

MEET

YASMIN

"Readers will be charmed by this one-of-a-kind character and won't tire of her small but significant dilemmas. Faruqi nails the child's perspective, and illustrator Aly gives Yasmin life."

★—KIRKUS, STARRED REVIEW!

written by
Saadia Faruqi

art by
Hatem Aly



READER'S GUIDE for Yasmin the Painter

—
TIPS FOR READING & DISCUSSING
EARLY CHAPTER BOOKS



Meet Yasmin

Yasmin Ahmad is a spirited young girl who's always on the lookout for those "a-ha" moments to help her solve life's little problems. A creative thinker and curious explorer, Yasmin and her multi-generational Pakistani family will delight and inspire readers.



About the Author

Saadia Faruqi is a Pakistani-American writer, interfaith activist, and cultural sensitivity trainer recently profiled in *O Magazine*. She is the author of the adult short story collection *Brick Walls: Tales of Hope & Courage from Pakistan*. Her essays have been published in *Huffington Post*, *Upworthy*, and *NBC Asian America*. She resides in Houston, Texas, with her husband and children.



About the Illustrator

Hatem Aly is an Egyptian-born illustrator whose work has been featured in multiple publications worldwide. He currently lives in New Brunswick, Canada, with his wife, son, and more pets than people.



TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR READING *Yasmin the Painter*

The *Yasmin* series appeals to pupils at a very exciting time in their reading lives: they have moved from picture books to early readers and chapter books. Pupils will be reading at different levels and have varying degrees of confidence. You may find that you need to change your interaction to match these variables.

- **Less Confident Readers** You may read the entire story aloud to a struggling or less confident reader or to group of readers. Ask pupils to read aloud the names of chapters as you get to each new one.
- **Confident Readers** More confident readers may want to take turns reading pages with you or other group members. You may also want to role-play different characters: one pupil can read Yasmin's dialogue, and another read the words of another character. You can read the text while pupils read the dialogue. This method works particularly well to keep pupils not only engaged, but focused on the words on the page as they seek out their "lines."
- **Above-Level Readers** If you are reading with a confident reader or reading group, allow pupils to read to you until they grow tired, then pick up where they left off. You can also invite group members to take turns reading chapters.

No matter your pupils' reading levels, when it is your turn to read, do so with expression, changing voices between characters and setting a mood with your tone, volume and intonations. The *Yasmin* series centres around a young girl excited to try new things. As such, your voice should alternate between confident and nervous to match Yasmin's moods.

It is essential to monitor pupil comprehension as you read. To make sure pupils understand what they've read before moving on, ask *who, what, why, when, where* and *how* questions about content and the literary craft. Try to sculpt most of your questions around higher-level reading strategies, such as inferring, comparing and contrasting, predicting, analysing and synthesizing. Pause to ask if pupils have questions. Teach pupil strategies to monitor comprehension, such as rereading and pausing to summarise what they've read before continuing.

Possible questions:

- *What details do you think are important?*
- *What is the main idea of the story?*
- *Can you infer a theme of this story?*
- *Why does [a character] act that way?*
- *Compare the setting in the story to our setting here.*

Engage Pupils

Encourage pupils to make predictions for the story by asking:

What new things do you hope to try? Explain that, in this book, the main character explores a fun passion that could lead to a future career. Help pupils make connections between their own lives and Yasmin's.



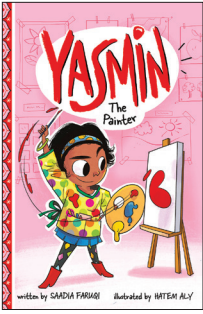
BEFORE READING

- **Allow pupils to preview the book.** Begin with the cover. Read aloud the title and the names of the author and illustrator. Allow pupils to look at the art. Ask: *What do you think this book is going to be about?* After pupils have provided their predictions, ask: *What evidence did you use to make that prediction?* Point out that their predictions were based on clues in the art and other elements found right on the cover. Explain that they will be meeting a girl named Yasmin and sharing some adventures with her.
- **Discuss how different cultures enrich a community.** Get pupils thinking about the importance of learning about various cultures and sharing elements of their own. Ask if any pupils in your class have moved here from another country or have family members that have done so. Invite them to share cultural traditions that they enjoy, such as holidays, meals, music, and stories such as folktales and fairy tales. Using their examples, emphasise how people from different cultures enrich a community, school, and country.
- **Use a map or globe.** Point out that the author is Pakistani-American, which means the author moved to the United States from Pakistan. Pupils may not be aware of where Pakistan or the United States are located. On a map or globe, point out their location.
- **Analyse art.** Now instruct pupils to study the art. Draw pupils' attention to the clothes hanging up. Ask for volunteers who may know what a *sari* or *kameez* is. If no one does, explain that a *sari* is a long, loose dress, usually made of silk. A *kameez* is a long, loose-fitting shirt worn by both men and women. Both styles originated in the Indian subcontinent and the middle east. If time permits, explain that the *shalwar kameez* consists of a long shirt (*kameez*) and baggy pants (*shalwar*). It is the national dress of Pakistan! Guide pupils to consider that their "normal" school clothes may not be considered "normal" in another country. Use this to jump into a thoughtful discussion about how "normal" or "other" is relative to what we are used to.
- **Make predictions.** Challenge pupils: *Looking at the drawing, make a prediction about Yasmin—what words do you think can describe her personality? What clues in the art did you use to make those inferences?* Guide pupils to notice her playful and confident pose, as well as the bright colours she wears.
- **Preview the text and art.** Open the book and allow pupils a few minutes to do so. If possible, take note which pages and illustrations they find most interesting, so you can focus on those later.
- **Analyse text features.** Ask pupils to volunteer text features they see: a Table of Contents, chapter titles, and so on. Explain that these features help to structure and organise a book. Titles allow for a "sneak peek" about what the pupils will read, as do chapter titles. Chapters also allow for a natural stopping point. (Note: Don't feel locked in to a chapter-by-chapter reading format. If you notice pupils becoming restless, choose an earlier stopping point and engage in one of the hands-on, related activities provided later in this guide.)
- See the *Connecting Literacy and Content* section on each title for tips, activities and extended learning opportunities to explore while reading. Take special note of cross-curricular connections to standards that cover PSHE and art, with extensions for maths and science.

Introduce the Content

Preview Yasmin the Painter

Tell pupils that they are going to read a book about a young girl named Yasmin. She is spunky, fun and likes to try new things—even if they scare her. Say: *You may find that Yasmin is a lot like you, but also very different.* Have pupils partner and look through the book's illustrations. Give pupils time to discuss differences and similarities they see between themselves and Yasmin.



CONNECTING LITERACY AND CONTENT

Yasmin the Painter

Reading Age: 6 - 8

Literature

Content: A schoolgirl wants to win an art contest.

CONNECT TO LITERATURE

Build Content Background

Engage Pupils

Connect to the Arts Engage pupils in activities and discussions involving their own art, and art made by celebrated artists.

- To make a home-school connection, invite pupils to bring in a piece of art they've made that they like and are proud of. As time permits, allow each pupil to discuss their artwork: how they made it, what it is, and what they like best about it.
- Before pupils arrive, hang photos of famous artworks around the classroom and invite pupils to examine the art. Make sure to include art specific to different periods and cultures (for example, Japanese screen painting, Mexican tin art, African masks, Byzantine mosaics). Challenge pupils to identify the different media and art forms. Guide pupils to realise that all cultures have contributed to the art world throughout time.
- Have pupils choose a favourite and describe its subject matter as well as they can. Introduce them to the idea of reflecting on art and analysing it: *Do you think the artist had a message? What was he or she trying to express or say?*
- Show pupils examples of different art forms: realistic, abstract, etc. Ask: *Why do you think people make art?* (Answers will vary; make sure to tell pupils that often artists have a message to express, whether it be personal or societal).
- Speak to pupils in a language they love: technology! Before class, preview different instructional art videos that make painting/drawing look easy. Share them with pupils, pointing out elements or explaining elements of art that are mentioned, such as line, texture, colour, space and shape. Afterwards, ask pupils whether the video made the art look easy, and if they think it is as easy as it looks.
- Tell pupils to begin thinking of a painting they would like to make: what style would it be? What subject? Would it have a message? Inform them that after reading, they will be creating their own works of art.

Discuss Text Features

Return to the Table of Contents and tell pupils: *Now we are going to read "Yasmin the Painter." On what page does it start?* (page 5) Let's turn to that page, now. Once at the story, have pupils page through it and study the illustrations. Ask them to make predictions based on the illustrations alone: *What emotions will Yasmin feel during this story? Does it have a happy ending for her? Predict what plot events might happen.*

WHILE READING

- **Analyse text features.** Point out that the title of the first chapter, "The Announcement," is explained on the first page. Remind pupils that these text features are clues; the announcement must be an important part of the story.
- **Connect text to self.** Help pupils relate to the story by asking: *What do you have trouble drawing? What are you good at drawing? How does Yasmin feel about the contest? (worried) How would you feel?*
- **Interpret figurative language.** On page 9, the author writes, "Yasmin wrinkled her nose" before saying thank you to her father. Pupils might not understand this figurative phrase.
 - o Remind them that figurative language is a device authors use to express an idea or let the reader form a mental picture more clearly.
 - o Demonstrate the meaning of this phrase, and then ask: *What idea was the author trying to express with this phrase?* (That Yasmin was disappointed with the gift).
 - o Continue using figurative language as a segue to making inferences: *Yasmin wasn't happy with Baba's gift, but she said "thank you" anyway. What does that detail tell you about Yasmin?* (that she is polite, she is kind).
- **Develop social-emotional skills.** Help build empathy and suspense. Say: *If I was already nervous about a contest, and then my dad came home with everything I needed to make my entry...I'm not sure how I'd feel. I might feel even more pressure to win. Do you think the gift made Yasmin feel even more anxious, or a little less worried now that she has all the tools she needs? How would you feel?*

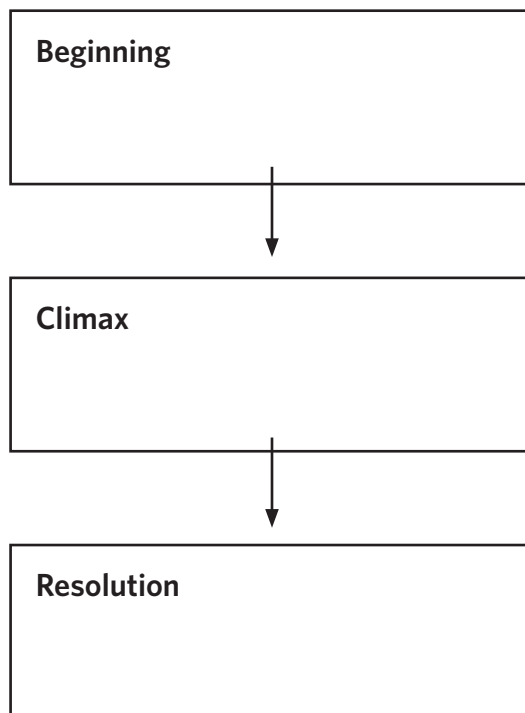
- **Analyse characters.** Pause when you finish reading page 11. Remind pupils of their own video-watching experience, so that they can more deeply understand the main character's feelings.
- **Study artist's craft.** Have pupils study the art on pages 14-15. Ask: *Why do you think the artist included these, instead of just telling the readers that Yasmin wasn't happy with her trees and flowers, and that she made a mess?* (It shows readers better what Yasmin was creating).
- **Recognise patterns.** Use this opportunity to call attention to another element of art: patterns. Ask pupils if they notice any patterns on the page (Yasmin's comforter, the rug). Have volunteers describe the repetition in the patterns. Challenge pupils, as their day goes on, to keep a list of repetition in the classroom or in nature that they notice. When they share their lists, guide them to see the connection between nature and art.
- **Monitor comprehension.** Ask pupils: *What happened when Yasmin stomped her foot?* (She made a mess.) *How did that accident turn into a good thing?* (It gave her an idea).
- **Identify elements of plot/interpret figurative language.** Chapter 3 marks the beginning of the climax: the art competition! Draw pupils' attention to the sentence, "Yasmin had a strange feeling in her tummy, like a hundred fizzy drink bubbles."
 - o Remind pupils that this is an example of figurative language. Explain similes, or comparisons using the words like or as.
 - o Invite pupils to interpret the sentence. Ask: *What is being compared?* (Yasmin's belly with fizzy drink).
 - o *What is the author trying to say?* (Yasmin's belly feels weird because she is nervous).
 Challenge pupils to come up with their own figurative sentences to express the same idea. Pupils can model their sentence after the one in the story.
- **Summarise plot.** Help pupils summarise to clarify their understanding of the story.
 - o Instruct them to study Yasmin's facial expressions on each page of the chapter, and compare them to the expression of those around her.
 - o Have them explain how and why her feelings change, using transition words to show chronology (first, next, then, finally, etc.).
 - o You can provide sentence frames to help them compare: *While Yasmin feels ____ on this page because _____, everyone around her seems ____ because _____.*
- **Participate in collaborative discussion.** Open a discussion of what art is, and how it can be judged. Tell pupils that, *Art is subjective. That means every person looking at it can have a different opinion about it.* Invite pupils to study the submissions pictured on pages 20-21. Ask which they like best. Have them repeat the process, discussing the works of art you previously hung up. Allow pupils time to express their thoughts and feelings, encouraging them to build on the ideas of others. Guide them to realise that art is a difficult thing to judge; what is art to one person may not be at all to another.

Extend the Learning

- **Below-Level:** Have pupils create an art project based on repetition. Show images of patterns that occur in nature (spiral shells, honeycombs, symmetrical butterfly wings, spider webs and snowflakes are just a few). Compare these to patterns made by people (brickwork, tiles, fences, knitted patterns, architecture, etc.). Pupils can draw inspiration from these, or create a pattern using geometric shapes, lines, space and images. Pupils can explain and discuss their decisions as a class afterward.
- **On-Level:** Tell pupils that your class will be having an art contest, too! Have pupils make their own works of art at home during the week. Tell pupils not to write their names on it. Once pupils turn in their creations, keep them out of view until the contest, so that the judging is done entirely on merit. Keep in mind that some pupils may not have art supplies at home. You may wish to allow them to borrow some school supplies for the assignment.
- **Above-Level:** Choose one of the instructional videos you showed earlier. Make sure it uses simple resources such as papers and pencil etc. and is kid-friendly. Allow pupils to follow along, and compare the outcomes. Explain that each artist's interpretation of a subject is different.
- **Above-Level:** Allow pupils to research an artist from their own culture or a culture different from their own, or one of the artists of the paintings you hung up earlier. Encourage them to make a multi-media presentation of their findings. Pupils should work on their own. Before pupils begin, collaborate on a list of details their reports should include, such as name, when they lived, where they were from, and include images of any famous paintings. Encourage pupils to delve further by finding out what qualities in the painting make the artist universally appreciated. This may also work as a project done over time for all pupils.

AFTER READING

- Allow time for questions and answers pupils may have about each text.
- Assess pupil understanding by having them summarise each story. Explain: *A summary is a retelling of the most important parts of a story. Summaries don't include every detail—just the details necessary to make sense of the story. A summary tells the story in the same order of events.* Draw a story map on the board like the one below.



- Model summarising for the story: *I'm going to separate the story into three parts: the beginning, the climax (or most exciting part) and the resolution-the ending.* Model rereading the beginning before writing in the text box. Talk out deciding which details are important or not as you continue, before filling in the other boxes. Pupils can then share their work with the class.
- Bring to the forefront the ways in which someone can be different and still be like everyone else. Draw a Venn diagram on the board. On one circle, write "Yasmin" and over the other "me." Encourage pupils to look through the story for differences, which will appear in each of the outer circles. All the many things they have in common should take center place between the circles. If pupils have difficulty, point out possible similarities: she goes to school; projects make her nervous, etc.
- Turn to the activities in the back of the book.
 - o Allow pupils time to discuss the *Think About It, Talk About It*. Act as a facilitator, circulating and taking note of pupils who aren't as willing to participate. You may wish to place quieter pupils in pairs or smaller groups to elicit sharing. You may also share your own thoughts if discussion seems to stall.
 - o When pupils read the *Learn Urdu with Yasmin!* page, make a fun activity that will also help pupils practice using context clues. Challenge pupils to sit in pairs, and to say to each other sentences using one of the Urdu words while their partner sits without looking at the book. Challenge the partner to guess or remember what each word means. Remind pupils to include context clues to help their partner. For example, "I love my baba," doesn't really include clues. However, "My baba has a beard and is very tall," provides a few more clues.
 - o Pupils can try the fun and practical projects in class or for homework.
- Ensure pupils have access to books on any topics that interested them: careers in exploring, art, architecture, or design, for example. Find titles at the library about the daily life of a child in Pakistan or another country other than theirs. Allow pupils to read the books during independent reading time. Encourage them to write notes connecting their own lives to those of children in different countries.

RESPOND BY WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING

RESPOND BY WRITING

- Recall what a *simile* is, and name an example already discussed. As a class, have pupils search for other similes and make a list on the board. Then, have pupils write their own simile, describing a season using a simile. (Scribe for younger children).
- Assign pupils a paragraph or drawing that describes a time they turned an accident into a good thing. Have pupils try to use at least one simile, and words that might set a mood for their piece. The text should be organised in chronological order as this one was; remind pupils of the transition words they used when describing the events in a text: *first, next, then, etc.* Inform pupils that they'll be sharing their narrative with a partner. Help pupils revise and edit for grammar and spelling, correcting any errors they notice.
- Assign pupils the job of writing a short expository piece describing a contribution a person from another nationality has made to society. They may choose their own focus, in terms of nationality and contribution. Before pupils begin, review with them the types of sources they should be using to ensure reliability and validity. Encourage pupils to write creatively, using descriptive words. Have them check their pieces for correct punctuation, spelling and capitalisation.
- Ask pupils to consider which story they liked the best. Have them write an opinion essay explaining their claim. Make sure they provide "evidence" from the text to make their claim convincing. You may need to teach pupils what their claim is: a sentence that states their opinion. Also make sure they understand that evidence will be the information they use to convince others that their opinion is the right one.

RESPOND BY SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Have pupils act out the story. Pupils must work together to choose roles.
- If it's more feasible, apply any of the writing topics as a speaking and listening topic. For example, have pupils relate a story about a time they turned an accident into a good thing. When relating personal stories, encourage them to use descriptive language so the listener can better picture the story.
- If pupils have read multiple *Yasmin* stories, consider the different career paths she explores and ask *Which career would be the most enjoyable?* from the stories you have read. Have pupils consider the question until they have decided on an answer. Tell pupils to come up with three reasons to support their decision. Then, pair pupils and have them argue that their opinion is the correct one. Tell pupils to use text evidence from the book, as well the other three reasons they listed. Encourage pupils to debate and try to come to an agreement. Remind pupils to listen to their partners respectfully, and to present their own ideas in a respectful manner.
- Have pupils imagine the conversations that occurred between the author, Saadia Faruqi and the illustrator, Hatem Aly as they worked together to make the book. Choose pupils to play the role of news reporter, Saadia and Hatem. Supply the reporter with an initial list of interview questions for them on the process of making the book. Instruct pupils to listen carefully and take notes of any questions that may arise. After the interview is done, the reporter should allow pupils to ask their questions. Model asking a question first, doing so respectfully. Have pupils note that you're speaking loudly and clearly, using words that the audience understands. Pupils should do the same.
- Give pupils a homework: to write five interview questions they might ask someone who moved to their town from another country. Facilitate a class collaboration to whittle all questions to a list of just 10 that would be appropriate and informative to ask. For example, pupils may ask how traditions were handed down to them, whether they feel these traditions are still being carried on or forgotten. You may wish to allow pupils to practice good listening skills by conducting mock interviews with each other.
- If possible, have an older adult who immigrated come to the classroom. Ask them the top 10 questions pupils picked.