

There was a bird that loved to listen to the other birds sing. The bird listened to their songs and thought, “I wish I could sing like that, too.” But the bird was unable to sing. All that the bird could do was make little clicking sounds, and it could make a sound like the wind. Nothing happened when the bird tried to sing, just a “click, click, click, whoosh” sound came out. That’s all that anyone ever heard from the bird.

All the other birds laughed and laughed at her. They all joined in and taunted, “Birds of a feather flock together. Even though you have feathers, you’re not like us, so you can’t be part of our flock.”

“Oh dear,” sighed the bird. She sat in her tree and worried. She wasn’t exactly sure what a flock was, but she knew the other birds laughed at her, and she knew it was because she was different. The bird said to herself, “No other birds will want to be my friends because they all think I’m strange.”

Every day the bird tried so hard to sing, but every day she just made the same clicking sound.

One day, while perched in the forest, the bird heard a new sound. It was the sound of people talking. The bird stopped and listened intently.

Then, something very strange happened. The bird discovered she could talk, too. She was able to say the same words the people in the forest were saying.

A man said, “Look at all the beautiful trees.” Then the bird also said, “Look at all the beautiful trees.” Another man asked, surprised, “Did you just hear that bird? It talked!” The bird repeated, “Did you just hear that bird? It talked!”

Now, all the people in the forest stopped to listen to the bird speak. One person would say something, and then the bird would echo what he had said. The people left, saying “What a special bird!” They heard, “What a special bird!” as they walked out of the forest. The bird had followed them.

Every day after that, people would come to the forest, and the bird would repeat what they said. Now, all the other birds looked at her differently.

“You’re our hero,” they stated. “You’re such a special bird.”

After that day in the forest, the bird had many friends. She still couldn’t sing, but she could talk. Although she was different, she and the other birds agreed that different was special. Being different felt very good. One bird said, “Being different is like being a diamond. There are many rocks, but there are not many diamonds. Sometimes you don’t see how bright a diamond is at first. Now, we see how great you are. You are our diamond.”

If you know someone who is different, remember this story. Everyone is special and everyone can do different things. Don’t judge other people. See who they are; learn what they can do. Be their friend. If you do that, you will find many special people.

Analyze Author's Techniques, including Figurative Language - Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question

1. Birds can't really talk. Why does the writer have them talk?

- a. to tell the story in an interesting way
- b. because it is funny
- c. so the people can hear them
- d. so the birds are special

3. Why does the writer include the last paragraph?

- a. to end the passage
- b. to make the idea clear
- c. to show what happens
- d. to tell how the bird felt

2. Why did the writer call this story "The Different Bird"?

- a. because it is about a bird
- b. to tell how the bird changed
- c. to tell that being different is good
- d. to help people learn about birds

4. What does it mean when one bird says the other is a diamond?

- a. to show what special means
- b. to tell how the bird is like a rock
- c. to explain what a diamond is
- d. to help the bird feel better

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Why does the writer include what the birds said as part of the story?*

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	a	c	b	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

The writer uses the birds' words to help the reader understand what the idea is.