



A Common Core State Standards
Aligned Discussion & Project Guide for
grades K - 3

RAINBOW KITE

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Written by Kelly Bennett
Illustrated by K.M. Brown
Published by Young Dragons

Dare to be different. Dare to fly.

Lulu wasn't planning to go outside-until that strange little kite showed up.

It was plain. A little ragged. Definitely lost. But when Lulu tried to reel it in, it didn't act like any kite they'd ever seen. It tugged like a scrappy pup, soared like a runaway train, spun into a flouncy party hat, then sailed off like a pirate ship.

As Lulu chases it through the neighborhood, imagination takes flight and catches the attention of other kids, curious and unsure. What begins as one child's game becomes something more-a spark for creativity, self-expression, and joy that's impossible to pin down.

Rainbow Kite is a playful, empowering story about following your imagination wherever it leads-and the freedom that comes when you do.

Guide created by
Debbie Gonzales, MFA



Table of Contents

Consider the Front Cover	3
Meet the Author	3
Meet the Illustrator	3
Post-Reading Discussion	4-7
Character Creation Craft: Folded Paper Hat	8-9
Kite Story Extensions Activity	10-11
Creative Writing Project: “What Makes Me Fly” Kite Map	11-15
Educational Standards Alignment.....	16



Consider The Front Cover



- Describe the kite on the cover. What details make it look unusual or special?
- Examine the character's expression, clothing, and body language. What might these clues tell you about what just happened?
- Identify elements in the background (like buildings or other objects). How do they help you imagine where the story takes place?
- Consider the title Rainbow Kite and the image together. What do you predict this story might be about?

Meet Author Kelly Bennett

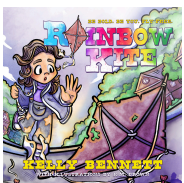
- Kelly calls herself an “unreliable kite-flyer.” How might that help her come up with a story like Rainbow Kite?
- Kelly says she lives in “Mimiville,” which is anywhere her grandchildren are. How do you think being around kids helps her write books like Rainbow Kite?
- Kelly likes picking weeds, chopping veggies, and riding her bike. What do these hobbies tell you about the kind of stories she might write?



Meet Illustrator K.M. Brown



- Katie says she loves trying new things with her art. What are some creative choices you see in the pictures of Rainbow Kite?
- Katie says she wants each picture she makes to be “inventive and eye-catching.” Before reading, what do you expect the illustrations in Rainbow Kite will look like? What do you think the kite might do in the story?
- Katie has drawn all kinds of art, including characters from her favorite stories. How might that help her draw Lulu and the kite in Rainbow Kite?



kellybennett.com

guidesbydeb.com
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Discussion Questions

The kite bucked and tugged like a playful pup... And so, a runaway kite became a pet.

SEL Focus: Imagination & Emotional Expression:

Lulu starts the day with no plans to venture out, which may hint at feelings of withdrawal, disinterest, or emotional stillness. Then, an ordinary object—a plain kite with a broken string—skitters into view, full of motion and possibility. Lulu’s simple action of touching the kite sparks a powerful transformation: the kite becomes a pet, full of life and joy. This shift is a direct reflection of Lulu’s inner world—her imagination awakening, her feelings beginning to move and take shape through play.



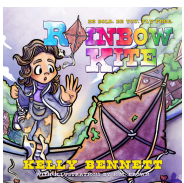
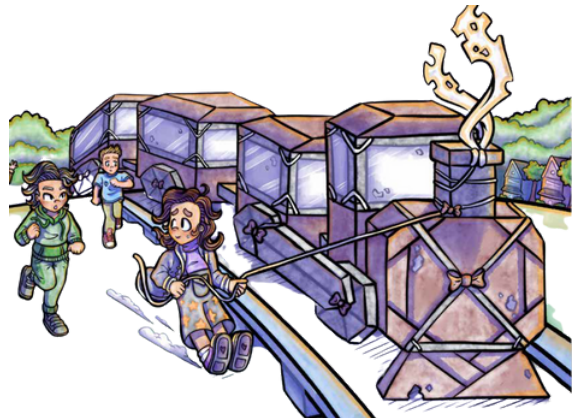
Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Interpret:** What might the story be saying about how imagination can change how we see the world—or how we feel in it?
- **Analyze:** Lulu gives life to something broken and plain. What does this tell us about how she sees? Is that a kind of superpower?
- **Predict:** If the kite hadn’t appeared, what do you think Lulu’s day would have been like?
- **Reflect:** Think of a time when something small or unexpected made your day better. What was it? How did it change your mood?
- **Create:** If the kite became a pet for Lulu, what would it become for you? Draw or describe your version.

Lulu stopped. The breeze did not.

SEL Focus: Resilience & Personal Agency:

This line comes just after Lulu’s play is questioned: dog, train —then challenged with “Are you a boy?” Lulu pauses. “**Lulu stopped.**” It’s a moment of hesitation, maybe doubt. But “**the breeze did not.**” The kite, full of motion and possibility, keeps tugging forward. This contrast mirrors Lulu’s choice: she may stop, but imagination and joy keep moving, waiting for her to rejoin.



Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Interpret:** What might it mean that Lulu stopped, but the breeze (and the kite) kept going? How is that like real life when someone makes us question ourselves?
- **Analyze:** What role do the other kids play in this moment? Are they stopping Lulu—or is she stopping herself?
- **Compare:** How is Lulu like the kite? In what ways is she different from it at this moment?
- **Predict:** If Lulu had chosen not to keep playing, what would she have missed out on?
- **Reflect:** Have you ever felt like stopping when someone made you doubt yourself? What helped you start again?

*“Aren’t kites for flying?” asked the one in boots.
“And trains are for boys. Are you a boy?”*



SEL Focus: Individuality & Creative Freedom:

*In this moment, Lulu’s imaginative play is questioned—not just her kite-as-train idea, but her freedom to imagine boldly and joyfully. The question “Are you a boy?” isn’t really about identity; it’s about **expectations**—what others think is “normal” or “acceptable” for someone to pretend or enjoy. This scene gently reveals how children can learn to place limits on each other’s creativity without even realizing it. But Lulu doesn’t shrink or explain—she keeps following what*

*excites her. In doing so, she reminds us that **play has no boundaries—and imagination belongs to everyone**. But Lulu never explains herself. She doesn’t argue. She simply says: “I like trains.” That’s it. A quiet assertion of **personal preference, curiosity, and the freedom to explore what delights her**, regardless of others’ expectations. The story affirms that children should not be asked to define themselves to justify their interests.*

Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Can you identify clues** that show how Lulu responds to being questioned about what she likes?
- **Interpret:** What is the kid in boots really trying to say? Do you think they are confused, curious, or trying to make a rule?
- **Reflect:** Has anyone ever told you that something you liked wasn’t “for you”? How did that make you feel?
- **Predict:** What might have happened if Lulu had stopped playing? What would she have missed out on?
- **Evaluate:** Do toys, games, or stories belong to certain kinds of kids—or to everyone?
- **Create:** Make a list or drawing of things you love—even if no one else understands why. How do they make you feel?



“Are you going to a tea party?”

“It’s a party hat.”

(...)

“Tea parties are for girls.”

“Lah-tee-dah! Tra-la-lah!”

SEL Focus: Joyful Self-Expression & Resisting Limiting Labels:

Here, Lulu is once again met with a peer’s attempt to define her play—and by extension, define her. The child assumes a kite on the head must mean tea party play, and that tea parties must be for girls. But Lulu doesn’t explain, defend, or deny. She reframes: “It’s a party hat.” And then she **sings**—lighthearted, confident, and undeterred. This moment models something powerful for children: **You don’t have to shrink yourself when someone misunderstands your joy.** You can simply keep being yourself—and maybe even invite others to join.



Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Can you identify clues** that show how Lulu feels in this scene? What does her singing tell you?
- **Interpret:** Why do you think Lulu answers with a song instead of an argument?
- **Analyze:** What does it mean when someone says something like “tea parties are for girls”? Who decides that?
- **Reflect:** Have you ever played something that others didn’t understand—or thought was silly? What did you do?
- **Predict:** What might happen if Lulu stopped dancing or playing because of what others said?
- **Create:** Imagine your own version of a party—what would it look like? What would you wear? Who would you invite?

“Arrrgh. I’m a pirate pirate!”

SEL Focus: Self-Confidence & Authenticity That Inspires Others:

At this point in the story, Lulu has been questioned, prodded, and categorized. Instead of getting pulled into a debate over labels—girl pirate? boy pirate?—she chooses something more powerful: **“I’m a pirate pirate.”** With just four words, Lulu makes it clear: **she is what she says she is.** No explanation, no justification, just bold ownership of her imaginative play. And the result? The other kids begin to join her. Not because she convinces them. Not because she tells them how to play. But because **she’s having so much fun being herself** that others can’t help but want to be part of it. Lulu’s confidence and creativity become an open invitation.



Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Interpret:** Why do you think Lulu says “pirate pirate” instead of choosing “girl” or “boy” pirate?
- **Analyze:** How does Lulu’s choice to be herself—even when questioned—affect the kids around her?
- **Reflect:** Have you ever seen someone having so much fun just being themselves that you wanted to join in?
- **Evaluate:** What do you think makes Lulu a good leader, even though she doesn’t act like a typical leader?
- **Create:** Invent your own character—someone who isn’t a “girl” or “boy” version of anything, but just is. What makes them fun or interesting?

*Lulu frowned. “Not with that scrawny tail.”
“Come back!” Lulu called. “I have an idea.”*



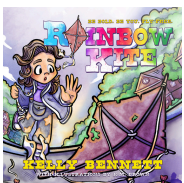
SEL Focus: Leadership, Problem-Solving & Collaborative Creativity:

*Just before this, another child—now swept into Lulu’s world—hesitates. They want to be a flying fish, but doubt their own creativity: “Not with that scrawny tail.” It’s a small statement of **self-limitation**, and it echoes earlier challenges Lulu faced.*

*Only now, Lulu is the one reaching back. She doesn’t laugh. She **calls them back**—gently, playfully, powerfully. “Come back! I have an idea.” With this moment, Lulu completes her arc from imaginative outsider to collaborative leader. Her confidence has bloomed into **compassionate guidance**, helping others believe in their own ideas, too. And this sparks a creative explosion—**fairies, airplanes, dragonflies, butterflies, flying fish...** a cascade of kids flying free. Lulu doesn’t lead by control—she leads by **creating space** for everyone’s imagination to unfold.*

Deeper Discussion Prompts:

- **Interpret:** What is Lulu thinking when she frowns and calls the child back?
- **Analyze:** How is this moment different from the earlier scenes where Lulu was the one being questioned?
- **Evaluate:** What kind of leader is Lulu? What makes her leadership special?
- **Reflect:** Have you ever helped someone else feel more confident? What did you do?
- **Predict:** What do you think Lulu’s idea might have been?
- **Create:** Imagine you’re part of Lulu’s kite crew. What flying creature or invention would you become?



Character Creation Craft: Folded Paper Hat

“Tra-la-lah!” Lulu gave it a test jiggle... And paraded all the way to the jump rope corner without losing the hat, not once.



Lesson Objectives:

- Encourage students to express their creativity by transforming a simple paper hat into a personalized character accessory.
- Connect Lulu’s imaginative play to students’ own creative identities.
- Foster self-confidence through character-building and storytelling.
- Develop fine motor skills through paper folding and artistic expression.
- Strengthen classroom community by sharing unique creations and imaginative identities.

Message Connection:

- In *Rainbow Kite*, Lulu turns a plain kite into endless possibilities: a pet, a train, a pirate hat. Her boldness and imagination invite others to join in, creating a joyful space of acceptance and creativity. This activity encourages students to do the same—to create, play, and share who they are, no explanations needed.

Materials:

- Book: *Rainbow Kite* by Kelly Bennett, illustrated by K.M. Brown (read aloud or shared reading)
- One sheet of rectangular paper (newspaper, construction paper, or printer paper — approx. 11" x 17" works best)
- Crayons, markers, stickers, glue, etc. for decorating
- Optional: feathers, buttons, paper scraps, ribbon, etc. for flair

Creative Extension: Character Creation Station

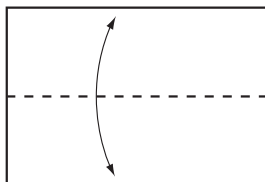
- Decorate the hat to match a character (pirate, train engineer, dragonfly, rainbow bird...)
- Name the character: “I’m a _____!”
- Write or share a short story: Describe what your hat helps you become, do, or imagine.

Classroom Display Idea:

- Create a bulletin board or hanging display titled: “Hats Off to Our Imaginations!”
- Include student-made hats and character bios for a visual celebration of creativity.



How to Fold Your Paper Hat

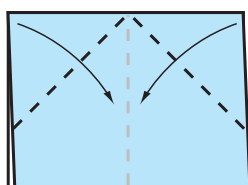
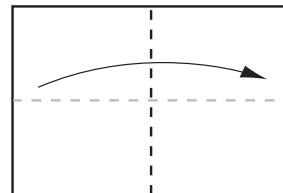


Step 1:

Start with your paper horizontal. Then, fold your paper in half (top edge to bottom edge).

Step 2:

Open your paper back up, then fold it the other way (left edge to right edge). Crease well.

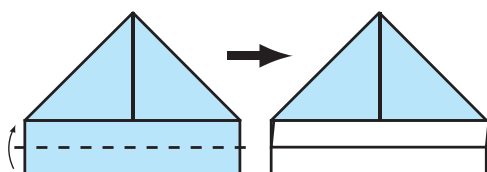
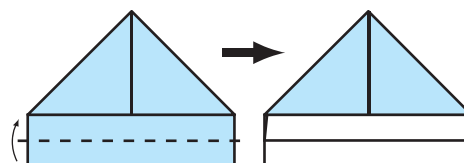


Step 3:

Fold the top corners down to the center line, forming a triangle. Leave some space at the bottom.

Step 4:

Fold up the bottom edge of the triangle (on one side only!)

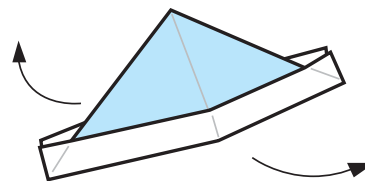


Step 5:

Flip your triangle over, and fold up the bottom edge on that side.

Step 6:

Open your hat up to shape it. Congratulations, your hat is now finished!



Kite Story Extensions Activity

“Into the breeze the dragonflies flew. Fairies, airplanes, butterflies, winged horses, a flying fish, too, flew and flew...”



Lesson Objectives:

- Inspire students to expand Lulu's journey by imagining the kite's next transformation.
- Practice narrative sequencing, descriptive writing, and creative storytelling.
- Encourage visualization and artistic expression through drawing.
- Reinforce the idea that play and imagination can lead to endless possibilities.

Message Connection:

- In *Rainbow Kite*, the kite starts as plain and broken, yet becomes something magical through Lulu's imagination. This activity helps students imagine "what happens next" when we keep believing in possibility.

Materials:

- Book: *Rainbow Kite* by Kelly Bennett, illustrated by K.M. Brown (read aloud or shared reading)
- Paper or writing journals
- Drawing supplies (pencils, crayons, colored pencils)
- Optional: template with a kite outline for illustration

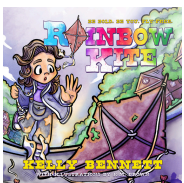
Procedure:

1. Imagine the Next Transformation

- Ask students: What else could the kite become? A superhero's cape? A jellyfish? A spaceship? A carnival ride? Encourage wild and whimsical thinking.

2. Draw and Describe

- Students draw their imagined version of the kite in its next form. Then, write a short description or narrative:
 - What does it do?
 - Who joins in the play?
 - What makes it fun, bold, or surprising?

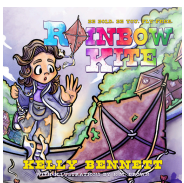


3. Share and Connect

- Students share their kite's transformation story with a partner, small group, or the class. Highlight how everyone's ideas are different, and celebrate each one.

Optional Writing Extension:

- Turn the drawing into a mini-story: "The Kite That Turned Into a ____." Encourage full sentences, beginning-middle-end structure, and imaginative flair.



Creative Writing Project: “What Makes Me Fly” Kite Map

“...and the once-plain kite bobbed and fluttered the way a bird might, a rainbow feathered bird, as it lifted high, high, high.”



Lesson Objectives – *What Makes Me Fly* Kite Writing Activity

- Encourage students to identify and express personal sources of joy, confidence, and imagination.
- Connect Lulu’s journey of self-expression to students’ own experiences of resilience and creativity.
- Foster self-awareness by distinguishing between what “lifts” students up and what “holds” them back.
- Develop descriptive and reflective writing skills through poetry, narrative, or list-making.
- Strengthen empathy by recognizing that everyone’s “kite” is unique and worth celebrating.
- Build classroom community by sharing and displaying individual kite projects in a collaborative “sky of ideas.”
- Inspire students to see imagination and self-expression as tools for leadership and connection.

Materials

- Book: *Rainbow Kite* by Kelly Bennett, illustrated by K.M. Brown (read aloud or shared reading)
- Kite Templates (2):
 - Sample Kite filled out as if by Lulu (to model the activity)
 - Blank Kite for student reflection and creativity
- Writing materials: pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Optional decorative items: ribbon, yarn, tissue paper, glitter, stickers for kite tails or embellishments
- Bulletin board or hanging display area labeled: Our Classroom of Kites

Procedure

1. Story Connection & Discussion

- Begin by reading *Rainbow Kite* aloud.
- Pause at key moments (e.g., “Lulu stopped. The breeze did not.” or “I’m a pirate pirate!”) to briefly discuss how Lulu is feeling and what’s happening with her imagination.



- After reading, discuss:
 - “What helped Lulu keep going, even when others questioned her play?”
 - “How did she turn imagination into something others could share?”

2. Introduce the Kite Map

- Show the sample kite template filled out as if Lulu completed it.
- Point out how inside the kite are things that lift her up—her joys, interests, strengths.
- The outside of the kite includes things that hold her back—doubts, worries, or unkind comments.
- Explain: “Today, we’re going to make our own kite maps, just like Lulu might.”

3. Student Kite Creation

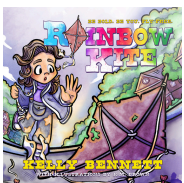
- Distribute the blank kite template.
- Guide students to:
 - Write or draw inside the kite what makes them feel excited, happy, curious, creative, or confident.
 - Write or draw outside the kite things that make them hesitate or feel unsure.
- Allow time for students to color and decorate their kites—encourage creativity and personal expression.
- Optional: Add tails made from ribbon or yarn with words like “joy,” “imagination,” or “kindness.”

4. Optional Writing Extension

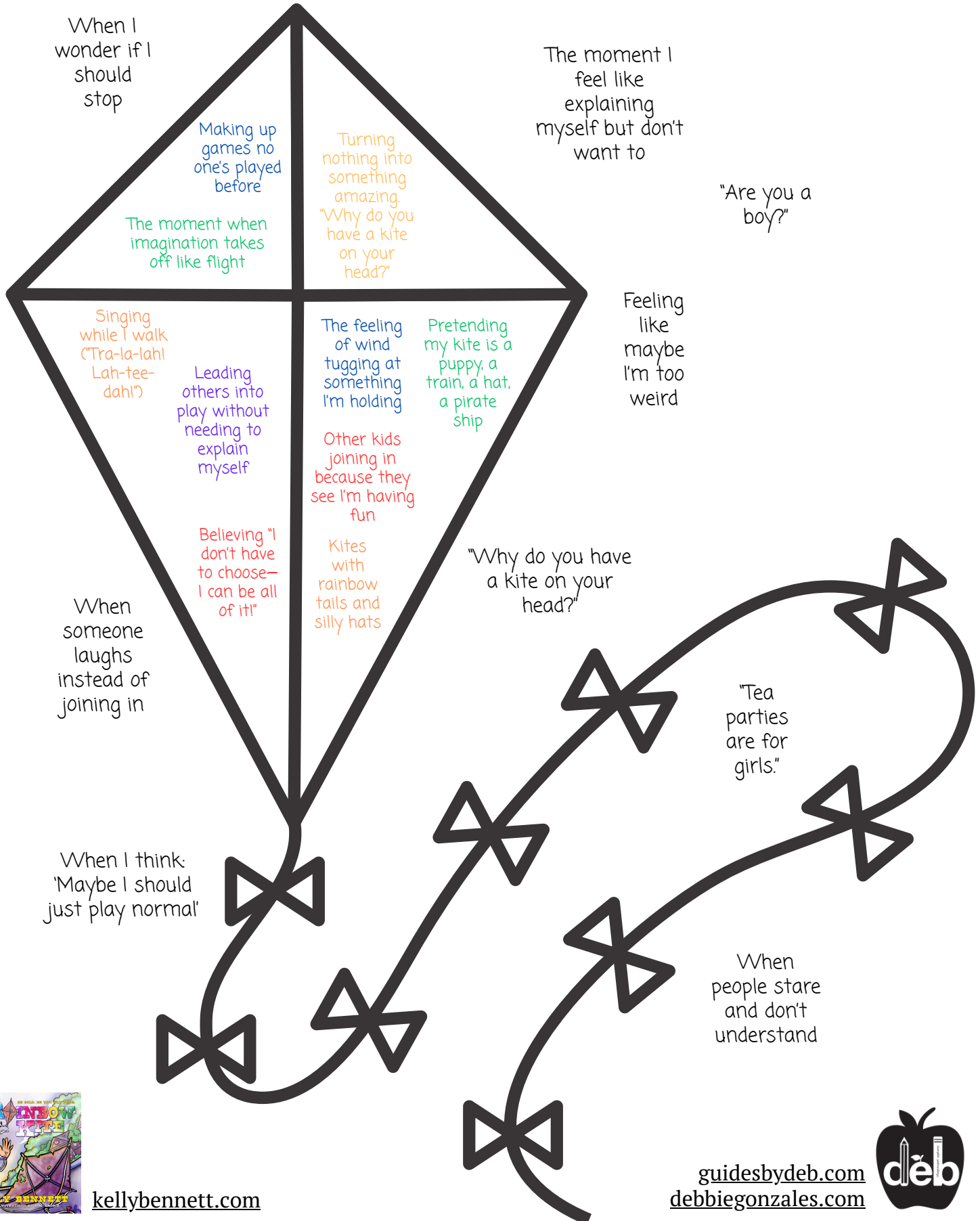
Invite students to choose 2–3 things from inside their kite and write a short reflection, poem, or story titled:

“What Makes Me Fly”

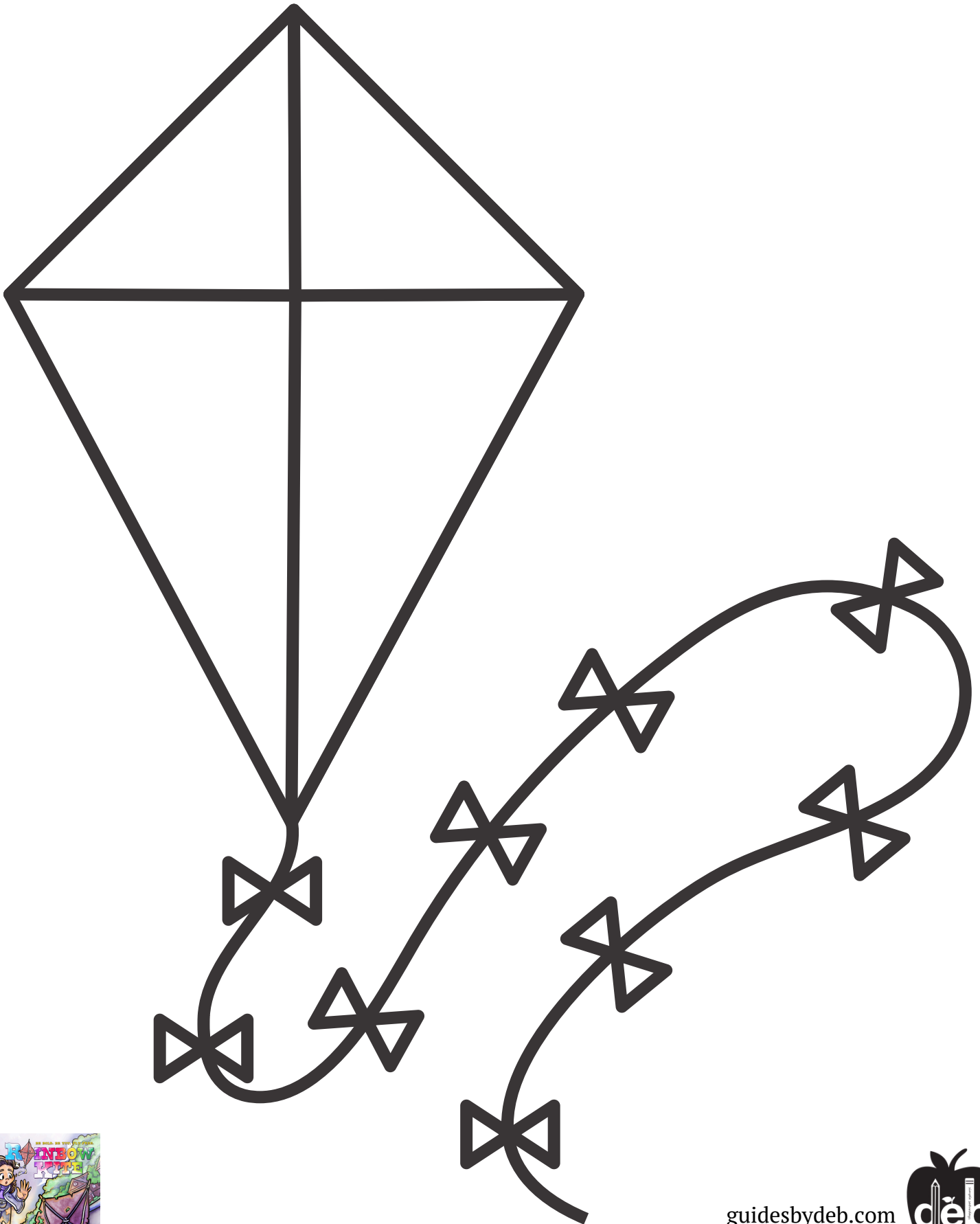
- Prompt: “Tell us what you love to do, or who you are when you feel most like yourself—just like Lulu!”



“What Makes Me Fly” Kite Map by Lulu



“What Makes Me Fly” Kite Map by YOU!



Educational Standards Alignment

Social-Emotional Learning (CASEL Core Competencies):

- Self-Awareness: Identifying sources of joy, imagination, and personal interests.
- Social Awareness: Understanding diverse perspectives, showing empathy through group sharing.
- Self-Management: Expressing oneself through creativity and staying confident despite challenges.
- Relationship Skills: Collaborating, sharing ideas, and listening respectfully.
- Responsible Decision-Making: Reflecting on peer influence and making confident personal choices.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS – Grades 2–4):

- **Reading – Literature (RL):**
 - RL.3.3 / RL.4.3: Describe how characters respond to major events and challenges.
 - RL.3.7 / RL.4.7: Use illustrations to understand characters, setting, or mood.
- **Writing (W):**
 - W.3.3 / W.4.3: Write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences using descriptive details and clear event sequences.
 - W.3.4 / W.4.4: Produce writing that is clear and appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **Speaking & Listening (SL):**
 - SL.3.1 / SL.4.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners.
 - SL.3.4 / SL.4.4: Report on a topic or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details.
- **Language (L):**
 - L.3.5 / L.4.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.