

## The Wild Book

**INSPIRATION FOR LEARNING:** This ‘inspiration for learning’ resource is based on the award-winning book ‘The Wild Book’ by the Cuban-American poet Margarita Engle. The Wild Book is a vibrant novel in verse, which paints a glowing portrait of the author’s grandmother as a young girl. These activities engage students in discussions around the potential barriers to learning, concepts of hope and a sense of belonging.

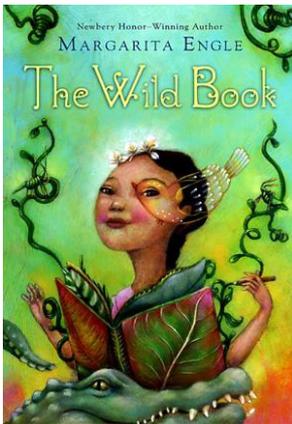
**KEY QUESTIONS:**

**How Can We Remove Barriers to Learning?**

**How Do We Support Learners to Find A Place to Belong?**

**BACKGROUND:**

**'The Wild Book' by Margarita Engle, a Cuban-American poet**



Fefa struggles with words. She has word blindness, or dyslexia, and the doctor says she will never read or write. Every time she tries, the letters jumble and spill off the page, leaping and hopping away like bullfrogs. How will she ever understand them? But her mother has an idea. She gives Fefa a blank book filled with clean white pages. "Think of it as a garden," she says. Soon Fefa starts to sprinkle words across the pages of her wild book. She lets her words sprout like seedlings,

shaky at first, then growing stronger and surer with each new day. And when her family is threatened, it is what Fefa has learned from her wild book that saves them.

**ACTIVITIES:**

**KEY STAGE:** 2 – 4

**TIME:** 60 minutes

**LEARNING STYLE:** Group Activity

**Activity One:**

Read the poem ‘**School**’ out loud to the students.

Ask the students for their initial thoughts on the poem, and make a list of their responses.

**School**

The others laugh.

They always laugh.

When I am forced to read

OUT LOUD,

They mock

My stumbling voice,

and when I have to practice

my horrible

handwriting,

they make fun

of the twisted

tilted

tormented

letters.

My fingers fall away

from the page.

I lose the courage

to try.

### Activity Two:

In pairs or small groups let the students answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Fefa is so unhappy at school?
2. How do you feel about reading 'OUT LOUD' in class?
3. What can Fefa's classmates do to make her feel better about 'words'?
4. What can Fefa's teacher do about her fear of words?

### Activity Three:

Individually or in small groups ask the students to write a letter or poem of encouragement to Fefa.

### Web Links:

- Read a review of The Wild Book here <http://www.booktrends.org/2012/07/review-wild-book-by-margarita-engle.html>.
- Listen to Margarita Engle as she introduces and shares some of the backstory for creating The Wild Book [http://www.teachingbooks.net/book\\_reading.cgi?id=7874&a=1](http://www.teachingbooks.net/book_reading.cgi?id=7874&a=1)

### Image & Poem:

The image and poem used in this activity are from The Wild Book by Margarita Engle.