



Little People, BIG DREAMS™

Taylor Swift

Educator Guide

Little People, BIG DREAMS: Taylor Swift

By Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara

Illus. by Borghild Fallberg

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Ages 3-7, HC, 7.7 x 9.5in, 32 pages

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### Book Summary:

Taylor Swift was born into a music-loving family in Pennsylvania. As a young girl, she sang cover songs at fairs, festivals and karaoke shows, and she even submitted a demo of cover songs to a record company in Nashville. However, it was only after learning how to write her own songs and play guitar that Taylor got her big break. She has since spanned multiple musical genres, earned numerous awards, and sold out stadiums around the world. Taylor is famous for her music, but she is also known for the kindness she shows to her fans and how she uses her voice to raise awareness of important causes.

### Essential Questions:

1. Who influenced Taylor's love of music from an early age?
2. What are some of the ways that Taylor shows her fans she loves them?
3. How does Taylor show that being a kind person is always her main goal?
4. What are some of the obstacles Taylor has had to overcome during her career?
5. Why is Taylor Swift a dreamer who is so well-respected and admired?

### Classroom Discussion Topics:

1. Taylor didn't have a lot of friends in school because other students didn't understand her music and style (pg. 7). Ask the students to share how we can be kind to others and make them feel they belong, even if we like different things.
2. Taylor has always been brave when it comes to performing her music, like when she would sing at county fairs, festivals, and karaoke contests before she was famous (p. 10). Ask the students the following: What does it mean to be brave? Can they think of a time when they were brave and what inspired them?
3. Inspired by her own life, Taylor wrote her first song, "Lucky You," when she was very young (pg. 12). Ask the students to share what makes them feel lucky and why.
4. On page 18, readers learn that Taylor invited eighty-nine of her fans to her house to eat cookies and listen to her new album 1989 before it was released. Ask the students if they could be invited to any celebrity's house, who would it be and why? What would they want to do there?



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## Student Activities:

1. **Class Karaoke Show:** Taylor worked on her singing and stage presence by performing at karaoke shows. Explain to the students that karaoke is when people take turns singing popular songs with the background music playing along with them. Borrow a microphone from the music teacher and allow individuals or groups of students to volunteer to perform their favorite songs (ensuring they are school- and age-appropriate ahead of time). Students who don't wish to perform can participate by designing and creating the backdrop for the stage and/or being audience members.
2. **Who Sang It Better?:** Taylor loves singing cover songs. After explaining to the students what it means when something is a musical cover, play both the original and Taylor's version of famous songs like "September" (originally sung by Earth, Wind, and Fire) and ask the students to vote on which version they like better. Students can share their reasons for their votes.
3. The first song Taylor ever wrote, "Lucky You," was about a little girl with a big heart (p. 12). Provide large cut-out hearts and art supplies and ask students to fill their hearts in with words and pictures of things they love. Play Taylor's music (ensuring song selection is school- and age-appropriate) while students create.
4. **Rhyme Time:** Once Taylor started writing her own music, her head was filled with melodies and rhymes for lyrics (p. 12). If necessary, provide a background lesson on what rhyming is and provide examples of rhyming words. Invite the students to sit in a circle. One person starts and provides a word, and each subsequent person says a word that rhymes with it. The round is over when someone repeats a word or can't think of one, at which time they provide a word to start a new round of rhyming.
5. On page 23, the illustration shows Taylor visiting a fan in the hospital and the text explains that being a kind person has always been Taylor's main goal. Being kind means thinking about people who might not be as fortunate as she is. Provide some art materials for students and have them make get well cards for children at a local hospital. Talk through what students can put in the cards to help make other kids feel better.



Guide created by Stephanie Villanova



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