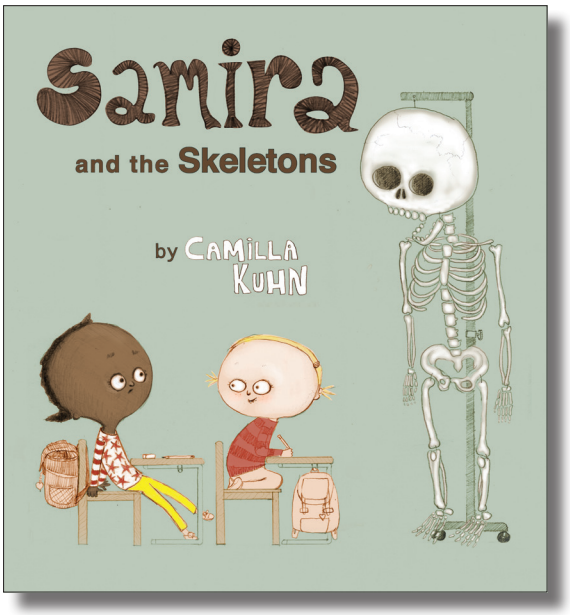
Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Grand Rapids/Cambridge
An imprint of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Educator's Guide
Includes Common Core State Standards Correlations

Samira and the Skeletons

Written and illustrated by **Camilla Kuhn**



Samira likes school, especially when she gets to sit next to her best friend, Frida. But when they learn about the skeletal system in science class, Samira suddenly begins to imagine everyone in school as a walking skeleton. Soon she starts avoiding her fellow classmates, even Frida, but Samira still can't escape her own skeleton. With some clever help from her mother, though, Samira realizes that maybe having a body full of bones isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Enhanced by delightfully impish illustrations, Camilla Kuhn's playful book depicts the hilarious results of an imagination gone awry.

About *the Author and Illustrator*

Camilla Kuhn is a Norwegian author and illustrator of children's books. She has a degree in graphic design from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design in London and currently lives in Oslo with her husband, two children, two dogs, a cat, two guinea pigs, a tortoise, some fish, and seven walking stick insects.

Praise for *Samira and the Skeletons*

★ "This Norwegian import is icky and unsettling even while being a guffaw-inducing exploration of the human body, complete with comically exaggerated anatomical drawings of what lurks beneath our skin. Beyond the guaranteed giggles, Kuhn adds a subtle teaching moment: by presenting Samira with dark skin and her best friend with lighter skin, and then showing both of their skeletons (and later, somewhat horrifyingly, muscles), Kuhn highlights how much we are the same underneath."

— *Booklist* (starred review)

"Tenderhearted kids may be freaked out by the book's moderately disturbing images, but scientifically curious ones (and those with a mischievous streak) should appreciate Kuhn's directness."

— *Publishers Weekly*

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-8028-5463-6 ▪ $16.00
8¼" x 8⅞" ▪ 34 pages ▪ Ages 5–8
Contact Eerdmans for rights information

To Order

Telephone (toll free): 800-253-7521

Telephone (local): 616-459-4591

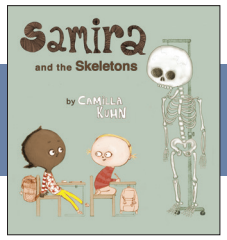
Fax: 616-459-6540

Email: sales@eerdmans.com

If you have any suggestions for using *Samira and the Skeletons* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
2140 Oak Industrial Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505

Discussion guide written by Ed Spicer



Educator's Guide

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- Science
- Human Body
- Friendship
- Discovery

PRE-READING IDEAS

Show students pictures of worms, slugs, and jellyfish. What do these creatures have in common? Then show pictures of turtles, tortoises, snails, and other animals with shells. Finally, show pictures of mammals. What does each group have in common? What distinguishes them from each other? How are humans different from the creatures in the first two groups? Why don't we have shells? Have students research and explain the differences between invertebrates and vertebrates.

Many students may have recently lost teeth or will lose teeth very soon. Have students draw pictures of missing teeth that includes an explanation of just exactly what a tooth is. Since teeth are not bones and not a part of a person's skeleton, ask your students to explain the difference between a tooth and a bone. Ask them to explain what bones are too. This pre-reading activity should be returned to after reading the text.

Invite students to share information about skeletons. This may involve listening to stories about Halloween costumes, being afraid, ghosts (and other monsters). Have students draw pictures of skeletons and finish a prompt such as: *Skeletons make me feel…*

We have many phrases in English that relate to skeletons and teeth: *spine tingling*, *bone dry*, *feel it in my bones*, *bone of contention*, *chilled to the bone*, *bare bones*, *by the skin of my teeth*, *skin and bones*, *bare bones*, *through gritted teeth,* and others. Pick some of these to have students illustrate and write definitions for. Do this without explaining the meanings. Ask students why they think we have so many phrases related to skeletons. Why do bones seem so important when we rarely see or think about them?

Have students try to guess how many bones they have in their hands, their head, and their whole body. If your students are like many young students, they may guess ten bones for their hands, one bone for their head, and (thinking it is a lot) a hundred bones for their whole body.

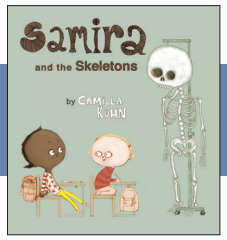
After collecting predictions for how many bones we have in various parts of our bodies, read with your students from Steve Jenkins's book, *Bones: Skeletons and How They Work* (Scholastic, 978-0-545-04651-0) or something similar.

ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Students deserve time to react to the story, and it should be perfectly fine for them to love the story, despise the story, and everything in between. Regardless of the reaction, however, students should be able to point to something in the text that sparked the reaction. Many students may try to be ambivalent about a text because they may believe that this exempts them from the need to respond. Make sure your students understand that all reactions require an explanation.

Pair students and have them tally the bones in a partner's hand or foot. Then have them count the bones in a poster or online view of the bones in a human hand or foot. Then have students compare human skeletons to other creatures that have similar or very different skeletons. For example, comparing human necks with giraffe necks is interesting, especially if you ask the class to predict the number of bones in each neck.

In the book, both the teacher and the mother make the common mistake of referring to teeth as bones. What is it about teeth and bones that causes them to make this mistake? Have students make a poster explaining how teeth are similar and how teeth are different. If your school has a librarian, turn this into a research project. If not, maybe your public librarian could help.



Educator's Guide

Ask students to imagine that they are the Tooth Fairy, and instead of a bunch of teeth, they receive a human skeleton. Would they be happy? Would they give money for a skeleton and no teeth? Then have students pretend that instead of a skeleton, they get a complete set of a six- or seven-year-old's teeth. If their rate is twenty-five cents per tooth, how much would the full set of teeth cost?

Invite a dentist to come to your class and explain the difference between teeth and bones, as well as share why good dental health is as important as taking care of your bones.

When Samira asks her mother to remove her skeleton, her mother agrees to help her. She gathers shears, a bucket, a cheese grater, a rolling pin, a plunger, and bandages. She puts Samira up on the table, puts on gloves, grabs the shears, and asks Samira if she should begin with the head or the feet. Is the mom serious? Have students write their answers and explain their thinking.

The illustrations depict a boneless Samira and an octopus, slug, starfish, worm, jellyfish, etc. Have students act out losing their bones. What would they miss most if they didn't have a skeleton?

When Samira finds out that she and Frida both have skeletons, she does not want to do anything with Frida. Ask students to draw or write about how Frida is feeling. Have them consider what would happen if Frida was telling this story. How would the words and art change?

At the end of the story, Samira and Frida (and their skeletons) are playing happily together. Then they go to school and the teacher is ready to talk about muscles! Ask students what they think will happen next. Have them act out this new story.

Each human body part has a certain number of bones. Find the number of bones in each area. Use a number grid or other math tools to keep track of the bone total so far. Students may discover that the number of bones in a child's body (maybe 270) is actually different from the number of bones in an adult's body (206). Compare what your students find to the skeleton shown on the cover to show how many bones the teacher's skeleton is missing.

Body Area	How many bones?	How many bones altogether so far?	How many bones are shown on the teacher's skeleton?
Head	29	29	3 or 4 maybe
Neck			
Upper Torso/ Chest (Including shoulders)			
Arms (including hands)			
Pelvis			
Legs (including feet)			
Total	**206**	**206**	

Common Core Curriculium Standards

This guide is aligned with the Common Core Curriculum standards. Educators can easily find grade specific standards at www.corestandards.org, which is where the following standards are found.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.5
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.6
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.7
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.8
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.10