Same, Same but Different


- **Short Summary**: This book is about two boys; one from America and the other from India who are pen pals. Throughout the story they begin to realize that they may be different because they come from different places but they also have a lot in common as well.

- **Awards**
  - 2012 South Asia Book Award (winner)
  - Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award

- **Professional Reviews**: [http://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/jenny-sue-kostecki-shaw/same-same-but-different/#review](http://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/jenny-sue-kostecki-shaw/same-same-but-different/#review) Although today’s kids usually communicate through texting or email, Elliot from the United States and Kailash from India use pictures and a few simple sentences to exchange information about their lives. Their teachers facilitate the snail mailing of pictorial letters, just as the author-illustrator did when she visited Nepal, which provided the inspiration for this book. The title, also used as a refrain throughout the book, is a popular saying in India and Nepal, heard by Kostecki-Shaw when she traveled there. Elliot and Kailash explore their similarities and differences, concluding that their lives are “Different, different but the SAME!” The engaging childlike acrylic paintings with crayon, pencil, tissue paper and other collage elements show the busy crowded American streets of Elliot’s city, the traditional buildings of Kailash’s riverside village, the taxis and buses in the States and the taxis and camel-pulled carts in India. The English alphabet is reproduced on wide-ruled notebook paper and the Hindi alphabet (unfortunately unidentified) on a small slate, and both typical American pets (dog and fish) and a whole farmyard of Indian animals appear. Both kids live unusually low-tech lives (no computers or cell phones in sight), but they each enjoy learning about their pen pal’s world. Purposeful, but saved from didacticism by the sheer exuberance of the illustrations; the accessible text introduces the idea of traditional two-way communication and demonstrates just how small our world can be. (Picture book. 5-7)

- **Author and Illustrator Website**: [http://dancingelephantstudio.com/visualart/2008/04/06/same-same-but-different/](http://dancingelephantstudio.com/visualart/2008/04/06/same-same-but-different/)

- **Discussion Questions**
  - **Pre-Reading**
    - Based on what you see on the cover, what do you think will happen in this book?
    - How do the two places on the cover look different?
    - Is it possible for two people to be the same but also to be different?
  - **During Reading**
    - What do you see that the boys have in common?
    - How are they different?
    - Do you think the boys are becoming good friends even though they are far away from each other?
  - **Post- Reading**
    - Would like to have a pen pal from another country?
    - What would you tell your pen pal about?
    - Would you ever want to go to another country to see how it is different there than here?

- **Activities**
  - **Reading/Oral Language**
    - Look over different kinds of languages, see how the languages are different from English and have the children point out differences that they see.

  - **Writing**
    - Try and find pen pals for your kids. Show them how cool it would be to be able to talk to someone from another country, by maybe connecting with another teacher in another country and then pairing the children up.

  - **Art**
- Have the kids draw their home or the city they live in and then it can be compared with other children’s drawings to see how some are similar and some are different.
  - **Music**
    - Listen to music from all over the world. Kids would love this, to be able to hear the different genres of music and have some fun in class as well.
  - **Technology**
    - Have the kids research, with supervision, different cultures and countries to see how they are similar or different from their own.
  - **Cooking/Food**
    - Kids come from different backgrounds and so there could be a day that you have a potluck of some sort for lunch, including parents, and have them bring a specialty dish from their family cook book. The children could try new foods and learn about other cultures and backgrounds.

- **Related Books**
  - *We Share One World* by Jane Hoffelt
- **Other titles by the same author**
  - *My Travelin’ Eye*
- **Other websites for further study**
  - [http://www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/multicultural/same-same-but-different.htm](http://www.rif.org/us/literacy-resources/multicultural/same-same-but-different.htm) - Related activities for the book
  - [https://www.smore.com/9tcr-same-same-but-different](https://www.smore.com/9tcr-same-same-but-different) - Lessons