMS

STACEY'S Extraordinary WORDS



ILLUSTRATED BY
**KITT
THOMAS**

EDUCATORS' KIT



About the Book

Stacey loves words! She loves to discover new words and to explore interesting and challenging words. Sometimes Stacey believes that playing with words is easier than playing with other children, especially when a classmate uses his words to hurt. However, Stacey realizes that words also have the power to help, to heal, and to inspire others, but only if she perseveres and is brave enough to speak these words aloud.

About the Author

Stacey Abrams is the three-time *New York Times* bestselling author of *While Justice Sleeps*, *Our Time is Now*, and *Lead from the Outside*; an entrepreneur; and a political leader. A tax attorney by training, she served eleven years in the Georgia House of Representatives, seven as Minority Leader, and became the 2018 Democratic nominee for governor of Georgia, where she won, at the time, more votes than any other Democrat in the state's history. She has launched multiple organizations devoted to voting rights, training and hiring young people of color, and tackling social issues at the state, national, and international levels. She is the founder of Fair Fight Action, Fair Count, and the Southern Economic Advancement Project. Abrams is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and sits on the boards of Climate Power 2020, the Women's National Basketball Players Association, the Center for American Progress, and the Marguerite Casey Foundation. She has received degrees from Spelman College, the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, and Yale Law School.



Photo by Kevin Lowery

About the Illustrator

Kitt Thomas is a first-generation Saint Lucian American author-illustrator and graduate of the Ringling College of Art and Design with a BFA in visual studies. Kitt's mission is to celebrate Black culture with their drawings and to encourage inclusion in all forms of art, as they found it hard to see themselves properly represented in the media they enjoyed growing up. They have worked with such companies as Netflix, Hasbro, and Cartoon Network. *Stacey's Extraordinary Words* is their debut picture book.



Photo courtesy of Kitt Thomas

Key Concepts

EDUCATION/LOVE OF LEARNING

Acquiring new knowledge, concepts, and ideas. Stacey loves to learn and uses her knowledge to teach and help others.

FEELINGS

A wide range of emotions are addressed (e.g., joyful, grumpy, anxious, angry, sad, shy, brave, embarrassed, disappointed) as Stacey experiences them throughout the story.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

The ability to achieve personal goals by believing in oneself. As Stacey begins to trust herself, she realizes that she can speak up for herself and for others.

PEER INTERACTION

How a group of people in the same age range relate to each other. Stacey observes the group dynamics in her classroom and out on the playground.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

How problems are solved when disagreements occur. In this story, Stacey learns to confront a bully and stand up for herself using strong, clear words.

PERSEVERANCE

Never give up! Stacey learns that she fails only if she stops trying to achieve her goals.



Questions for Group Discussion

- What does Stacey love to learn?
- Why does she love words?
- Stacey says that sometimes “words understood her better than people did.” What does she mean when she says this?
- How do words help Stacey with her feelings?
- How does Stacey feel when her teacher asks to speak with her after class? Why?
- What does the teacher tell Stacey? How does Stacey feel about it?
- Stacey’s feelings change quickly. Why?
- What is a bully? How does Jake act like a bully?
- Jake bullies Zivko about his accent. What does Stacey think about Zivko?
- When Stacey hears Jake bullying others, what does she want to do?
- Why doesn’t she stand up to Jake?
- How does Stacey prepare for the spelling bee?
- What are the rules for the spelling bee?
- How does Stacey feel as the spelling bee is about to begin?
- What happens at the spelling bee?
- Stacey stays onstage to receive her second-place ribbon because she is a “good sport.” What does that mean?
- When Stacey congratulates Jake on winning the spelling bee, how does he react?
- How does Jake’s reaction make Stacey feel?
- How does she respond to Jake’s hurtful words?
- Why does Stacey think she failed? How does her mother help her?
- What is perseverance? How does Stacey persevere?
- What does Stacey learn by participating in the spelling bee?
- Does this story have a happy ending? Why or why not?
- Read and discuss the Author’s Note at the end of the book. How did participating in the spelling bee change Stacey’s life?



Extension Activities

BEE A GREAT SPELLER! Hold a class spelling bee! Use age-appropriate words and provide the students with word lists or cards to help them prepare for the event. Students can play word games (e.g., bingo or memory match) to practice reading and spelling the words. Emphasize the joy and accomplishment of learning new words. Following the spelling bee, give each student a badge or certificate to celebrate their spelling success.

WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD? Discuss how Stacey kept her special notebook of extraordinary words. Give each student a booklet (it can simply be pages folded and stapled) and tell them they will be keeping their own notebook. Ask them to write down interesting words they come across as they are reading. Help them to define the words, and display some of the definitions in the classroom to share new vocabulary words with all the students.

HOORAY FOR VOCABULARY DAY! As a follow-up to the previous activity, ask the students to choose a new or favorite word from their notebook or from the vocabulary words displayed in the classroom. Tell the students that they will be celebrating Vocabulary Day by wearing a costume to school that represents their word, and by sharing a poster they have made that celebrates their word. Vocabulary Day should include a parade during which the students share their special words with each other and with students in other classes.

TAKE A STAND. Reread the page: “Stacey knew as many words as Jake did. She wanted to say something when he said mean things to her friends, but she was intimidated—scared. Because sometimes he said hurtful things to her too. She wished she had used her clever words to help Suki or Zivko or herself by speaking up.” Have a class discussion about how Stacey could have stood up for herself or her friends. What could she have said? What are the best ways to confront a bully? After the spelling bee, how did Stacey stand up for herself? Have students act out vignettes to demonstrate their ideas and to show their classmates that they, too, can take a stand.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING? Reread the book aloud to the class. Ask the students to recall some of the feelings that Stacey experienced throughout the story (e.g., embarrassed, grumpy, anxious, scared, brave, proud, impatient, disappointed). List their ideas on a class chart. Then have the students take turns acting out a feeling from the list without speaking, as if they were playing charades. Ask the other students to guess what feeling the student is conveying. Discuss how body language and facial expressions can communicate how a person is feeling.

ANOTHER WAY TO SAY. Ask the class to describe why Stacey loved words. Tell the students that they will also be celebrating words by making a list of synonyms. Explain that synonyms are words that mean the same thing but some words are often more interesting. Introduce the concept of synonyms with an example by asking the students for another way to say “run.” They might suggest “dart,” “scurry,” “dash,” and “sprint.” Discuss how synonyms enrich language. Create several lists of synonyms with the class. (Good words to use might be “big,” “cold,” or “mad” because students will know many synonyms for these words.) Then extend the activity by having students write a poem or story using some of the synonyms that the class suggested.





Use this alpha-box dictionary to record words you want to know how to spell or would like to use more often! You can use this one-page dictionary when you are writing to help you out.

Extraordinary WORDS

<u>Aa</u>	<u>Bb</u>	<u>Cc</u>	<u>Dd</u>
<u>Ee</u>	<u>Ff</u>	<u>Gg</u>	<u>Hh</u>
<u>Ii</u>	<u>Jj</u>	<u>Kk</u>	<u>Ll</u>
<u>Mm</u>	<u>Nn</u>	<u>Oo</u>	<u>Pp</u>
<u>Qq</u>	<u>Rr</u>	<u>Ss</u>	<u>Tt</u>
<u>Uu</u>	<u>Vv</u>	<u>Ww</u>	<u>Xx Yy Zz</u>



Stacey's words are all mixed up! Can you unscramble them?
(You can look at the word bank at the bottom of the page if you are stuck.)

1. NXUASIO

— — — — —

2. BELUNDR

— — — — —

3. STOUEROCU

— — — — —

4. UPMYGR

— — — — —

5. VECSPNEERAR

— — — — —

6. LIAVGEL

— — — — —

7. KHIWS

— — — — —



**WORD
BANK**

village

anxious

perseverance

grumpy

blunder

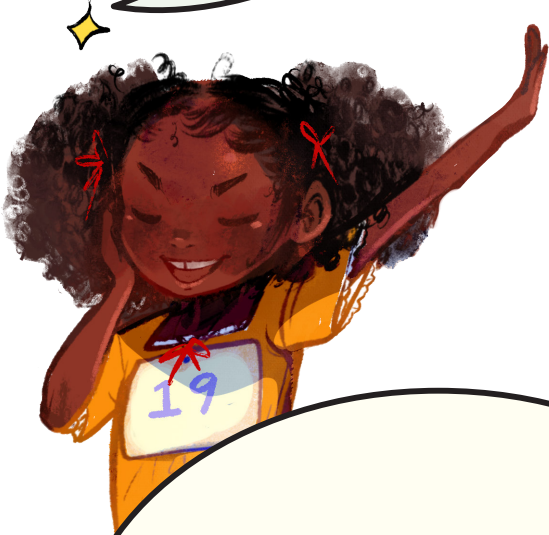
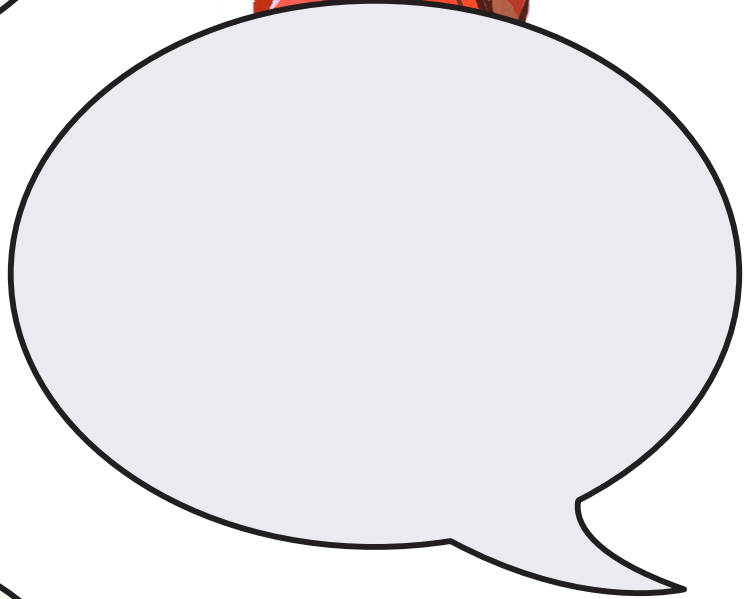
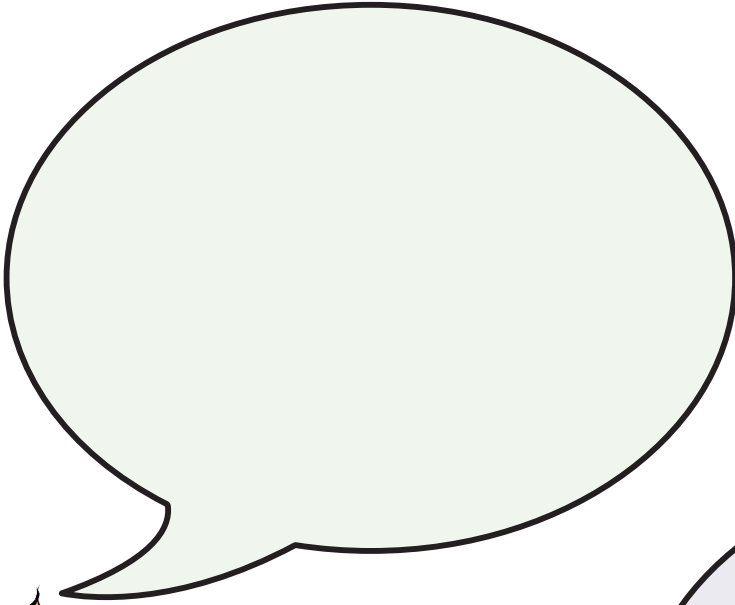
whisk

courteous



SPEAK UP!

If someone is being unkind to you or your friend, what words could you use to say how you are feeling? Write down some ideas and practice speaking up!





Author's Note



I love words. I can't remember ever not loving them. As a preschooler, when class ended, my parents were still hard at work. Luckily, I attended preschool on the college campus where my mother served as librarian. She would have us nap in the stacks as she continued to work, and I nestled with books and stories and words. Even today, the rich scent of a library or the waft of a freshly opened book makes me smile.

Not only were words my companions, they were also my protectors. One day during first grade, the principal of Anniston Avenue Elementary fetched me from class and walked me outside to one of the trailers that lined the back of the school building. My next memory is of the door opening wide and a lovely woman greeting me. Mrs. Blakeslee—my soon-to-be second-grade teacher.

Unbeknownst to me, I had been moved up a grade in the middle of the term. As a new kid in class, the strongest, most familiar sight was the books on the shelves near the front of class. My teacher invited me to read as many of them as I wished. In those uneasy first days, while other kids played at recess, I read quietly, unsure of my place—until I opened the pages of a good story. There, I could hide from the older children who teased me and revel in the victories of others. When Mrs. Blakeslee chose me for the spelling bee that year, her act of kindness nudged me out of the books and into a world I had never imagined.

My first spelling bee combined my greatest joy and biggest fear: talking about words and making mistakes. More than forty years later, these remain the stalwart axes against which I measure my growth. In that contest, I learned in front of a live audience that *chocolate* has two o's. When the bell dinged, I practiced stoicism before I knew of the concept. And I still recall my mom pressing the yellow candy into my hand, remembering that I, her second of six children, loved that color most. Because of that first lost spelling bee, followed by four more close calls until I claimed victory in sixth grade, I discovered how to merge my delight and my terror, realizing that failure is never more than an invitation to try again.



Art © 2021 by Kim Thomas

Like Jake, some kids picked on me and others who were different. Over the years, I learned how to use my words to do good, even when I am most afraid. I constantly strive to speak up, especially when it makes me nervous. And if I am doing my very best, I make room for those who haven't discovered their superpowers. Yet.



Stacey's Notebook of Extraordinary Words

- **anxious** (ang·shuhs): filled with worry
- **awkward** (aa·kwurd): lacking in confidence or skill
- **blunder** (bluhn·dur): a mistake
- **bright** (brite): giving off lots of light
- **chocolate** (chaa·kluht): a yummy dessert *Remember the second "o"!*
- **clambering** (klam·bur·eeng): using your hands and feet to climb a difficult path
- **complicated** (kaam·pluh·kay·tuhd): including many parts
- **conquered** (kaan·kurd): took control by force
- **courteous** (kur·tee·uhs): to treat others with kindness and respect
- **craggy** (kra·gee): rough or uneven
- **cruel** (krooel): when someone is mean on purpose
- **defeated** (duh·fee·tuhd): won in a competition *Weirdly, it can also mean losing!*
- **disengage** (di·suhn·gayj): to release or separate from something
- **dither** (di·thur): to be unsure
- **duckling** (duh·kluhng): a baby duck
- **enormous** (uh·nor·muhs): very large
- **evaporated** (uh·va·pur·ay·tuhd): to disappear into the air
- **except** (uhk·sept): not including *Not to be mixed up with accept, where you do receive something!*
- **geometry** (jee·aa·muh·tree): a type of math that measures the surface of shapes
- **grumpy** (gruhm·pee): in a bad mood
- **instantaneous** (in·stuhn·tay·nee·uhs): when something happens immediately *But don't give up if it doesn't. Most things take time and lots of practice!*
- **intimidated** (in·ti·muh·day·tuhd): not confident in yourself
- **monotonous** (muh·naa·tuh·nuhs): when something stays the same
- **onomatopoeia** (aa·nuh·maa·tuh·pee·uh): a word to describe the sounds of other words
- **perseverance** (pur·suh·vee·ruhns): always willing to try again and never give up *One of my favorite words!*
- **persnickety** (pur·sni·kuh·tee): to be very particular about things
- **petrified** (peh·truh·fide): really, really afraid *It can also mean when something is converted into stone.*
- **promptly** (praampt·lee): when something happens very quickly
- **ptarmigan** (taar·muh·gin): a bird that lives in cold, northern regions *Remember, the "p" is silent!*
- **reception** (ruh·sep·shun): an event where you welcome someone *It can also mean when you receive something—like a reaction.*
- **sesquipedalian** (seh·skwuh·puh·day·lee·uhn): a word with lots of syllables
- **shudder** (shuh·dur): to shiver or shake
- **sluggish** (sluh·guhsh): very slow
- **stupendous** (stoo·pen·duhs): another word for amazing
- **squeezed** (skweezd): held too tight *Remember the lost letters like "q" and "z."*
- **tackled** (ta·kuhld): worked hard to deal with a difficult task
- **torturous** (tor·tschur·us): very unpleasant or painful
- **transportation** (tran·spor·tay·shun): a way to get from one place to another
- **village** (vi·luhj): a place smaller than a town, where people live together
- **whisk** (wisk): to move quickly

