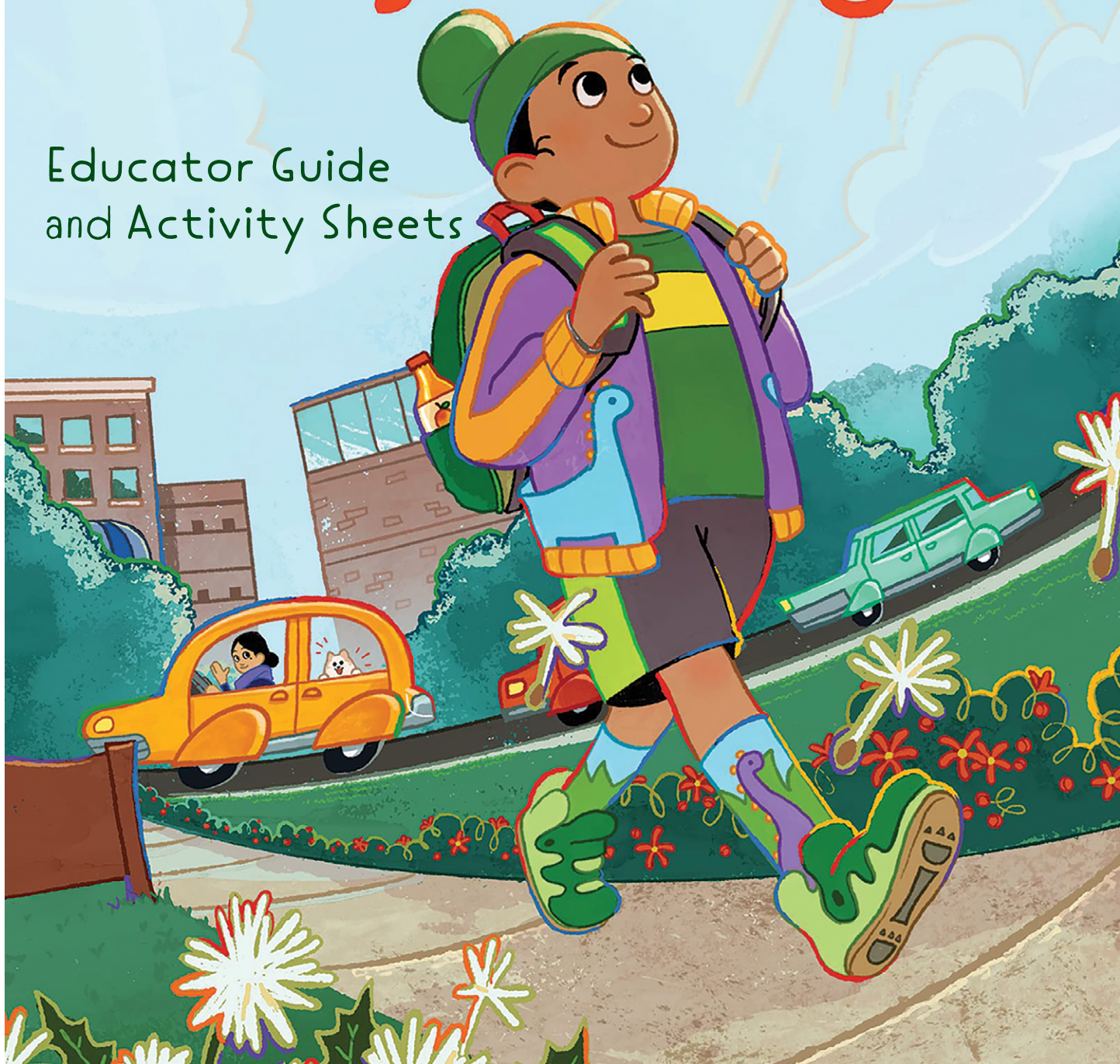


My Name Is Saajin Singh

Educator Guide
and Activity Sheets





My Name Is Saajin Singh

Written by
Kuljinder Kaur Brar

Illustrated by
Samrath Kaur

GENRE Children's Fiction

THEMES Self-esteem & self-reliance, prejudice & racism, emotions & feelings, identity, compassion, empathy

SUITABLE FOR Pre-K–2

GUIDED READING LEVEL Fountas and Pinnell M

COMMON CORE STANDARDS RL.2.2.1,2,3,4,5,6,7
W.2.1,3,5,6
SL.2.1,1a,1b,1c,2,3,4,5,6
L.2.2,3,4,4a,4b,4c,4d,4e,5,5a,5b,6

SUMMARY Saajin loves his name—he loves it so much that he sees it spelled out in the world around him in his snacks, in the sky, and sometimes he even sings it out loud. On his first day of school, Saajin is excited to meet his new classmates, but things take a turn when the teacher mispronounces his name as Say-jin and he is not sure how—or if he should—correct her. After trying to live with the different version of his name for a while and some thoughtful conversations with his family about the meaning behind it, Saajin realizes the importance of reclaiming his name and embracing his identity.

Creator Video Resources

Author **Kuljinder Kaur Brar** talks about why she wrote the book.*



Click the video below to watch behind the scenes with illustrator **Samrath Kaur****



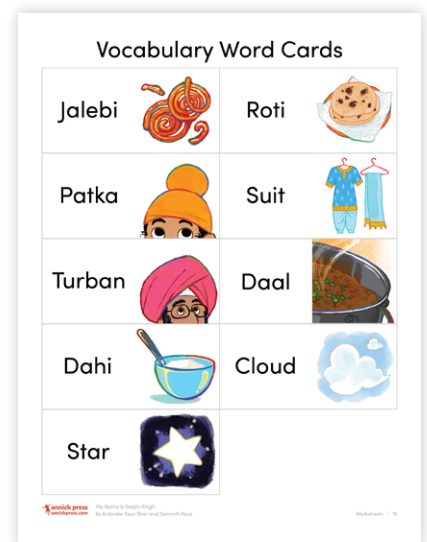
* <https://youtu.be/7gM7WXb02cE>

** <https://youtu.be/05MLqfoJmm0>

Before Reading the Book

These activities build the context, introduce the topic of the book, and establish prior knowledge and interest.

- ① Create a name tag (using paper/markers, clay, or pipe cleaners). Ask students to write a list of words using the letters in their first and last name (for example: Saajin Singh, words: in, sing, an, his).
- ② Show students the cover of the book, read the title, and ask students the following:
Who chose their name? Does their name have a meaning? What does it mean to them?
 - By examining the cover of the book, discuss what Saajin is wearing (from his shoes to the top of his head). Explain to students that Saajin is a Sikh boy who does not cut his hair. His hair is tied up in a bun at the top of his head, which is called a joora. He is wearing a patka, which is a piece of cloth tied around the head. [Play this video for students to provide a short introduction to what a patka is.](#)*
 - [Display the instructions](#)** on the projector so students can see how a patka is tied step-by-step. Discuss how in some cultures, boys may have long, uncut hair for cultural and religious reasons. In the Punjabi community, some boys cover their hair with a patka.
- ③ Have students sit in a circle. Give them time to think about their favorite food or drink. The teacher will start the game by saying, “My name is _____ and I like (favorite food/drink).” The following student will state the teacher’s response and add on their name and their favorite food/drink. Each person after that will state the names and food/drink preferences of those before them and add on their name and food/drink preference.
- ④ **Vocabulary word cards:** Display the following word cards in a pocket chart. Discuss what each word means. After the discussion, display these words on the word wall:
 - **Jalebi:** orange pretzel-shaped sweet snack
 - **Roti:** circular flat bread
 - **Patka:** fabric cloth covering a bun (joora) on the top of the head. Typically worn by Sikh boys and men.
 - **Suit:** Indian women’s clothing
 - **Turban:** long fabric cloth covering a bun/patka on the top of the head. Typically worn by Sikh men and women.
 - **Daal:** lentil soup
 - **Dahi:** white yogurt
 - **Cloud**
 - **Star**



* <https://bit.ly/3vpq655>

** <https://bit.ly/3cQBQY2>

While Reading the Book

These activities check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.

- ① On pages 4–5, Saajin is wearing his favorite food. Ask students what they think his favorite food is.
- ② When Saajin introduces himself to Christopher on page 15, he introduces himself as Say-jin. Ask students why they think he does this, and how it might make him feel.
- ③ On pages 12–13, Saajin starts to feel down about the name Say-jin but doesn't say anything. Ask students why Saajin might not have told anyone how he was feeling. If they feel comfortable doing so, ask students to share instances where they felt like Saajin.
- ④ On page 28, Saajin wears his favorite drink. Ask students what they think his favorite drink is.
- ⑤ Ask students to carefully examine the illustrations on pages 26–27. What is Saajin dreaming about? What do students predict will happen next?



After Reading the Book

These activities inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this text, and stimulate further extensions.

- 1 Ask students why they think that Saajin chose not to correct Mrs. Wilson or Kelly when they mispronounced his name. Has anyone ever mispronounced their names? If so, how did it make them feel and what did they do about it?
- 2 Ask students to point out moments where Saajin displays courage in the book.
- 3 Saajin eventually learns that he should correct people when they mispronounce his name. How did he learn this?
- 4 On page 24, Saajin and his family are eating dinner. They are eating daal (brown lentil soup), dahi (white yogurt), and roti (circular pita). Ask students what they like to eat for dinner.



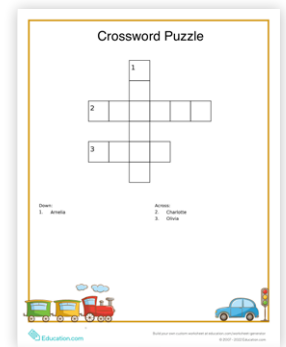
Extension Activities

These activities are only a start. They are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the story and their own creativity.

Language Arts

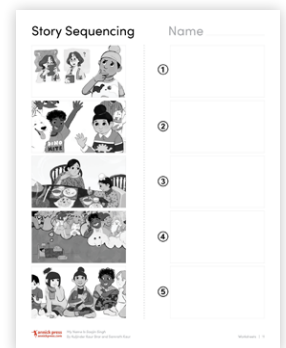
MY NAME

- 1 Saajin's name means "loving friend." Give students the opportunity to research the meaning of their names (Internet research/asking family members). Who picked their name? Why? Ask students to write "My name is _____ and it means _____." If a student can't find the meaning of their name or they don't have one, students can write "My name is _____ pronounced _____ (with the phonetic spelling). Students can write this on card strips and display these around the classroom.
- 2 [Create a word search or crossword with the students' names.](#)* For the crossword, the clues can be either the meaning of their name or a word that rhymes with their name (for example, a clue for a student whose name is Sam could be, "My name rhymes with 'jam.'").



STORY ELEMENTS & SEQUENCING

- 1 Discuss the characters, setting, problem, and solution of the story. Print images of the story scenes and discuss what is happening in each scene. Invite students to put the story scenes in order. Ask students to complete the story sequencing worksheet.



Social Studies

ON THE MAP

- 1 Saajin's parents are immigrants from Punjab, India. He comes from a Sikh background and speaks Punjabi. On a globe or a map, locate Punjab, India. Ask students to learn about their background. For example, did their parents immigrate from another country? You may need to define the word *immigrate* for students. What language(s) do students speak at home? Display a world map on the bulletin board. Have students label a pin with their name on it and use a thread to connect where their families moved from/their background to their current location.
- 2 **Country research project:** As a class, research the current country students live in and fill in the country worksheet together.



* <https://bit.ly/3PJfpSR>

Then give students the opportunity to research the country their families moved from. Students can work in groups of 2–3 if they are from the same country. For younger students, have them complete this activity with another classmate.

CITIZENSHIP

Saajin was excited to show Christopher around the school. Ask students what things about their school they might show a new friend.

- 1 Ask students to draw or print a map of the school and highlight the places they'd like to show off to their new classmate for their tour.
- 2 If students recommend different places in the school to a new classmate, ask them to create a video of them showing off the place, explaining the location, and why they enjoy being there. The teacher can then join these small clips into one video and then show this video to new students who join the class throughout the school year.



FAVORITE FOOD

Saajin enjoys writing his name with a jalebi (Indian sweet) and roti.

- 1 Invite students to take a picture, draw, or even bring in their favorite sweet to share with the rest of the class. If students bring their favorite food to class, challenge them to write their name with this favorite food.
- 2 Create a class book (see worksheet). Each student will fill out either their favorite food or drink and draw themselves eating/drinking it (maybe even have it spilled on their clothing like Saajin!).





Science

THE FIVE SENSES

Throughout the story, Saajin uses his senses to describe how his name feels.

- 1 Go over the five senses with students. Get in touch with the five senses by going outside on a nature walk. What do they see/hear/smell? When they're outside, have them touch the grass and describe how does it feels. What do they see/hear/smell while they're outside?
- 2 Refer to the book and discuss where Saajin was using his five senses. Use a different colored sticky note for each sense. Example: For taste, use a yellow sticky note and put it on the pages where Saajin is eating his name (roti and jalebi). For sight, use a blue sticky note and put it on the pages where Saajin is looking at his name (in the clouds and stars), etc.

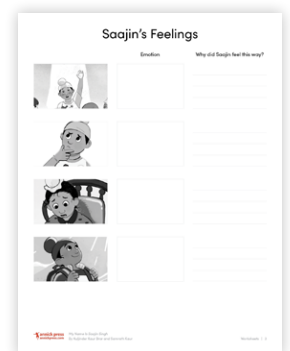


Social and Emotional Learning

IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

Saajin experiences some strong emotions throughout the book.

- 1 Go over different types of feelings/emotions: happy, proud, embarrassed, etc. Ask students to act these emotions out (teacher can model how to do this).
- 2 Invite students to complete the feelings recognition worksheet.





MAKING MISTAKES

Saajin learned that even adults make mistakes.

- ① Invite students to share when they have made mistakes.
- ② [Using the website Flipgrid](https://info.flip.com/),* ask parent(s)/grandparent(s)/guardian(s) to record an example of them making a mistake. Watch the videos in class.

Math

CELEBRATING CLOTHING

- ① Go through the book and examine the different patterns on the characters' clothing. Ask students to design their own pattern (AB, ABA, ABC, etc.) on the worksheet.

SHAPE HUNT

- ① Open the book to page 10 (where Saajin is talking to Kelly). Model how to find shapes and invite students to find different shapes on this page. Go through the entire book and look for shapes.

Art

- ① Use the directed drawing sheets so students can learn how to draw a turban, suit, and patka.
- ② Ask students what their favorite cereal is and ask them to bring that cereal to school in a small container. Students can then write their names with the cereal, just like Saajin. They can then glue the cereal letters onto construction paper shaped like a cereal bowl.



* <https://info.flip.com/>