

Family Resource

Reading Rostam's Picture-Day Pusteen With Your Child



ages: 3-7



15-20 minutes

Rostam's Picture-Day Pusteen, written by Ryan Bani Tahmaseb and illustrated by Fateme Mokhles, is available [online](#), in local bookstores, and at public libraries.

Skills Practiced

- Textual & visual literacy
- Phonological awareness
- Critical thinking
- Empathy
- Cultural awareness

The Why

Reading Rostam's Picture-Day Pusteen with young children can inspire accessible conversations about cultural pride, acceptance, and bravery. The story shows how challenging it can be to feel different, especially as a young child in a new country. By reading it together, parents and guardians can help their children understand the value of embracing their unique heritage while also appreciating the differences in others.

Reading and reflecting on this book is an effective way to build empathy. When children encounter Rostam's experience of choosing whether to wear his traditional Iranian clothing on picture day, they gain insight into his perspective. This moment can spark meaningful discussions about celebrating diversity and fostering pride in one's heritage —values that every parent and guardian seeks to instill in their children.

The How

During the Read-Aloud:

- Use an expressive tone to highlight Rostam's emotions—like excitement, worry, and bravery—so that children can better connect to his feelings.
- Pause during key moments to ask questions like, "How do you think Rostam feels right now?" or "What do you think he should do?" Doing so will help keep children engaged and encourage them to put themselves in Rostam's shoes.

Reflective Discussion Questions for Afterward:

- Tell me about a time when you felt nervous about being different.
- If you were one of Rostam's classmates, how could you make him feel less nervous?
- Why is it important to be kind to someone new at school?
- What is something special about you or our family that you're proud of?
- What does being "brave" mean to you?
- Why is it hard sometimes to be brave?
- Why should we be proud of who we are?

Take it Further

Invite your child to design their own pusteen by drawing it and adding personalized patterns, colors, and designs. Just as Rostam's pusteen reflects his heritage, encourage them to create a design that represents what is special to them. They can incorporate favorite colors, cultural symbols, or drawings of things they love, such as animals, hobbies, or family traditions. Afterward, ask them to share their design and explain the meaning behind their choices, helping them celebrate and express their unique identity.