



# WILMA UNLIMITED

AUTHOR: KATHLEEN KRULL

ILLUSTRATOR: DAVID DIAZ

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Wilma Unlimited](#)

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

This true story tells about Wilma Rudolph whose left leg was paralyzed by polio when she was five years old. Although she was told she would never walk, she did not believe it. She became a runner and she became the first American woman to earn three gold medals in a single Olympics.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathleen Krull, born in 1952, grew up in Illinois. When she was fifteen, she was fired from her part-time job at the library in Wilmette, Illinois for reading too much. After college she was a children's book editor, but began writing children's books full time in 1984. She is well known for her innovative, award-winning nonfiction for young readers, which includes the successful *Lives of...* series. Kathleen Krull lives in San Diego, CA. ([www.kathleenkrull.com](http://www.kathleenkrull.com))

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

David Díaz born in 1960 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida is an American illustrator of children's books. He graduated from [The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale](#). He won the 1995 Caldecott Medal for U.S. picture book illustration recognizing *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting.

**Awards:** Caldecott Medal, Jane Addams Children's Book Awards for Picture Book. He lives in Carlsbad, California.

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

*Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:*

- Introduce the author and illustrator. Note that they both live in San Diego.
- I wonder what this book is going to be about.
- I wonder what the person on the cover is doing.
- What do you think the white line in the middle of the cover signifies?

### DURING THE STORY

*Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:*

- (p.1) Do you know how much you weighed at birth? Why wasn't Wilma expected to have a first birthday?
- (p.6) What do you think paralyzed means?

## WILMA UNLIMITED

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Defying the odds
- Determination
- Physical disabilities
- Discrimination

### *Tips for every book!*

### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

### DIGGING DEEPER:

*"Tell me more, why do you think that?"*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"Why do you think they feel like that?"*

*"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"*

- (p.11) Can you imagine what Wilma was thinking while she watched her classmates play ball?
- (p.17,18) When they saw Wilma walking down the aisle, how did the people express what they felt? What words were going through their minds?
- (p.29) What do you think is meant by “the power of concentration”?

## AFTER READING

*Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:*

- What can we learn from this story?
- Are people with disabilities any different than you? In ways we are all different, but that doesn't mean we should be treated any differently.
- Why do you think the author chose Wilma Rudolph as a subject?
- What does it mean to defy the odds?
- How did you feel after reading the story? Why?

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Have you ever tried something difficult and succeeded, or is there something that you would like to try that seems difficult? Share with the person sitting next to you and then share with the group.

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Have each child pick a partner. Make sure at least one is wearing tennis shoes.
- Have the child work on the partner's shoe. Untie one shoe and try to retie it with one hand. Have them choose a word that best describes the frustrations they faced, share with the class.

## SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

### 1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- What is the power of concentration?
- Wilma Rudolph became a second-grade teacher after she retired from running. What qualities did she have that would help her to be a teacher?
- If you became a famous person, what would you like to be famous for?
- If you were sick and missed school for a long time, what would you miss?

#### **Suggested Optional Activity:**

- Give the children a paper and a pencil (or a template of a medal) and ask them to think of something of which they are proud. They can draw medals. This activity can be extended with crayons, ribbons and cardboard if desired.

### 2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Have students write a biography about themselves. This can either be done based on their current age, or, they could imagine they were 30 years old and ask them to write about what they will have accomplished by then. Start them off with the phrase: “I am *NAME*, and I am 30 years old. I am famous for *xyz* but I had to work hard to get here...

### 3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Wilma was hugely hindered due to being paralyzed by polio, but this was never going to stop her. Go outside with the children and get them to play catch with only the hand they do not use to write with. You can extend this game by getting them to stand on one leg, close one eye, etc.

## COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1,3.2,3.4,3.6,3.7