

“Age doesn’t matter. You can do anything  
you want to do at any age in your life.”

ANAYA WILLABUS



# Make It HAPPEN!



## Before Reading

Think about your own **goals**. Do you want to play soccer or make music? All of these activities take time and practice.

## During Reading

During reading, review the highlighted vocab words. While learning about Anaya, understand how she got to where she is today. What **skills** has she shown that have helped her **career**? In each chapter, the Make It Happen! activity will help you, too, build skills to reach your own goals.

## After Reading

Look in the back of the book for questions and activities to help you think about Anaya's story. Share these with a friend, parent, or teacher. Also, talk about the skills you need to reach your goals.

**goal:** something that a person is trying to do or achieve

**skill:** the ability to do something that comes from training, experience, or practice

**career:** a job or profession that someone does for a long time



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# Early Life



Anaya loved learning  
at an early age.

Anaya Willabus settles into the airplane seat next to her mother. She thinks of the new people she has met and places she has seen after her visit to **Guyana**. She can still feel the sun on her face. Anaya closes her eyes. She pictures the colorful Easter kites in the bright, blue sky. She remembers the shouts of kids chasing a soccer ball.

Anaya also thinks of her home and friends in Brooklyn, New York. She doesn't know what to tell them about first. No one else in her third-grade class had ever been to Guyana.

There are so many experiences that she wants to share with them. She pulls out a pen and notebook. Anaya starts to write down her thoughts about all she has seen and felt.



Kite flying was one of the Guyanese **traditions** that Anaya experienced during her first trip.

**Guyana:** a country on the northeast coast of South America, bordering Venezuela, Suriname, and Brazil

**tradition:** a particular belief or activity done by the people in a group, family, or society over many years

# A Love for Reading

Anaya Willabus was born on November 2, 2006, in Brooklyn. Her parents are **immigrants**. They were born in Guyana. Anaya's parents wanted her to learn about her family's history. They taught Anaya, her sister, and her brother about Guyanese **customs**.

Anaya always wanted to travel. She wanted to know more about different places. She couldn't wait to visit Guyana someday. Her parents liked "sharing things with us about the world," Anaya said. She wanted to know more about different places.

One way Anaya learned about the world was through reading. Anaya's love of books started at an early age. She started to read when she was only 2 years old.



Anaya was born in 2006.

**immigrant:** a person who moves to a new country to live there

**custom:** an action or way of behaving that is normal for a particular group of people



Anaya's parents **encouraged** her love of reading. Anaya's dad "would read certain stories. And I would memorize them," she said. Her family has more than 400 books at home. Anaya has read them all.

**encourage:** to give help and support to someone

## Make It! HAPPEN! Plan a Trip

Anaya learned a lot about the world from books. You can learn about a new place by reading and planning a possible trip.

- Visit the geography section of your local or school library and challenge your **global and cultural awareness**.
- Choose three books on places that look interesting.
- Decide which place you'd like to visit.
- How would you get there? Would you need a car once you arrived?
- When is the best time to visit? Are there any events that you don't want to miss?
- Make a list of museums, historic sites, or places in nature you could visit while you're there.

**global awareness:** understanding the importance of issues that affect the world, instead of just smaller parts like a neighborhood or city

**cultural awareness:** understanding and respecting the different peoples of the Earth and their beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles

How did you decide where to go? What are you most excited to see?

# First Steps of the Journey



Anaya published her  
first book in 2015.



Anaya was 7 years old when she first visited Guyana. She saw many new things. Kids ran around barefoot. There were animals and fruit trees everywhere. “It was so interesting to me how the locals got together,” Anaya said. She explained that they “played soccer and **cricket** without knowing each other. We joined in the fun.”

When she was there, Anaya flew a kite. “This was my first experience flying a kite,” Anaya said. Families often visited the national park to fly their kites. When Anaya’s mom was a kid, she and her family did the same thing. Anaya was happy to join in her family’s tradition.

Anaya couldn’t wait to write about her trip. That way, she would always remember it. She could also share her experience with others.



In 2014, Anaya traveled with her sister, brother, and parents to Guyana.



**cricket:** a team game played with a bat and a ball where the batter strikes the ball and runs between two wooden sticks