

# The Boy with Long Hair

## Teachers' Resource Guide



Written and Illustrated by Pushpinder Kaur Singh

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## Summary

The Boy With Long Hair is a true story of courage and triumph of a young boy who had long hair as a symbol of his faith and religion. He was born and brought up in a Sikh family in San Jose, California. He was aware of his unique identity, and it was not a problem for him. Everyone in his school knew him as an intelligent, funny and fun loving boy.

His life changed when he was in fourth grade. His family moved to a new place. The people of his new town had never seen a boy with long hair. There, no one wanted to talk to him or play with him because to them, he was a strange looking child. He was saddened by the loneliness and angered by the ignorance of the children and adults around him. When he could take it no longer, he decided to do something about it. He told the world who he was. And the world listened. And he was happy to be the boy with long hair.

## How Will "The Boy With Long Hair" by Pushpinder Singh Help?

This book is intended to increase awareness of Sikh identity and diversity in our schools. Although this book focuses on one ethnic group, the Sikhs from India, the concept is of universal significance. Countless children suffer from bullying, teasing and discrimination because they may look different; and because others fail to identify with them and understand their customs. They are excluded from play groups at school, beaten up, and humiliated. Bullying interferes with the well-being of the victim and his/her ability to perform to the maximum potential in school as they do not feel safe and accepted. The Sikh boys are especially vulnerable as they have long, uncut hair that is tied in a bun on the top of their head.

"The Boy With Long Hair" will help young children develop empathy and understanding for the feelings of others. This is not a story of one boy from one culture. This story has a universal theme for children from all cultures.

This book has been included in the HSS Framework by the California Department of Education to be used by Grade 2 teachers.

# Background Information about the Sikhs

- ❖ The word "Sikh" means a student or learner or seeker of knowledge.
- ❖ The founders of this religion were known as Gurus.
- ❖ Guru means a spiritual teachers or the one who dispels darkness of ignorance.
- ❖ The Sikh religion started with Guru Nanak in the 15th century.
- ❖ Guru Nanak simplified the concept of religion as a way of life as opposed to some rituals.
- ❖ The Sikhs had ten human Gurus in succession.
- ❖ The Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh was the last human guru. He gave the Sikhs their unique identity with long hair and turban. Their identity gave the Sikhs self-confidence and instilled fearlessness in them.
- ❖ The Sikhs value their hair as a gift of their tenth Guru and keep it with utmost respect. It is impolite to touch their hair without permission.
- ❖ The boys and men tuck their hair in a bun on top of their head. The turban, a symbol of royalty in India, adorns a Sikh man's head. Men should not trim their beards either.
- ❖ The Sikhs are easily recognized by their turbans, but their identity is still not understood by many. This ignorance results in severe harassment, teasing, bullying and sometimes beating of Sikh children in schools and prejudice and violence against Sikh men in public places.
- ❖ Sikh faith believes in equality of gender. Some girls and women wear a turban too. It is a matter of commitment. But most of the girls and women braid their hair or roll it up and tuck it in a bun on the back of their heads.
- ❖ As the Sikh boys are ostracized by their peers because of their long hair, many parents cut young boys' hair as soon as they face such problems. These children are then denied the identity given to them by their heritage.
- ❖ Number 5 is very special to the Sikhs:
  - They are the fifth largest religious denomination in the world.
  - They have 5 articles of faith – long uncut hair, a small comb, a steel bracelet, a small sword and special boxer shorts. The names of these articles begin with the sound /k/ in Punjabi, the language of the Sikhs.
  - The Sikhs originated in the state of Punjab. Punjab means the land of five rivers.
  - There are nearly 500,000 Sikhs in the United States of America.
- ❖ According to a National Report of Severe Bullying done by Sikh Coalition, nearly 70% Sikh boys reported experiencing moderate to severe harassment, teasing and sometimes beating in schools and prejudice and violence against Sikh men in public places. The situation worsened after 9/11 and has spiked in recent months.
- ❖ The most important action to prevent bullying is education about diversity. This can be achieved by reading books on diversity and a follow up with a discussion in the classrooms.

# CA Language Arts and HSS Content Standards Addressed by The Boy With Long Hair

CA HSS Content Standard 2.1: A. Compare and contrast yourself with the Boy with Long Hair Activity. They make a list of the ways in which they are different, and another list of the ways in which they are the same. Which list is longer? Are they surprised at the conclusion? Why or why not? This book teaches a lesson of finding similarities in our differences as the boy with long hair points them out. It is a great way to build the essential life skills of respect for diversity.

CA HSS Content Standard 2.2: Map Activity-Students can label the state of Punjab in India. It is the place where most of the Sikhs come from.

**Key Ideas and Details:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL.2.3: Describe what the boy with long hair does to help others understand who he is.

**Craft and Structure:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.4: Describe how Words and Phrases (e.g. Regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

**Craft and Structure:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL.2.6: Have students read in different voices the dialogue bubbles on pages 8-9, 21-22.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL.2.7: Students describe what places the boy with long hair is, what problem he faces and how he solves it.

**Text Types and Purposes:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3: Students write a narrative. Some topics to write a narrative could be:

1. Have you ever seen a group of children teasing another child just because he or she looks different? Describe the situation. What did you do about that? What could you have done?
2. Why do you think children tease others? What can be done to stop children from teasing and harassing others?

**Presentation and Knowledge of Ideas:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.4: Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences. This book lends itself to carry on a discussion in being sensitive, caring and compassionate. Students talk about ideas/actions that will show that they care.

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.6: Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).

**Activity:** Vocabulary: happiness, sadness, pride, anger, shame, strange, and pitter-patter. To learn the spelling and meaning of the above words ask the students to: look up the words in a dictionary, write synonyms and antonyms for each word, and use each word in a sentence. Draw an illustration to show the word and its meaning.

### Other Ideas

**Sample Activity for Writing and Speaking and Listening:** Students of all ages love to see their work published in a class book. If possible, make multiple copies of the book and give one to each student. They would love to share and read them again and again. Personal stories of exclusion can make interesting collection to share.

**Writer's Craft and Structure Ideas:** The Boy with Long Hair is a rich resource for the teacher in the writing class. Anne Stuart at the Noyce Writers' Workshop Summer Institute had pointed out several features that make this book a 'touchstone book':

1. It is easy to follow non-fiction/realistic fiction story written in a narrative style with new information on a relevant topic.
2. Illustrations and the text follow a predictable pattern.
3. It uses author's craft in a number of ways; repetition, onomatopoeia, feeling words, caption bubbles, internal dialogue, quotation marks, creative uses of 'and' and commas, and the repetitive use of the word 'sometimes' to create impact.
4. The setting plays a significant role. The reader notices the at the boy with long hair is thinking about his situation at different times-on the bus stop, in the playground, in the classroom. This interferes with his wellbeing and achievement at school. Any child who has experienced isolation can relate to this experience.

**Art Ideas:** Students illustrate the feeling words from the text. Make a class book with the student work. Create a class mural with different hair styles.

**Math:** Make a bar graph, or a picture graph to represent the diverse ethnic groups in your classroom.

**Role Play/Technology:** Write a script about a time when you saw someone being teased. What did you do? Did you intervene to protect the victim? Do a role play in class or make video and post it on YouTube.

This book is a proven resource that fosters the understanding we need to be more accepting and compassionate towards others who appear different to us. It does so while teaching important literacy skills to the students. It is an equity resource!

## Where is the Boy with Long Hair Now?

The boy with long hair had a great time rest of that year. His classmates developed a better understanding about his culture and became his friends. He had to educate his peers and teachers about his beliefs every year. He grew up to have a beard and mustache just like his daddy. His sister grew up to be the girl with long braids. He attended University of California, Berkeley before moving on to Harvard Law School in Cambridge. He is a successful lawyer in a prestigious law firm in Washington DC, and is happily married. He now has two sons of his own.

The following pages have reproducible activities.

# Compare and Contrast

Think about the Boy with Long Hair and yourself. In the bottom sections, write as many things about yourself and him that are different. In the top section, write as many things that are the same in you and the Boy with Long Hair.

We Both	
The Boy with Long Hair	Me

CA HSS Content Standard 2.1:

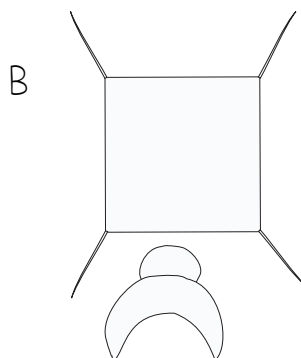
# Word-Picture Match

You learned several new words in The Boy with Long Hair story. Some of the words were not English words. Connect the pictures with the words. Then use these words in sentences.

1. Patka



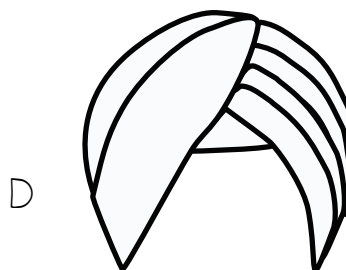
2. Comb



3. Jooda



4. Moustache and beard



5. Turban





# Word-Picture Match Answer Key

Connect the words with the correct pictures.

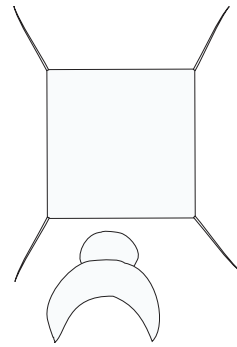
1. Patka

A



2. Comb

B



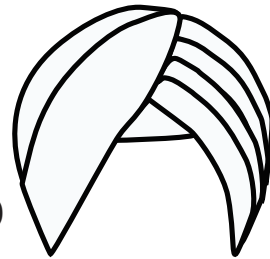
3. Jooda

C



4. Moustache and beard

D



5. Turban

E



# Word Search

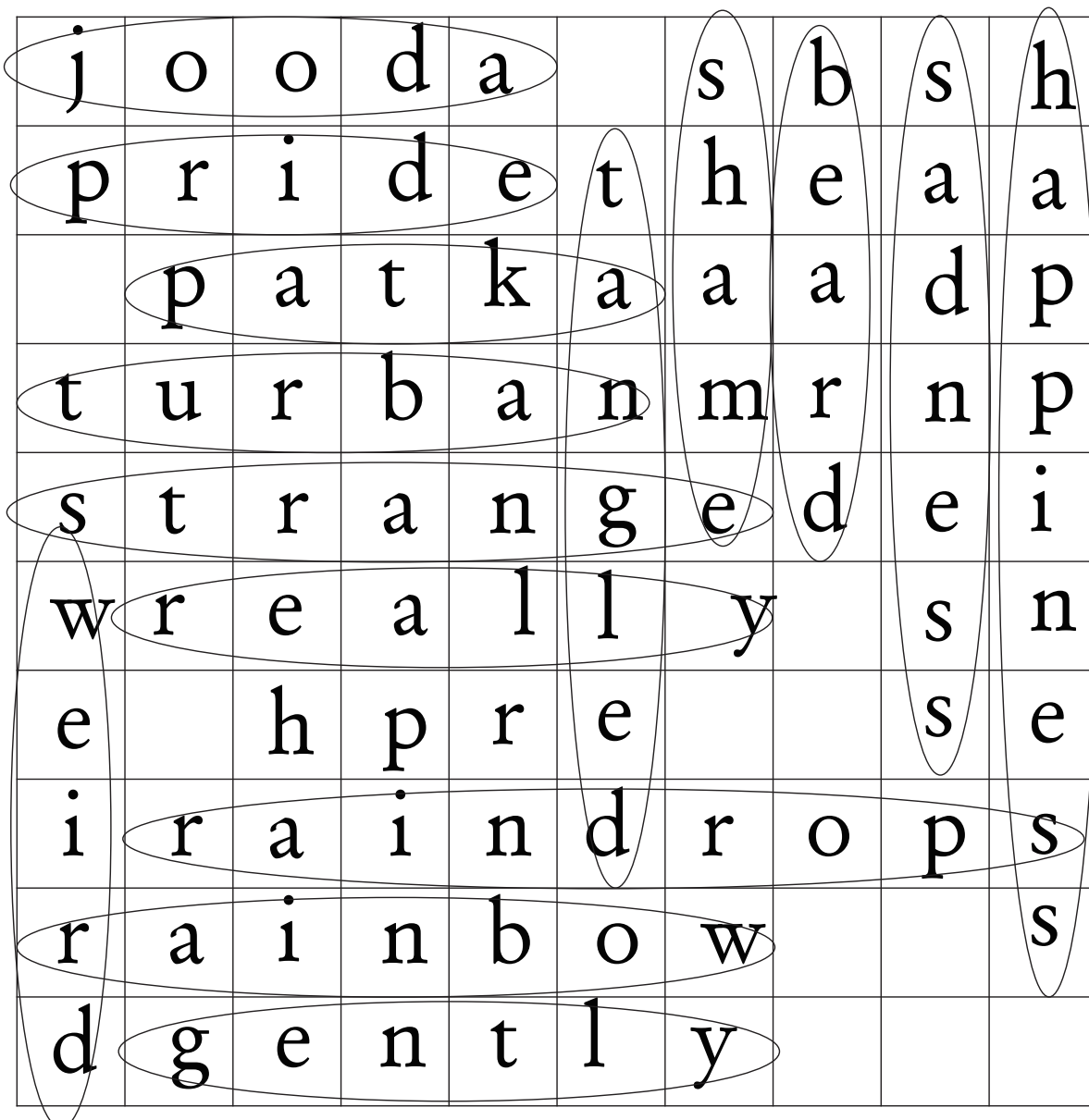
Find and circle these words in the word search puzzle.

jooda	happiness	sadness	really
turban	beard	strange	patka
weird	gently	tangled	rainbow
pride	shame	raindrops	

j	o	o	d	a	m	s	b	s	h
p	r	i	d	e	t	h	e	a	a
e	p	a	t	k	a	a	a	d	p
t	u	r	b	a	n	m	r	n	p
s	t	r	a	n	g	e	d	e	i
w	r	e	a	l	l	y	a	s	n
e	k	h	p	r	e	n	e	s	e
i	r	a	i	n	d	r	o	p	s
r	a	i	n	b	o	w	y	l	s
d	g	e	n	t	l	y	h	r	a

# Word Search Answer Key

jooda	happiness	sadness	really
turban	beard	strange	patka
weird	gently	tangled	rainbow
pride	shame	raindrops	



# Map Activity

Sikhs like the Boy with Long Hair come from the state of Punjab in India. Chandigarh is the capital of Punjab. Color the state of Punjab green on the map of India. Punjab is like California in some ways. It is surrounded by hills on the north. It is also a place where many crops and fruits are grown and sent to the rest of the country.



# The Boy with Long Hair Reading Quiz

Choose the correct answers.

1. How did the boy feel in his old school?

- A. He felt sad and lonely.
- B. He felt hurt.
- C. He felt happy and accepted by his friends.

2. How does the boy feel in his new school?

- A. He feels sad and lonely.
- B. He feels smart.
- C. He feels happy and accepted by his friends.

3. What is a Turban?

- A. A turban is the long hair bun on the boy's head.
- B. A turban is what his daddy wears on his head.
- C. It is a small cloth that the boy with long hair wraps on his head.

4. Why does the boy have a bun of hair on his head?

- A. He has a bun on his head because it is a nice hair style.
- B. He has a bun on his head because he never cuts his hair and he wants to keep it neatly.
- C. He has a bun on his head because his daddy told him to do it.

5. What did the boy with long hair do so that others won't look at him in a strange way?

- A. He told them to stop it.
- B. He told them about his long hair so that they would understand him.
- C. He had a fight in the bus.

6. What would you do if you see a boy with long hair who feels sad and lonely?

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# The Boy with Long Hair

An extremely important subject told in a simple story!

The Boy With Long Hair is a story for all children who have felt left out because their heritage has given them customs that seem strange to some people. It is a story of a boy who knows that although people may look or behave differently, there is much that they all have in common. With his innocence and simplicity, the boy with long hair will warm the hearts of both adults and children.

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