



A Curriculum Guide to **I'M GONNA PUSH THROUGH!**

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Ages 4–8

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

In 2016, Jasmyn Wright saw a need to encourage, inspire, and remind her third-grade class of just how brilliant and resilient they were. So she created the “push through” mantra to affirm their resilience in every situation. Today, her push through mantra inspires children and adults on a global level to reach their maximum potential.

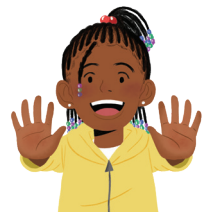
I'm Gonna Push Through! reflects the power of perseverance, telling readers to push through no matter how tough or scary an obstacle may appear. Wright reminds young readers of prominent figures who have faced challenges, making clear that whether it's a math problem, loving a part of yourself, or even the grand task of finding life's purpose, you can do anything if you put your mind to it. So chin up, head high, and push through!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Key Ideas and Details

Addressing Key Ideas and Details, the Common Core State Standards consider one's ability to ask and answer questions about a text (RL K.1–2.1), retell stories and express understanding of the central message (RL K.2–2.2), and describe how characters respond to major events and challenges (RL K.3–2.3). The following questions engage these standards.

1. Many stories we read focus on one character and the challenges they face, but in *I'm Gonna Push Through!*, we see many children work through many *different* challenges.
 - What are some examples of challenges shared in the story?
 - What do all these examples have in common? Explain your answer.
2. In addition to reading about children who push through, the author also shares the names of public figures who have encountered obstacles.
 - Name a few of the figures mentioned in the story. Which ones did you recognize? Which ones are new to you?
 - What do you know about each of these people and the challenges that they overcame?
 - What more would you like to know?
3. This book shares an important message: no matter what happens, or how scary or new something may be, we have to *push through!*
 - In your own words, what does it mean to “push through”?
 - Give examples from your own life of ways in which you might “push through.”



Craft and Structure

To learn about craft and structure in literature, the Common Core State Standards ask us to describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song (RL .4–2.4), and to pay attention to shifting points of view in characters and narration (RL K.6–2.6). The following discussion questions and activities engage these standards.

Introduction to Call-and-Response

The narrator, or the person telling the story, is speaking to the children throughout *I'm Gonna Push Through!*. She asks questions like, “What if it's too hard?” (*I'm gonna push through!*). The author also leaves sentences for the children to finish, such as, “Remember, you were born for a...” (*reason!*). These are examples of call-and-response. The narrator *wants* her audience to talk back to them.

Keep this idea in mind when answering the following questions:

1. Look closely at the words in the book before answering these questions:
 - How can you tell the narrator's voice from the children's voices?
 - Who do you think the narrator is to the children? Explain your answer.
2. Throughout the book, the children repeat the phrase, “I'm gonna push through!”
 - Do you think this phrase is a good title for the book? Explain your answer.
 - How does it make you feel to hear that phrase repeated after every challenge and setback the children face? Then look at the children's faces in the book: How do you think it makes *them* feel?

3. Call-and-response can be very encouraging and also a lot of fun.
 - Can you think of an example where you have used call-and-response before? If so, what were the phrases, and how did they make you feel?
 - Can you come up with your own short call-and-response with a classmate?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

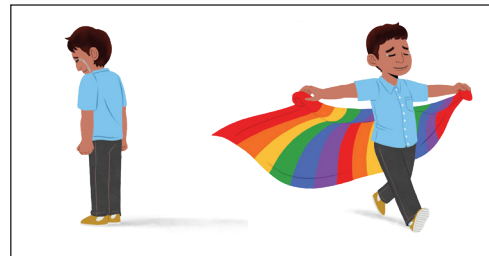
To learn about the integration of knowledge and ideas, the Common Core State Standards asks students to use both words and illustrations in a text to demonstrate understanding (RL K.7–2.7).

Introduction to Understanding Identity

In *I'm Gonna Push Through!*, the children try to overcome familiar challenges with school, learning how to do new things, and making friends. But there are other challenges as well, those concerning the children's identity.

Identity is the special set of qualities that make you, you! Identity is also the way that you think about yourself, and how the world thinks about you.

1. Look for the page where a boy is crying at first, but then we see him walking with a rainbow flag and smiling.
 - What do you think his challenge was?
 - What clues from the text and illustrations tell you that?
 - What do you think he had to do in order to push through?
2. Now look for the pages where a girl is growing up and searching for her life's purpose. Your purpose is the reason you exist!
 - Why do you think this character had trouble searching for her purpose?
 - What clues from the text and illustrations tell you that?
 - What do you think she had to do in order to push through and find her purpose?
3. With a partner, share one goal that you have for your life. This may be the job you hope to have, people you may want to help, or a dream you'd like to achieve. When your partner finishes sharing, be sure to tell them, *I believe in you!*



WRITING

The Common Core State Standards emphasize informative and explanatory writing in the primary grades. The activities below provide opportunities for children to write and supply facts about a topic (W K.2–2.2), research and present knowledge (W K.7–2.7) and gather information from provided sources in order to answer a question (W K.8–2.8).

Introduction to Researching Role Models

The author shares many stories of public figures who have had to push through in order to be successful. Some you may know, like Barack Obama and Martin Luther King Jr. Others may be new and unfamiliar. The back matter at the end of this book helps us to learn a bit more about them.

1. With a partner, choose one of the people mentioned in *I'm Gonna Push Through!*, and read their blurb in the back of the book. Then complete the "If They Can Do It, So Can I" handout at the end of this guide.
2. Think about a time when you had to do something very difficult. Were you able to push through? If so, how did you do it? How would you use what you've read in this book in a similar situation going forward? Use the handout "I Will Believe in Myself and You, Too!" at the end of this guide to share your own story.

Fluency and Prosody

As part of ELA Reading Foundations, the Common Core State Standards emphasizes not only accurate reading of grade-level texts, but also appropriate rate and expression or fluency (RF K.4.B–2.4.B). The activity below addresses this standard.

Introduction to Choral Reading

Jasmyn Wright is a teacher who wanted to encourage her students to push through. She taught her students a call-and-response chant that helped them remember just how wonderful they are. We were able to hear that chant when we read *I'm Gonna Push Through!*; consider watching the video of Jasmyn Wright and her students to hear how the chant sounds in action: [YouTube.com/watch?v=FhtNphjY-xw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhtNphjY-xw).

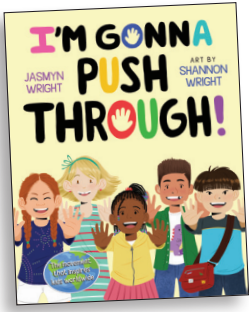
1. Now try reading the full text of the book as a mantra with your classmates using the handout "I'm Gonna Push Through!" at the end of this guide. The leader will speak first with the bolded words, and then the rest of the group will respond with the lighter words that follow.

EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE

Read other books similar to *I'm Gonna Push Through!*:

- *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* by Debbie Levy
- *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers
- *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan and Roslyn Jordan
- *Remarkably You* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o
- *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art* by Barb Rosenstock

IF THEY COULD DO IT, SO CAN I!



Name: _____

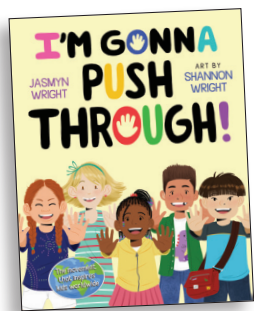
Date: ____/____/____

Partner: _____

Directions: Select one of the figures in the chart below mentioned in *I'm Gonna Push Through!*, then complete the following questions.

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Barack Obama | Jillian Mercado | LeBron James | Tyler Perry |
| Malala Yousafzai | Diane Guerrero | Stephen Hawking | Trevor Noah |
| Oprah Winfrey | LaDonna Brave Bull Allard | Sharice Davids | Marley Dias |
| George Takei | Jamie Brewer | Juan Felipe Herrera | Mirai Nagasu |

1. My person is _____ (*your person's name*).
2. He/She is a _____ (*your person's job*).
3. Even though _____ (*your person's challenge*), he/she pushed through!
4. I chose my person because _____.
5. Here is a picture of my person pushing through their challenges.



I WILL BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND YOU, TOO!

Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Directions: Think about a time when you had to do something you thought was very difficult. Then use the sentence starters below to share what happened. Write some advice for a friend who may be having a hard time pushing through a difficult situation!

I had to push through when _____.

At first, I felt _____ because _____.

Then, _____ helped me by _____.

Now I can _____.

Here is a picture of me *pushing through*!

Dear _____,

Sometimes things in life are rough, tough, and even a little bit scary. But that doesn't mean we can't succeed! Here is how I push through. Maybe it will help you, too.

I believe in you!

Love,



I'M GONNA PUSH THROUGH!

To add associated kinetic movements to the text, watch the "Push Through" and "I Am" videos on Jasmyn's Push Through website at WePushThrough.org

Hold your head high. No matter what stands in the way of your dreams, remember this:

YOU can push through anything!

If someone tells you it's too hard, don't you *ever* listen. You tell them,

I'm gonna push through!

Think of those before you who never gave up: Barack Obama...

He pushed through!

Malala Yousafzai...

She pushed through!

Oprah Winfrey...

She pushed through!

George Takei...

He pushed through!

Jillian Mercado...

She pushed through!

Diane Guerrero...

She pushed through!

LaDonna Brave Bull Allard...

She pushed through!

Jamie Brewer...

She pushed through!

Marley Dias...

She pushed through!

LeBron James...

He pushed through!

Stephen Hawking...

He pushed through!

Sharice Davids...

She pushed through!

Juan Felipe Herrera...

He pushed through!

Mirai Nagasu...

She pushed through!

Tyler Perry...

He pushed through!

Trevor Noah...

He pushed through!

And if *they* can do it, you can do it too.

You say it now.

If they can do it, I can do it too!

What if it's too hard?

I'm gonna push through!

What if it's too tough?

I'm gonna push through!

What if you're afraid?

I'm gonna push through!

What if it's too rough?

I'm gonna push through!

What if you don't know how to do it?

I'm gonna push through!

What if you just *can't* do it?

I'm gonna push through!

What if you're just too young?

That's not true!

What if you're not good enough?

That's not true!

What if you're not strong enough?

That's not true!

Tell me why...

I can do ANYTHING I put my mind to!

I believe in you.

Chin up!

Believe in yourself.

Head high!

Turn and tell someone, encourage them and say:

I believe in you!

Now ask them:

Do you believe in yourself?

Point to yourself and say:

I believe in me. I WILL believe in myself!

Remember, you were born for a...

REASON!

Your life has...

MEANING!

You were birthed with a...

PURPOSE!

And it will be your goal to...

FIND IT!

Because one day in this world you will...

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

And use your footprint to...

LEAVE AN IMPRINT!

Tell me why...

I can push through ANYTHING I put my mind to!

Excellent.

Now, don't let anyone in the world tell you otherwise.