

Whole-Book Plan

Full lesson	
TIME	31 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Read the whole book and explain what Vashti's teacher did, and where it got Vashti to.
STUDENT PRODUCT	A chart of the ask, the frame, and where it led
FOCUS	One mark, taken seriously by somebody else
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	How do you get somebody started who is sure they cannot do it?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 1, 3, 8 and 14, found before the lesson
- One chart each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 1 — art class is over and the paper is empty
- Passage 3 — what the teacher tells her to do
- Passage 8 — the dot above the teacher's desk, in a huge swirly gold frame signed VASHTI
- Passage 14 — a canvas taller than she is, and a brush on a long pole

Lesson sequence

1 Before reading · 5 min

Focus:	An empty page, and a girl who will not move
Teacher direction:	Ask who has ever sat in front of an empty page and not been able to start. Do not rush past this - it is the whole first page, and children who have felt it will read the book differently from ones who have not.
Prepared text:	Passage 1

2 Teacher model · 6 min

Teacher model:	I read what the teacher says and I notice how little she asks for. Not a picture, not a bear, not anything Vashti would have to know how to draw. Just one mark, and permission not to know what happens next. Then I read the page where the dot is hanging up in a gold frame, and I ask what the teacher did to a mark that took a second to make.
Prepared text:	Passage 3, Passage 8

3 What happens to the dot · 10 min

Focus:	A small ask, and a big frame
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 3 and 8, write what Vashti's teacher asked for and what she did with it.

Expected answer:	The teacher asks for very little: one mark, with no need to know where it will lead. She does not ask Vashti to draw anything. Then she takes the mark Vashti makes and puts it in a frame of swirly gold above her own desk, where the class will see it the following week. The frame is far bigger than the dot inside it, and the dot has Vashti's name on it.
Student product:	Two boxes: what the teacher asked, what the teacher did
Prepared text:	Passage 3, Passage 8

4 Where it gets to · 10 min

Focus:	From a dot you can cover with a thumb
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 8 and 14, write how far Vashti gets from that first dot.
Expected answer:	The first dot is small enough to be lost inside its own frame. By the end of her working she is painting on a canvas taller than she is, using a brush on a pole long enough to reach the top, and one of her dots is made by painting everything except the dot - so the dot is the part of the paper she leaves alone. She has gone from a mark she made without looking to deciding what a dot even is.
Prepared text:	Passage 8, Passage 14

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: Read it in one sitting; it is short and the ending only works whole. Do not explain the last page. Read it, close the book, and wait - somebody will say that Vashti has turned into her teacher, and that is the lesson arriving on its own. The pages are worth showing as well as reading: the color of the text changes with the dot on the page, the angry page is washed red behind her, and the last two pages put Vashti in exactly the pose her teacher was in at the start. Have paper and one marker each ready for afterwards, because the class will want to make a mark, and that is the correct response to this book.

Expected answer:	Vashti is still sitting in the art room after the lesson has finished, with nothing on her paper, certain she cannot draw. Her teacher asks her for one mark and nothing more, so Vashti jabs the paper with a marker - and the teacher studies it, pushes it back and tells her to sign it. The next week the dot is hanging above the teacher's desk in a gold frame, and Vashti, annoyed, decides she can do better. She paints dots in every color, discovers purple by mixing, works bigger and bigger, and even makes a dot by painting everything around it. Her dots fill a wall at the school art show. There a smaller boy tells her she is a great artist and that he cannot draw at all - so Vashti hands him a blank sheet and asks him to show her, looks carefully at the shaky line he makes, and asks him to sign it.
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Model: I notice that the teacher never says anything encouraging. She does not say the dot is good, or that Vashti is clever, or that she can do it. She just asks for a mark, looks at it properly, and puts it in a frame. Then she says nothing at all and lets Vashti see it.

Support and extension

Above: The teacher never tells Vashti she is good at drawing. Explain why the frame worked better than saying so.

Below: Fill the two boxes, then write where Vashti's dots got to.

Assessment

Look for:

- Says Vashti believed she could not draw.
- Says the teacher asked her to make one mark.
- Says the teacher framed the dot and hung it up.
- Says Vashti then made many more dots.
- Says Vashti asked the boy to sign his line.

Short version	
TIME	16 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Read the whole book and explain what Vashti's teacher did, and where it got Vashti to.
STUDENT PRODUCT	A chart of the ask, the frame, and where it led
FOCUS	One mark, taken seriously by somebody else
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	How do you get somebody started who is sure they cannot do it?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 1, 3, 8 and 14, found before the lesson
- One chart each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 1 — art class is over and the paper is empty
- Passage 3 — what the teacher tells her to do
- Passage 8 — the dot above the teacher's desk, in a huge swirly gold frame signed VASHTI
- Passage 14 — a canvas taller than she is, and a brush on a long pole

Lesson sequence

1 Before reading · 3 min

Focus:	An empty page, and a girl who will not move
Teacher direction:	Ask who has ever sat in front of an empty page and not been able to start. Do not rush past this - it is the whole first page, and children who have felt it will read the book differently from ones who have not.
Prepared text:	Passage 1

2 Teacher model · 4 min

Teacher model:	I read what the teacher says and I notice how little she asks for. Not a picture, not a bear, not anything Vashti would have to know how to draw. Just one mark, and permission not to know what happens next. Then I read the page where the dot is hanging up in a gold frame, and I ask what the teacher did to a mark that took a second to make.
Prepared text:	Passage 3, Passage 8

3 What happens to the dot · 6 min

Focus:	A small ask, and a big frame
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Teacher direction:	Using Passages 3 and 8, write what Vashti's teacher asked for and what she did with it.
Expected answer:	The teacher asks for very little: one mark, with no need to know where it will lead. She does not ask Vashti to draw anything. Then she takes the mark Vashti makes and puts it in a frame of swirly gold above her own desk, where the class will see it the following week. The frame is far bigger than the dot inside it, and the dot has Vashti's name on it.
Student product:	Two boxes: what the teacher asked, what the teacher did
Prepared text:	Passage 3, Passage 8

4 Where it gets to · 3 min

Focus:	From a dot you can cover with a thumb
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 8 and 14, write how far Vashti gets from that first dot.
Expected answer:	The first dot is small enough to be lost inside its own frame. By the end of her working she is painting on a canvas taller than she is, using a brush on a pole long enough to reach the top, and one of her dots is made by painting everything except the dot - so the dot is the part of the paper she leaves alone. She has gone from a mark she made without looking to deciding what a dot even is.
Prepared text:	Passage 8, Passage 14

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Model: I notice that the teacher never says anything encouraging. She does not say the dot is good, or that Vashti is clever, or that she can do it. She just asks for a mark, looks at it properly, and puts it in a frame. Then she says nothing at all and lets Vashti see it.

Support and extension

Above: The teacher never tells Vashti she is good at drawing. Explain why the frame worked better than saying so.

Below: Fill the two boxes, then write where Vashti's dots got to.

Assessment**Look for:**

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- Says the teacher framed the dot and hung it up.
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- Says Vashti asked the boy to sign his line.