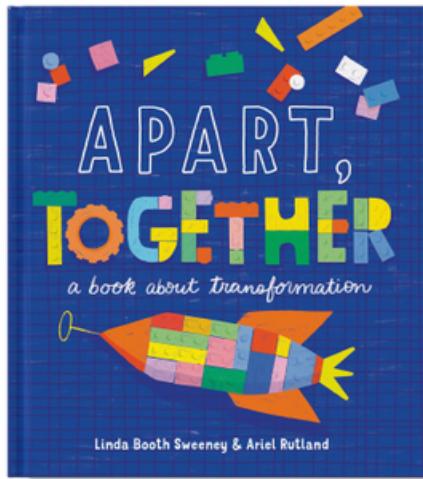


APART, TOGETHER

By Linda Booth Sweeney • Illustrated by Ariel Rutland



ABOUT THE BOOK

Apart, Together invites children and their grownups to read, discuss, play, imagine and together, be curious about the connections that make up their world.

THEMES: Prediction, Change, and Critical Thinking

Reading *Apart, Together* is a fun way for children to imagine and predict how interconnections and interactions among objects and people can create something entirely new. With each new page, critical thinking skills grow and the brain itself grows!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

One of the most powerful features of a picture book is the page turn. In *Apart, Together*, the page turns are especially important as they signal transformative moments.

NOTICE: You can begin by simply reading the words on the page and asking, *What do you see?* For example, in the garden scene, you and your young reader might notice the seeds, soil, sun, and water. Share aloud all you can see. Children might say they see the gardener with pink boots.

WONDER: Together as you point out the elements that are APART ask, *What could happen if all these things combine?* Try different words for “combine” like “work together,” “connect,” “mix,” “interconnect.”

Listen for their responses. Children might say they don't know or just be excited about what comes next. Encourage them to make a prediction about what might change. Then turn the page to explore what changed.

CONNECT: Ask: *What changed? Did something new appear when the parts were combined?*

Ask: *What do you think caused the change?* Talk about how the soil, sun, water, and of course, the gardener, work TOGETHER to make beans.

Work with your child to help make their thinking visible with string, drawings, and diagrams.*

CURIOS ABOUT CONNECTIONS

Curious About Connections conversations help children build the muscle to see not only objects—a bee, soil, a soccer player—but to imagine how the interconnections and interactions among those objects can create something entirely new. These conversations lay the foundation for early systems thinking. But their impact extends even further, supporting social-emotional learning (SEL), a growth mindset, and building resilience by helping children feel more confident when dealing with complex problems as they grow older.

*For ways to “make thinking visible” and other *Curious About Connections* resources, [SCAN HERE!](#)



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Apart, Together is a concept book that can be read multiple times, going deeper each time, extending thinking and experiencing new and emerging ideas with each read. The activities below show how *Apart, Together* supports learning and development in multiple areas.

FUN IN THE KITCHEN!

(STEM, SEL, language/literacy)

Reread the pages where a child is baking and then enjoying a yummy cake. Ask: *Have you ever baked?* If yes, *what do you like to bake?* Talk about how the different ingredients taste very different when they are apart versus together. *Why is that?* (Older children can explore the interactions between ingredients, such as how baking powder interacts with other ingredients to cause the cake to rise). Ask the child if they'd like to create a recipe for a favorite food such as cookies, a sandwich, or a special family dish. Encourage the child to describe the steps in their recipe by using sequential words like "first," "next," "then," or to number each step. Suggest that the children illustrate their recipes. To foster social-emotional learning (SEL), children can work with friends or family members to create a group cookbook.

SURPRISE CREATURE CREATIONS

(literacy/language, SEL, art, imaginative play)

Ask the child to imagine a creature—it can be big or small, from land or sea, wild or tame—anything you can visualize in your mind. Think about the details. Decide who goes first. The first artist draws the head and neck on the top fold of the paper.

Connect lines to the neck so the next artist knows where to start. The second artist adds on, drawing the body and arms. Extend lines from the body to the next fold for the next artist to draw legs and feet. Children should be creative—triangles and squiggles work too. Unfold the paper to reveal your new creature! *What did all the parts create when they were connected?*

Give your creature a name. *What words can you use to describe your creature? What words describe how they move? How they look?* Describe your creature's habitat. Encourage children to notice something interesting about the other artists' drawings.



Scan me and unlock
more *Apart, Together*
content and resources!

MAKING MUSIC

(art/music, SEL, systems thinking)

Ask a child (or a group of children) if they have ever listened to a band, orchestra or chorus. Discuss how the musicians may practice apart, as individuals, and how they come together to practice and create a special sound unlike something any one of them can create alone.

Now try it! Get a bunch of different child-friendly instruments or make your own out of soup cans, pots, milk jugs, oatmeal boxes and wooden spoons. Together with the child (or children) play each instrument apart. Then play several instruments together. *What's the difference?* If you have several children, have them choose an instrument and suggest they come up with their own simple melody or rhythm. Then ask the children to put their melodies together.

A PICTURE OF HEALTH

(making thinking visible, systems thinking)

In the activity, young readers brainstorm and create a picture of the interrelationships that help them to be healthy. Begin by rereading the scene in the book where the child is washing her hands. Talk about how clean hands help to keep us healthy. Ask: *What else helps to keep us healthy?* Then on a paper plate or cut-out circle write or create simple drawings (five to eight) for each element the child says.

Look for interconnections.

What elements on the circle influence another?

For example, *if you have supportive friends, might you exercise more?* Draw an arrow from the cause (encouraging friends) to the effect (more exercise). Explore all the possible interconnections.



Whether at home or in class, you can display the "plate of health" connections and do a gallery walk, encouraging children to comment on and learn about each other's work.

This guide was co-created by author, Linda Booth Sweeney and early childhood educator and curriculum developer, Jody Ellenby. Design by illustrator and graphic designer, Ariel Rutland.