



ON A BEAM OF LIGHT

AUTHOR: JENNIFER BERNE

ILLUSTRATOR: VALADIMIR RADUNSKY

See a video of the book read aloud here: [On a Beam of Light](#)

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

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

A boy rides a bicycle down a dusty road. But in his mind, he envisions himself traveling at a speed beyond imagining, on a beam of light. This brilliant mind will one day offer up some of the most revolutionary ideas ever conceived. From a boy endlessly fascinated by the wonders around him, Albert Einstein ultimately grows into a man of genius recognized the world over for profoundly illuminating our understanding of the universe. Jennifer Berne and Vladimir Radunsky invite the reader to travel along with Einstein on a journey full of curiosity, laughter, and scientific discovery. Parents and children alike will appreciate this moving story of the powerful difference imagination can make in any life.

(<https://www.amazon.com/Beam-Light-Story-Albert-Einstein/dp/145215211X>)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Berne is the award-winning author of *Manfish: The Story of Jacques Cousteau* and *Calvin Can't Fly: The Story of Bookworm Birdie*. Jennifer grew up in New York City where she was active in dance and theater as a child. She studied art and design, and worked for Andy Warhol at "The Factory." After a successful career in advertising, Jennifer began writing for NICK JR. MAGAZINE and writing books about the subjects she loves most—our amazing universe and the people who discover its secrets. She lives in a house she designed in the rolling hills of Columbia County, NY. She and her husband spend their summers aboard their sailboat, cruising the coast of Maine.

(<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2013/05/31/5-questions-with-jennifer-berne-on-a-beam-of-light>)

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Vladimir Radunsky has published more than thirty books for children. Many of them were translated and published in France, the U.K., Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Japan. The books received numerous awards in the United States and in Europe, among them the New York Times Book Review Best Illustrated Book of the Year, and have been on the New York Times bestseller list. His most recent book, in collaboration with Jennifer Berne, *On a Beam of Light, A Story of Albert Einstein*, received six starred reviews and was picked by Kirkus Reviews as the Best Book of 2013. Original art from the books has been exhibited in France, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, Japan, and the United States. (<http://www.nybooks.com/contributors/vladimir-radunsky/>)

ON A BEAM OF LIGHT

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Individuality
- Curiosity
- Imagination

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?"

BEFORE READING

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

- The author, Jennifer Berne, wrote another book we read.
- I notice that she writes many of the same genre (kind) of books. Can you think of a reason why?
- Have you ever heard of Albert Einstein? Do you think this is what he really looked like?
- The cover picture shows the artist's interpretation of Einstein's look. (If possible, show children an image of Albert Einstein.)

DURING THE STORY

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

- (p.1) I noticed the text is written in both black and red. What do you think the red signifies?
- (p.3) Is there a reason Albert is not talking at age 3?
- (p.6). How did the author let us know the meaning of curious?
- (p.7) The thought bubbles express what the parents are thinking.
- (p.8) Do you think Albert's father's present was a good idea?
- (p.9) I wonder why the author used the word *questions* 4 times on this page.
- (p.15) How did the illustrator show us that Albert was interested in many subjects?
- (Pp.16 ,17) Is there a reason some of the numbers have lines drawn through them.
- (p.18) I wonder why the illustrator used a thought bubble.
- (p.22) Is this a speech bubble or a thought bubble?
- (p.23) What are the little dots meant to signify?
- (p.25) The author said that Albert saw time and place. What does that mean?
- (p.26) Why did scientists and professor want to work with Albert?
- (p.32) Do you think Albert forgot about science when he was playing his violin?
- (p.45) Is there a reason the illustrator drew one red question mark and many black ones?

AFTER READING

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

- Why do you think Words Alive chose this book to read to you?
- If you were asked who Albert Einstein was, what would you answer?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Some school are names after Albert Einstein, why do you think that would be?
- Do you know how old you were when you began to talk?

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Pretend you are invited to a costume party and you want to dress as Albert Einstein. With a partner, decide how you would create the costume. What would you need?

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- What was the reason Albert's father brought him the compass?
- Was the teacher correct in saying Albert was a disruption?
- Although he was smart, did Albert have to do other things to find the answers to his questions?
- Would Albert have been a good teacher for children of your age?
- Do you think *On a Beam of Light* is a good book title?
- Could you think of another name for this book?

- If Albert were your classmate, how would you treat him?
- Do you have a preference for fiction or nonfiction? Why?

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Draw a picture of yourself with as much detail for me to identify you. Draw a thought bubble and write what you are thinking.
- Then, draw a picture of Albert Einstein and write a speech bubble with something he might have said.

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

Albert Einstein traveled to many places and received many awards. There were even stamps made with his image. Write a thank you letter from Albert Einstein for an award he received. Mention the award and tell how he feels.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

A caricature is a picture of a person or thing in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic effect. There are many caricatures of Albert Einstein because of his wild hair and big mustache. Draw a caricature of a person you know or a famous person. This could be a color hair or a facial characteristic like big eyes etc.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy .RL 3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4, 3.5