



## Slug Days

Written by Sara Leach

Illustrated by Rebecca Bender

Pages: 120

Interest level: Gr. 1-4

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### **A charismatic illustrated novel about the ups and downs of school and home life for one little girl with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

On slug days Lauren feels slow and slimy. She feels like everyone yells at her, and she has no friends. Today there is a different bus driver; Dan and Sachi are sitting in Lauren's seat on the bus; and Lauren's teacher interrupts her reading time. But not every day is like this. On butterfly days Lauren makes her classmates laugh, goes to get ice cream, or works on a special project with Mom.

Lauren has Autism Spectrum Disorder, and she sees the world differently from many people. Sometimes this can be frustrating and makes Lauren want to flip her lid. But with support and stubbornness and a flair that's all her own, Lauren masters tricks to stay calm, understand others' feelings, and let her personality shine. She even manages to find common ground with her sticky, slobbery baby sister. Best of all, it is being different that gives Lauren insight into the insecurities of the new student, Irma.

### **About the author**

Sara Leach hails from Whistler, BC, where she loves to ski, hike and bike. Her middle grade novel *Count Me In* won the Red Cedar Book Award for 2012/13. In addition to being a children's author, she is also an elementary school teacher-librarian. She has had the privilege to teach several amazing students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and her experience working with them inspired *Slug Days*.

## Discussion Questions

- We all share similarities and differences. In what ways do you feel you are the same as one of the characters in this book? In what ways do you feel you are different?
- Do you think the adults and children in this book treat Lauren fairly? Why or why not?
- Everybody has their own way of looking at and experiencing the world. How do you think Dan, Irma or Mrs. Patel would tell this story?
- Lauren uses tricks to calm herself so she won't "flip her lid." We all get angry sometimes. What tricks do you use to calm yourself?

## Curriculum Connections

**Language Arts:** *Big ideas - Everyone has a unique story to share. Stories can be understood from different perspectives.*

Imagine you are one of the other students in Lauren's class. Describe one of the events that takes place in the book the way that student would see it.

**Math:** *Big Idea - Objects and shapes have attributes that can be described, measured, and compared.*

Lauren builds "regular" hexagons for the bee houses in Insectia. The sides and angles of each side are the same. Where can you find regular shapes in your classroom? Your school?

**Science and Art:** *Big ideas - Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems. The arts connect our experiences to the experiences of others.*

Work with a small group to create your own Insectia. Learn about different insects and their homes, and create 3D representations of them using materials in your classroom.

## Resources

<http://www.autismspeaks.ca/about-autism/what-is-autism/>

[www.saraleach.com](http://www.saraleach.com)

[www.rebeccabender.com](http://www.rebeccabender.com)

[www.pajamapress.ca](http://www.pajamapress.ca)