BOOK LEAGUE CLASSROOM

Chrysanthemum

Written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes · Grades PreK to 3

WATCH THE READ ALOUD

Your name is part of who you are, and other people's words can make you doubt it or help you love it again.

BEFORE YOU READ

Ask. What do you know about your name? Who chose it for you?

Listen for. As we read, notice how Chrysanthemum feels about her name at home, and how that changes when she gets to school.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. What reasons do Jo, Rita and Victoria give for teasing Chrysanthemum about her name? Remembering
2. Each time she is teased, the author says Chrysanthemum "wilted." What does that word tell you about how she feels? Understanding
3. Her parents help with her favorite foods, hugs and a board game. What helps you feel better after a hard day? Applying
4. The students change their minds as soon as Mrs. Twinkle shares her own name. Why do you think her words mattered so much to them? Analyzing
5. Mrs. Chud hears Victoria's comments at naptime and only tells her to put her head down. Was that enough? What could a teacher or a classmate have done? Evaluating
6. At the end, Jo, Rita and Victoria give themselves flower names. Invent a new name that shows something you love about yourself, and explain your choice. Creating

LOOK CLOSER

Study the pictures of Chrysanthemum's father at home. He is reading books about childhood worries and identity. Ask: what do the pictures tell us about him that the words do not?

WORDS TO KNOW

wilted drooped like a thirsty flower. Here, she felt sad and small.

envious wishing you had something that someone else has.

dreadful very, very bad.

longingly in a way that shows you really want something.

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Chrysanthemum

WRITE ABOUT IT

Tell about a time someone's words changed how you felt, for better or for worse. What happened first, next and last?

PreK to grade 1: draw the moment, then label it or tell an adult what to write.

Grade 3 and up: retell the first day of school from Victoria's point of view. What might she be thinking, and why does she act the way she does?

MAKE IT: OUR NAME GARDEN

You need. Paper flower shapes, crayons or markers, tape or a bulletin board.

1. Each child writes their name in the center of a paper flower.
2. On the petals, they draw or write things that make them who they are.
3. Count the letters in every name. Chrysanthemum has thirteen. Line up or graph the class from shortest name to longest.
4. Plant the flowers together on a wall as a class garden.

THE STORY IN BRIEF

Chrysanthemum, a young mouse, adores her name until classmates tease her for it on the first day of school. Her parents comfort her each evening, but the teasing goes on. Then the class meets Mrs. Twinkle, the music teacher everyone admires, and learns that her first name is Delphinium, another flower. Suddenly the girls want flower names of their own. Victoria, one of the teasers, forgets her lines as the fairy queen in the class play. Later Mrs. Twinkle has a baby girl and names her Chrysanthemum.

WHAT THIS BOOK BUILDS

CASEL SKILLS

Self Awareness. Chrysanthemum's sense of who she is moves from sure, to shaken, to sure again.

Relationship Skills. Words from classmates, parents and a teacher each change how she feels.

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Kindness. Mrs. Twinkle shares her own flower name, which changes how the class sees Chrysanthemum's.

Love. Her parents' steady affection carries her through each hard day.

Social Intelligence. Mrs. Twinkle reads the room and responds to what Chrysanthemum needs.

COMMON CORE ELA

K RL.K.1, RL.K.3, RL.K.7, SL.K.1, W.K.3

Grade 1 RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, SL.1.1, W.1.3

Grade 2 RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.7, SL.2.1, W.2.3

Grade 3 RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.6, SL.3.1, W.3.3

FIND IT BY

Themes Identity, Self Acceptance, Kindness, Teasing, Starting School

Season Back to school

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