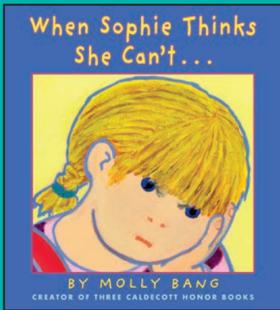


When Sophie Thinks She Can't . . .

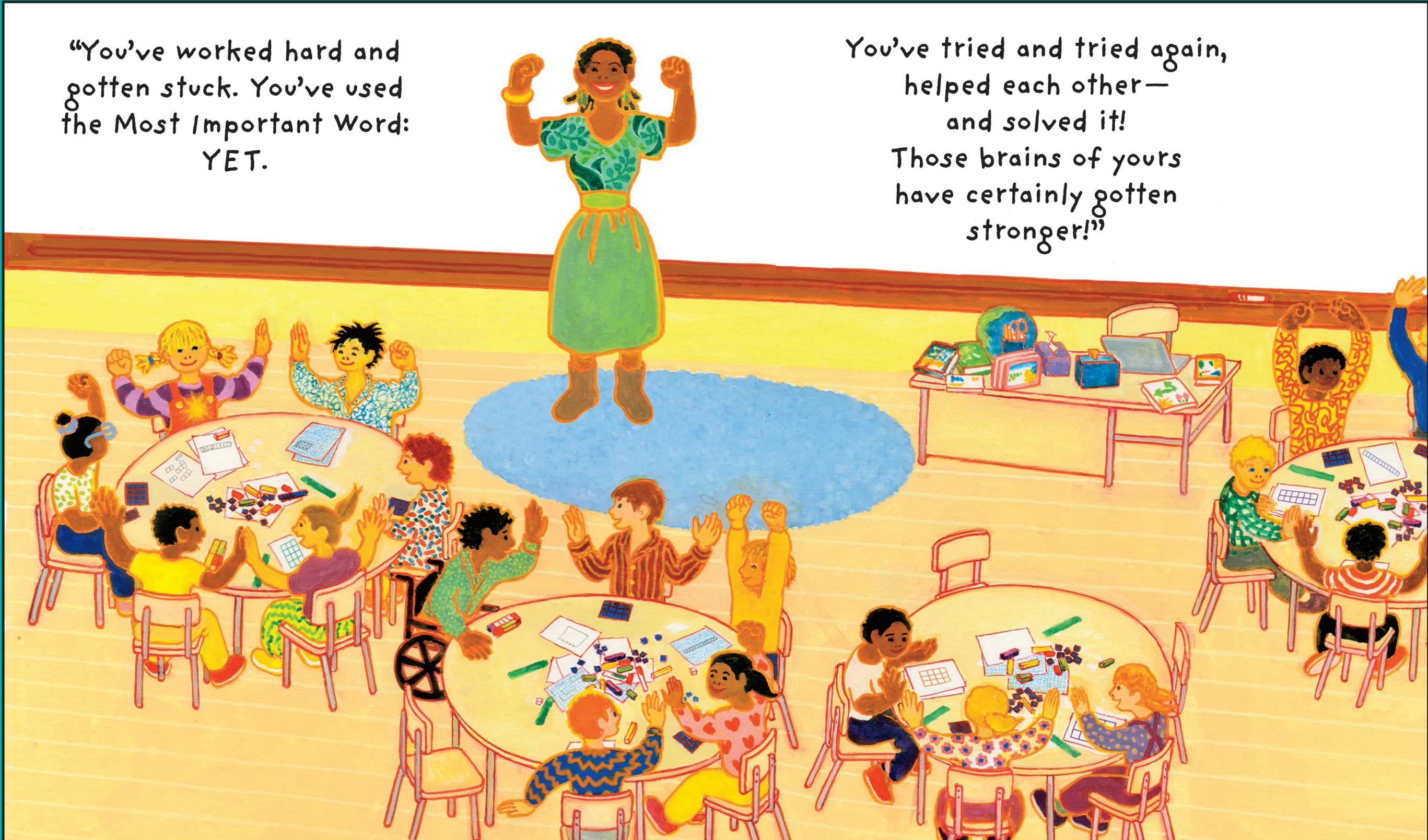
By Molly Bang



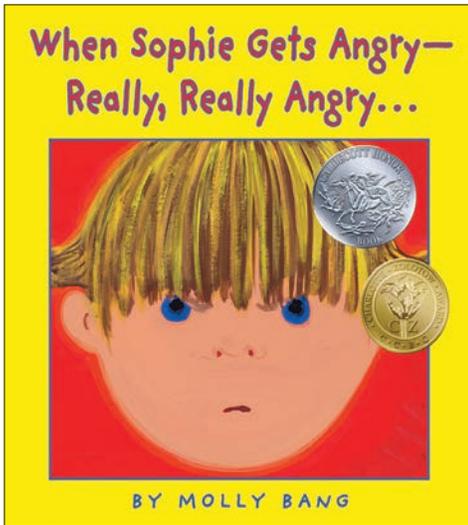
“You’ve worked hard and gotten stuck. You’ve used the Most Important Word: **YET.**”



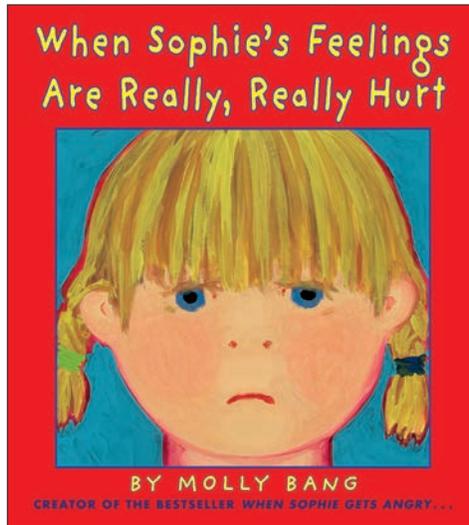
You’ve tried and tried again, helped each other— and solved it! Those brains of yours have certainly gotten stronger!”



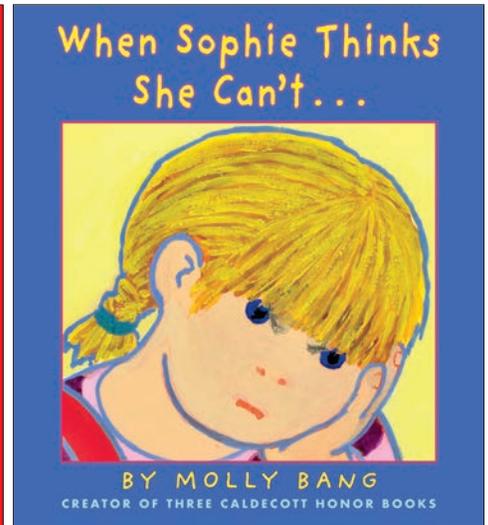
THE SOPHIE BOOKS BY MOLLY BANG



HC: 978-0-590-18979-8 • \$17.99
PB: 978-0-439-59845-3 • \$6.99
EBK: 978-1-338-08844-1 • \$3.99



HC: 978-0-545-78831-1 • \$17.99
EBK: 978-0-545-80149-2 • \$10.99



HC: 978-1-338-15298-2 • \$17.99
EBK: 978-1-338-25727-4 • \$10.99

Each of the books deals with a specific emotion: feeling angry, feeling misunderstood and hurt, and feeling incompetent. Each story describes the development and resolution of those feelings. In each book Sophie learns strategies that enable her to cope with challenging emotions. The art reflects the changes in Sophie's feelings and those of her friends and/or family.



ABOUT MOLLY BANG

Molly Bang has written and illustrated more than twenty books for young readers, including *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry . . .*; *Ten, Nine, Eight*; and *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher*, each of which were Caldecott Honor books. With Penny Chisholm, Molly Bang wrote and illustrated the Sunlight Series books, including *Rivers of Sunlight*. Bang divides her time between Falmouth, Massachusetts, and Northern California.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE SOPHIE BOOKS

Discussion Questions:

The following questions are not intended to limit those that teachers might have. Instead they are a guide that will help to develop students' visual literacy and analytical thinking.

- What is happening in this picture?*
- What do you see that makes you say so?*
- What more can you find?*

What connections do you make between the feelings and the colors and shapes in the pictures?

Concepts and vocabulary to discuss and teach: strategies, emotion, cope, shapes, color, outlines

*The first three questions are from *Visual Thinking Strategies* by Philip Yenawine, the former head of education at the Museum of Modern Art.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR WHEN SOPHIE GETS ANGRY—REALLY, REALLY ANGRY...

This book describes one reason a child gets angry and one possible way of dealing with her feelings. Use the following activities and discussion prompts with your students with this book.

Before reading:

What makes you angry?
How do you cope with your anger?

When looking at the two pages with Sophie, her sister, and the gorilla:

Why does Sophie get angry?
How do the pictures show the sisters' emotions?
Do you think their mom is being fair?

When looking at the first several pages with painted words:

How does the artist show Sophie's feelings in the painted words?

Activity:

Have the students generate a list of "feeling" words, e.g., *worried*, *frustrated*, *surprised*, *scared*, *nervous*, *peaceful*. Write them on chart paper or the board. Have each student choose a feeling-word they want to express. Then have each student select two colors of magic marker or crayon that—to the student—best represent that feeling. Have them use the entire sheet of paper to illustrate their chosen feeling-word. Put the pictures on the floor and have students choose several picture-words they think work really well, and say why. Then have students return to their seats and either make their picture-words stronger or choose another word to illustrate. Again spread them on the floor and have the students describe how different ones have gotten stronger and clearer.

When looking at the picture of Sophie in the tree looking out over the ocean:

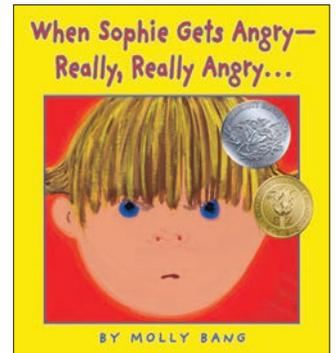
The color red is almost missing from this picture. Why do you think the artist did this?

General questions and activities:

How does the cat reflect the humans' actions and feelings? How might the artist have made the cat's responses even stronger? Look only at the outline around Sophie. How does this outline change throughout the book and how do these changes show her feelings?

Activity:

Show students various pictures from advertisements, comics, or other illustrations that use outlines to show different feelings. Then have the students draw a person, animal, or tree with an outline that shows a specific feeling. Spread the pictures on the floor and see if the other students can guess the feeling intended and describe the outline (e.g., jagged, smooth, droopy, drippy, wiggly) that gives them that feeling. Have the students return to their seats and change the pictures to make them even stronger and clearer. Then spread the pictures on the floor again and notice the changes. Ask students if the pictures have become stronger and clearer.



QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR WHEN SOPHIE'S FEELINGS ARE REALLY, REALLY HURT

This book has two main themes: how art represents and evokes feelings and how to discuss with care and support our different ways of seeing and responding to our world. Use the following discussion prompts with your students with this book.

After reading through to the page that shows Sophie's painting of the tree:

If you just saw her picture, with no knowledge of what Sophie was trying to do, what would you say about her tree picture?
How does Sophie feel about her tree? What makes you say so? In what specific ways has she used color to show her feelings?
How does her tree look different from a "real" tree?

When looking at the next page with Alex and the students laughing at Sophie:

How does the artist show the emotional situation in this picture? Think about the directions the students are facing and their locations on the page.

When looking at the page with Sophie alone and hurt:

If you were Sophie's close friend or her teacher, what might you say to support her?

When looking at the next three pages:

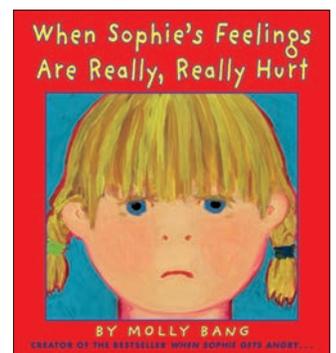
How does Ms. Mulry support Sophie without making Alex "wrong" or "bad"?

When looking at the page with two students' paintings:

How are the children's two pictures different? How do the two trees make you feel, and how does each student-artist do this?

When looking at the last page:

Why do you think the artist ends the book with this picture?



QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR WHEN SOPHIE THINKS SHE CAN'T...

This book is more complicated than the previous two because it introduces a powerful and effective teaching approach referred to as “growth mindset.” The purpose of the book and the following discussion questions is to help students understand that they are capable of accomplishing challenging and/or difficult tasks with such an approach, using effective strategies, effort, peer interaction, and persistence. For background on growth versus fixed mindset, the theme of this book, be sure to read the end page, “About the Book.”

Vocabulary and concepts to discuss and teach:

competent, incompetent, confident, being smart vs. getting smarter, strategies, tools, struggle, persistence, yet

Before reading the book aloud, discuss *smart* with these questions:

What does it mean to be smart?

Can people get smarter?

Ask students to think about what the book says about *smart* as they listen to the first reading.

After the first reading, ask:

How does Sophie change from feeling incompetent to understanding that she can get smarter?

What are five (or more) things that help her change?

During a second reading, ask these questions for the following pages:

For the double-page picture with the two sisters:

What’s happening here? What in the words and pictures makes you say so?

What does her sister do that makes Sophie feel incompetent?

What did the illustrator do to show Sophie’s feelings?

For the single-page picture of Sophie on the way to school:

What might be Sophie’s feelings as she is walking to school? What in the words and pictures makes you say so?

For the single-page picture of the teacher and students on the rug:

What do you notice?

What do you think it means “to become smart or smarter”?

For the single-page picture of muscles flexing:

How do you feel when you flex your muscles?

Note: Make sure to emphasize that growing one’s brain is like strengthening one’s muscle. The brain is not a muscle.

For the single-page picture of a rectangle and a square:

What’s the difference between a rectangle and a square?

For the single-page picture of soccer and gardening:

What have you gotten smarter at?

How did that happen?

For the single-page picture of the three children:

On the preceding page, Ms. Mulry says, “Use the tools at your table.” What does she mean by *tools* (a physical object to accomplish a task)? What other tools can you think of and what are they used for? What tools has Ms. Mulry given the children?

Note: This is a place to teach the meaning of *strategy*. Sometimes what we use to accomplish a task is not a tool; it can be something we know how to do. We call this a strategy. For example, looking at picture clues to figure out an unfamiliar word is a reading strategy.

For the single-page picture of the three children and Ms. Mulry:

Discuss with your students the importance of struggle in learning. Note: Ms. Mulry is reframing the word *struggle* as a positive concept. If children are not struggling, they are not getting smarter. If the lesson is too easy, students are not learning. If the lesson is too hard, children aren’t learning either and they may become frustrated and continue to hold a fixed mindset rather than develop a growth mindset. (See the end page “About the Book.”)

For the double page with the word “Yet”:

Discuss the significance of *yet*.

For the double page of Sophie’s solution:

Sophie thinks about something outside of school that she already knows, her garden and the rows of vegetables. She uses that knowledge to come up with her solution. Think of a time when you knew something that helped you to figure out a solution for a problem.

Note: This is the strategy of “using prior knowledge.”

For the double page with “getting smarter”:

Possibilities for discussion: smart versus getting smarter, persistence (“You tried and tried again”), collaborative problem solving, and celebrating success.

For the double page with Sophie walking home:

How is Sophie feeling? What do you notice that makes you say so?

For the double page with Sophie and her dad:

How does Sophie’s conversation with her dad relate to her experience with the rectangles problem?

After reading the book a second time and discussing these questions, ask your class the following questions to discuss *smart* again:

Does the book say that people can get smarter? If so:

How do they get smarter?

What’s the importance of *yet*?

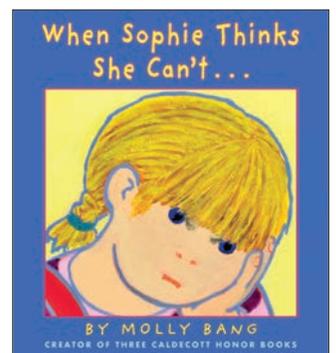
For the double page with Ms. Mulry drawing the six types of tile rectangles, use the following question, and the hint if needed, to prompt students to use the tiles as an outline of a rectangle with a blank space inside:

Can you figure out a way to create another rectangle with the tiles?

(Hint: it is a little different from the rectangles that Ms. Mulry’s class discovered.)

Tangrams Activity:

The endpapers state that more than 6,500 combinations can be made from the seven different tangram shapes. Challenge the students to see if they can make at least twenty-five different ones.



PRAISE FOR THE SOPHIE BOOKS

“Vibrant... Sure to be a staple in classrooms everywhere.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*, review of *When Sophie Thinks She Can't*

★ “[A] lovely study in emotion from Bang and a thoughtful exploration of art-making.”
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review of *When Sophie's Feelings Are Really, Really Hurt*

“All libraries will want this bold offering for lessons on classroom manners, art, and individuality.”
—*School Library Journal*, review of *When Sophie's Feelings Are Really, Really Hurt*

★ “Bang’s double-page illustrations, vibrating with saturated colors... reveal the drama of the child’s emotions.”
—*School Library Journal*, starred review of *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...*

“Bang’s evocatively illustrated book suggests no quick fixes; she treats childhood emotions with respect.”
—*Publishers Weekly*, review of *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...*

“Bang captures the intensity of Sophie’s feelings with strong, broadly brushed forms and colors.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*, review of *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...*

“An elegant and thought-provoking book for... children learning how to deal with emotions.”
—*The New York Times Book Review*, review of *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...*

Accolades for *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...*

Caldecott Honor Book • Jane Addams Honor Book • ALA Notable Book • Charlotte Zolotow Award

