KEVIN HENKES: An Author Study

Using Art and Writing to Teach Kevin Henkes’s Books

Featuring:

A PARADE OF ELEPHANTS
KEVIN HENKES

WAITING
KEVIN HENKES

The YEAR of Billy Miller
Kevin Henkes

Lily’s Purple Plastic Purse
BY KEVIN HENKES

Kitten’s First Full Moon
KEVIN HENKES

kevin henkes
egg

Chrysanthemum
by Kevin Henkes

Aligns with Common Core Standards for Grades 1–4

Greenwillow Books
An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
Kevin Henkes was born in 1960 in Racine, Wisconsin, and during his childhood, he often visited the local art museum—the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts. He also visited the library on a weekly basis with his parents. He practiced drawing as a child and was introduced by the authors and illustrators, but he says, “I never imagined that one day I would be one myself.”

He grew up loving books and loving to draw and paint. During his junior high year of school, writing became essential to him, and when he was a senior, a public librarian introduced him to Barbara Bader’s American Picture Books from Noah’s Ark to the Beast Within. It was only natural that he would decide to write and illustrate children’s books for a career.

Kevin Henkes began college at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, choosing to go there in large part because of the School of Education’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC). The July after his freshman year, he set off for New York with a selection of work and a ranked list of publishers. His first picture book was Greenwillow Books, headed at the time by its founder, Susan Wemberly Worried, how did your writing career begin? A: When I began The Year of Billy Miller, I wasn’t consciously thinking about research, preparing, drafting, revising, and proofreading. But, of course, I do all of those things in my own way. My novels begin with character. Character is the seed from which my books grow. I think I know where I want to end, but I have no idea how I will get there or who will populate the book in terms of people, other than my main character. I write very, very slowly. I usually think about it for about a year, and then I’ll take notes for a year, which is happening while I’m working on something else. Then when I write the novel, I write paragraphs, or paragraphs, very slowly. I know other people who write many, many drafts, but that’s not the way that I work. I go very slowly and have just one draft, even though I may write one or two paragraphs 15 times before I get it right. I usually want to be because I do in write in such small chunks, I read it aloud many times as I’m going.

Kevin Henkes writes, paints, and draws in his studio on the third floor of his home in Wisconsin, where he lives with his family. His desk is surrounded by books, including some of his favorite books from childhood, and a cabinet is filled with his drawings. His tools are simple; he writes his drafts using paper and ink and then types them up using a typewriter that belonged to his wife, Penny, stars in a series of beginning readers that includes Penny and Her Song, Penny and Her Doll, and Penny and Her Marble.

In addition to his picture books, Kevin Henkes has published thirteen novels. Words of Stone is especially meaningful to him, because this book was his first to elicit letters from older children and adults. His novel Olive’s Ocean won a Newbery Honor in 2004, and his novel The Year of Billy Miller, won a Newbery Honor in 2014. His newest novel, A Weekend with Wendell, was published in 2016.

Kevin Henkes presented the world of children’s literature with a memorable new addition to its roster of cherished characters. His newest mouse character, Penny, in 2007. This is an honor bestowed upon “an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of children’s literature.”

Henkes states, “My main goal is to create books that engage children. Of course I’m happy when teachers, parents, or librarians thank me because for them one of my books says something important about tolerance, loyalty, or individuality. But I’m most pleased when children tell me that they loved one of my books, that they made it laugh, that they sleep with it under their pillow.”

Q: When you begin a picture book such as Wemberly Worried, do you always know where the story is going, or do your characters ever lead you in a direction that you hadn’t considered? A: Books begin with character; character is the seed from which a book grows. When I set out to write Wemberly Worried, I didn’t know where it would end with the start of school, although in its simplest form, it’s a logical path for the book to have taken. That’s the magic and mystery of creation.

Q: It must be a very different process, working on a novel. Do you still have vivid pictorial images of the characters and their environment? A: Writing a novel is very different. I can delve much deeper into a character’s psyche, for example. I can describe a scene at length. I can deal with subject matter that is more complex than the subject matter of my picture books. But, because I’m a visual person, I do have very strong images in my head as I work. I love describing my characters and their environments. Setting a scene—providing proper lighting, the colors and textures of things, sounds—is one of my favorite things about writing a novel.

Q: How does writing a novel differ from writing a picture book? A: The thing that’s most different for me is that when I’m writing a picture book, I will sometimes see the entire book in my head. With a novel, I don’t do that. I know perhaps a character and an opening situation. I think I know where I want to end, but I have no idea how I will get there or who will populate the book in terms of people, other than my main character. I write very, very slowly. I usually think about it for about a year, and then I’ll take notes for a year, which is happening while I’m working on something else. Then when I write the novel, I write paragraphs, or paragraphs, very slowly. I know other people who write many, many drafts, but that’s not the way that I work. I go very slowly and have just one draft, even though I may write one or two paragraphs 15 times before I get it right. I usually want to be because I do in write in such small chunks, I read it aloud many times as I’m going.

Q: When you began The Year of Billy Miller, how did your writing process compare to the 5-step process that young writers learn in school? A: I do not do any of the following: research, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing. When I began The Year of Billy Miller, I wasn’t consciously thinking about research, preparing, drafting, revising, and proofreading. But, of course, I do all of those things in my own way. My novels begin with character. Character is the seed from which my books grow. I take notes about Billy long before I began working on the actual story. My notes included things such as: what he looked like, what he liked to do, who his friends were, what his family was like. This is the kind of prewriting I do. Hi didn’t mention Lilly’s boots, crown, or cape when I wrote the story, though I knew long before the manuscript was finished that Lily would be wearing them. Determining where to break the story into chapters is important—and instinctual in many cases. Some breaks seem natural and obvious. Others take longer to figure out. I cut up my own pages until I get the right flow. I look for the breaks in the sections of a book dummy until the flow and pacing seem right. Reading the text aloud again and again helps, too.

Q: Do you have any recommendations for ways classroom teachers or parents can help children grow as readers, writers, and artists? A: Exposure is everything. Read aloud as often as possible. If your child likes to write or draw, make sure that he or she always has paper and a pencil. Encourage children to experiment when they come to art, and remind them to have fun and not be concerned with creating a masterpiece. If, as adults, we value art and books, our children will, too.
ABOUT THE BOOK
Up and down, over and under, through and around... five brightly colored elephants are on a mission in this picture book for young children by Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes. Where are they going? What will they do when they get there? It's a surprise!

With a text shimmering with repetition and rhythm, bright pastel illustrations, large and readable type, and an adorable parade of elephants, Kevin Henkes introduces basic concepts such as numbers, shapes, adjectives, adverbs, and daytime and nighttime. _A Parade of Elephants_ is an excellent choice for story time as well as bedtime sharing.

BEFORE READING
First, ask the children if they have ever observed how elephants move. Ask if they have ever seen a marching band in a parade, and then have the children march together around the classroom. Next, ask the children to imagine they are a group of colorful elephants marching along together. Finally, tell the children that you are about to read them a book called _A Parade of Elephants_!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. Read the first page of the book ("Look! Elephants!") and ask: How do you think the author feels about seeing the elephants? How can you tell?
2. Read the next page ("One, two, three, four, five") and ask: What do you notice about the number of elephants on this page? Do you see a pattern?
3. Pause after reading the page, "A parade of elephants." Ask: How can you tell that these elephants are marching? Do they all look the same? Or are they different from one another?
4. Turn to the next page and ask the children to describe the elephants. Then read that page ("Big and round and they are") and ask the children if they agree that this correctly describes the elephants. Why or why not?
5. Pause again after reading the next page ("Up, down") and ask what the author means by that. Do the same for the next two pages ("Over, under" and "In, out"). On each page, have the children explain what the elephants are doing?

6. Read the next two pages ("They march and they march and they march all day."). Ask: How do you think the elephants are feeling now? Why?
7. Read the page: "And when the day is done, they are done, too." Ask the children what they notice in the picture. If they need prompting, ask: Are the elephants still marching? How can you tell? And what is in the sky?
8. Read the next page ("They yawn and stretch. They stretch and yawn."). Ask: Now you know how the elephants are feeling. How can you tell?
9. Pause after reading, "But before they sleep they lift their trunks..." and ask the children to predict what will happen next.
10. Finish the story and ask: Were you surprised by the ending? Why or why not?

ABOUT THE BOOK
On the second page, read: "And when the day is done, they are done, too."

In this story, the elephants march. Ask the children what they think the author feels about seeing the elephants. Have them label their picture with both the numeral and the number word.

ACTIVITIES

1. Get in Shape. Discuss the round shape of the elephants in this story and then introduce the children to some basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle). Then have the children go on a shape hunt. They should look around the classroom and identify objects that are shaped like circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles. (For example, a desktop is the shape of a rectangle.) Finally, have the children make shape posters on which they draw, color, and label the basic shapes.

2. Count Me In! Prepare cards that have the numerals 1-10 written on them, as well as cards that have the number words one through ten. Hand out the cards to the children. Then, as a class, put the numeral cards down in order. Then have the children place the matching number words next to each numeral. Finally, have the children choose a number and draw a picture to represent that number. For example, if they choose “5,” they can draw a picture of 5 stars. Have them label their picture with both the numeral and the number word.

3. Parade of Puppets. Have the children make elephant puppets using materials such as socks, paper bags, or cardboard for the puppet, and paint, fabric markers, and felt to decorate the puppet. When the puppets are finished, have the children line up and count them aloud together. Then host a parade of elephants as the children march around the classroom with their elephant puppets.

4. Which Way Do I Go? Build an obstacle course with the children either in the classroom or outside. Use concepts from the book when creating the course, so that children are required to go up and down, in and out, and over and under objects as they proceed through the course. This can also be accomplished on a playground. Have the children call out directions to their classmates (e.g., “Go under the table” or “go in and out of the tunnel”) to guide them through the course. If it is not possible to go outdoors, and if indoor space is limited, the class can construct a small obstacle course and use the puppets from the previous activity to go through it. The same concepts (up/down, in/out, over/under, big/little, first/last) can be applied as the puppets are directed through the mini-obstacle course.

5. Join the Parade. In this story, the elephants march. Ask the children to choose their favorite animal and draw it. Then they should color and cut out their animal drawing. Attach the picture to a paper strip that fits around the child’s head to create an animal headband. After the headbands are completed, plan an animal parade. The children can wear their headbands, moving and sounding like their animal, as they parade along together.

ABOUT THE BOOK
This masterful and stylistically original picture book—a graphic novel for preschoolers—introduces young children to four eggs. One is blue, one is pink, one is yellow, and one is green. Three of the eggs hatch, revealing three little birds who fly away. But the fourth egg, the green egg, does not hatch. Why not? The three birds return to investigate. Crack! The green egg hatches, too, revealing a baby alligator. Started (and afraid they might be lunch!), the birds fly off the page, leaving the baby alligator alone, sad, lonely, and miserable. The baby birds return—did they decide they had misjudged this big green baby?—and the four new friends head off on an adventure together. With a surprising and compelling mix of comic-like panels, wordless pages and spreads, and a short text featuring word repetition, surprise, and suspense, Egg is an ideal book for emergent readers as well as for sharing in a group.

BEFORE READING
Introduce students to the basic concept and structure of a graphic novel. Use a document camera or an overhead projector to model how to read from left to right, from frame to frame. Point out other unique aspects of the format, such as the use of panels, words, colors, and lines.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. Read the first two pages. How are these pictures alike? How are they different?
2. Why do you think the green egg does not hatch with the others?
3. What are the little birds listening for? Why do they peck the egg?
4. What do the birds do when the alligator hatches? Why?
5. How does the alligator feel when the birds come back and befriend him? Students should also explain that at first the birds are frightened of the alligator, but then they become curious, and finally, happy to meet a new friend. Ask students to think of an experience during which their feelings changed. What happened to make them feel one way, and then another? In small groups, have students discuss their experiences. Then have students write (or draw) a personal narrative story about their experience.
6. Why is the friendship between the birds and the alligator surprising?
7. How long do the birds and the alligator play together? How do you know?
8. How do you know?
9. How does the story end?
10. Does this story need to have any more words in it? Why or why not?

ACTIVITIES
1. Box It In. Show students the 4-frame page of the birds approaching the green egg. Discuss what is happening in each frame. Then give students a 4-box template. Ask them to create a story by drawing a related picture in each box. Tell students that their pictures should convey the story without words. Then have students switch pages with a partner. Each student should try to tell their partner’s story aloud by looking at the pictures. Partners should ask each other for clarification as needed.

2. And Then . . . Discuss the Story’s Ending. Ask students to predict what would happen if the story continued. Then have students write and illustrate a sequel to Egg. Younger children can make drawings to show their ideas.
Correlates to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.K.3; W.1.3; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.K.1, SL.1.1.

3. The Show Must Go On. Ask students to name the characters in the story, and then have them work in small groups to create puppets of the birds and the alligator. Then ask them to work together to retell the story using their puppets. Students can perform their puppet show for the rest of the class.
Correlates to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.1.2, RL.1.3; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: SL.K.5, SL.1.5.

4. How Are You Feeling? Discuss how the characters’ feelings change in this story. Students should recall that the alligator is sad when the birds fly away, but is happy when the birds come back and befriend him. Students should also explain that at first the birds are frightened of the alligator, but then they become curious, and finally, happy to meet a new friend. Ask students to think of an experience during which their feelings changed. What happened to make them feel one way, and then another? In small groups, have students discuss their experiences. Then have students write (or draw) a personal narrative story about their experience.
Correlates to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.K.3; W.1.3; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.K.1, SL.1.1.

5. A Good Egg. Ask students to think about which animals lay eggs. Then use books or Internet resources to create a list of oviparous animals. As a class, write an informational piece about oviparous animals. Model how to include a topic sentence, supporting facts, and a closing sentence. Students can add illustrations of oviparous animals.
Correlates to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.K.7; W.1.7.
### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the puppy have to wait so long for the snow? How often does it snow?
2. Why is the owl happy more often than the other animals? How often does the owl get to see the moon?
3. What makes the pig and the bear happy? Is there a particular season of the year that might make each of them happier because the rain or the wind occurs more frequently?
4. When one of the friends goes away, where might the departed friend go? Who might take the friends away?
5. Who could have brought the gifts to the friends on the windowsill? What gifts do the friends receive?
6. How do the friends know the elephant came from far away? Why does he leave and never return?
7. How do the pictures of the clouds relate to each one of the animal friends?
8. What occurs in the scenes outside the window? How does what the friends witness outside the window relate to the weather and the seasons of the year?
9. What is the cat with patches waiting for? Based on the expressions on their faces, how do the friends on the windowsill react to the new kittens?
10. What might the cat with patches and her kittens wait for? Based on the expressions on their faces, how do the friends on the windowsill react to the new kittens?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Every Picture Tells a Story: Ask students to look through the book and find two illustrations that give the reader information that the words do not say. Discuss the fact that Kevin Henkes both wrote and illustrated the book. Then ask students to draw their own illustration of one of these scenes and to explain the information the illustration conveys. Display the students’ art and explanations in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: WK.1, W.1.1, and W.2.1; Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.6, RL.1.6, and RL.2.6.

2. Sky Images in the Clouds. On a nice day with clouds in the sky, take students outside to observe the clouds and help them to imagine or see familiar objects in the clouds. Ask students to write a poem about an image they see or their experience of searching the sky for familiar cloud shapes. Have students draw the shape of the cloud image they see, and then read their poems to the class. Collect the images and poems to create a classroom book.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: WK.1, W.1.1, and W.2.1.

3. Do You See What I See? The scenes the friends see outside their window vary from day to day. Ask students to select one of the scenes and write about a time when they saw or experienced a similar scene out of a window in their home, school, or another setting. Have students include why they think that memory has remained strong for them. Ask students to share their writing in small groups. Post student writing in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: WK.1, W.1.1, and W.2.1.

4. Patiently Waiting Brings Rewards. Ask students to write a paragraph about something they are waiting for and why they are waiting OR something they waited for and received. Students should express the emotions they feel while they wait, or, if they received something they waited for, how they felt when they received it. Create a classroom windowsill display that’s similar to the windowsill in the book. Have students draw pictures of themselves waiting and/or receiving what they’ve waited for. Display their paragraphs next to their self-portraits.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: WK.1, W.1.1, and W.2.1.

5. In Your Own Words. After reading the book, pair up students with a partner and have them list the events that occurred in the story, in the order in which they happened. After they make their lists, ask students to write a one-sentence reaction to the story on sentence strips, stating what they liked the most or the least or what the story reminded them of. Ask students to read their one-sentence reactions to the class, and post the sentence strips in the classroom.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: WK.3, W.1.3, and W.2.3; Reading Literature: Craft and structure: RL.K.6, RL.1.6, and RL.2.6.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Five animal friends sit patiently on a windowsill waiting and watching the world outside. The owl waits for the moon; the pig waits for the rain; the bear waits for wind; the puppy waits for snow; the rabbit waits for . . . nothing in particular. Occasionally, gifts will appear on the windowsill, and a new friend might arrive, but together they all wait. One day a cat with patches joins them, and the windowsill friends receive a big surprise!
KITTEN’S FIRST FULL MOON: Perfect for learning about dreaming big dreams!

ABOUT THE BOOK
As she sits on her porch, Kitten sees the huge moon in the sky and thinks it is a bowl of milk. It looks delicious and she wants to taste it, so she tries reaching and jumping as far as she can and chasing and climbing as fast and as high as she can. She even tries swimming. Every attempt fails, and sadly she walks home—where, to her surprise, she finds a bowl of milk waiting for her on her porch.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. What kind of bug does Kitten get on her tongue? What clues do the illustrations give to help you determine the kind of bug?
2. The moon is high in the sky, so why does Kitten think it is possible to reach the “bowl of milk”?
3. During what season of the year does the story take place? What clues do the illustrations give to help you reach that conclusion?
4. Why is Kitten scared when she climbs to the top of the tree?
5. Why is the “bowl of milk” Kitten sees in the pond bigger than the “bowl of milk” in the sky?
6. Why does Kitten jump into the pond? How does she react when she lands in the water?
7. Why does Kitten keep trying to reach what she thinks is a bowl of milk even after she fails multiple times?
8. How do you know how Kitten feels after each failed attempt to reach the “bowl of milk”?
9. What does Kitten find on her porch when she returns home from her night of chasing a bowl of milk? How does Kitten feel then?
10. What phrase is repeated throughout the story? Why would Mr. Henkes repeat this phrase after each of Kitten’s failed attempts to obtain her goal?

ACTIVITIES
1. Learn by Example. Discuss with students the reasons why Kitten keeps trying to reach an impossible goal. Ask them to retell each of Kitten’s attempts and describe how each attempt failed. After the discussion, ask students to write the lesson they learned from the story.
2. Black and White Enhance Meaning. Very few picture books are illustrated in black and white. Ask students why they think Mr. Henkes used black and white illustrations. Discuss how the illustrations are an integral part of the story. Then, using Henkes’ illustrations as a model, ask students to draw a short series of pictures (3–4) of their pet or a friend’s pet. Have students label each illustration. Allow students to use pencil or charcoal and encourage them to add shading and details, where appropriate. Post illustrations in the classroom.
3. Phases of the Moon. Discuss with students the different phases of the moon. Have students fold a sheet of paper into four sections and then draw four different stages of the moon. Ask students to identify and label each stage they draw and then to write a sentence describing what the moon looks like to them at each of the four stages. Have students share their phases and descriptions with a partner.
4. Kitten’s Character. Kitten could be described as hungry, inquisitive, brave, fast, persistent, and unlucky. Write these words on the board, and then read a passage from the book. Ask students to select the word they think fits Kitten’s actions in that passage, and ask them to explain why they selected that word. Then, going back to the list of words on the board, ask each student to select one word and use it to write a new sentence describing Kitten and giving information from the story about her actions. Students can read their sentences to the class.
5. In Your Own Words. After reading the book, place students with a partner and have them list the events that occurred in the story, in the order in which they happened. After they make their lists, ask students to write a one-sentence reaction to the story on a sentence strip, stating what they liked the most or the least or what the story reminded them of. Have students share and discuss their reaction strips in small groups. Ask each group to share one of the student reactions or a new group idea or insight.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.K.2, SL.1.2, and SL.2.2; Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.6, RL.1.6, and RL.2.6.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.K4, L1.4, and L.2.4; Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.4, RL.1.4, and RL.2.4.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.K4, L1.4, and L.2.4; Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.4, RL.1.4, and RL.2.4.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: W.K.2, W.1.2, and W.2.2.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.K4, L1.4, and L.2.4; Reading Literature: Craft and Structure: RL.K.4, RL.1.4, and RL.2.4.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: Conventions of Standard English: L.K.1, L.1.1, and L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2, and L.2.2; Writing: Text Type and Purpose: W.K.2, W.1.2, and W.2.2.

In Your Own Words.

About the Book.

Discuss with students the different phases of the moon. Have students fold a sheet of paper into four sections and then draw four different stages of the moon. Ask students to identify and label each stage they draw and then to write a sentence describing what the moon looks like to them at each of the four stages. Have students share their phases and descriptions with a partner.
ABOUT THE BOOK

Chrysanthemum loves everything about her perfect name until her first day of school. When a trio of mean girls teases and taunts her about the unsuitability of her name, Chrysanthemum doubts that her name is “absolutely perfect”; she thinks it is absolutely dreadful. It is only when the students go to music class and Mrs. Twinkle reveals to the class her own long, flower-based name—Delphinium—that Chrysanthemum feels better and becomes the envy of the three mean girls.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a chrysanthemum? Have students research and discuss.
2. Why do the mean girls make fun of Chrysanthemum’s name?
3. Could her classmates have done anything to stop the girls from teasing Chrysanthemum?
4. What could Chrysanthemum have done to overcome the bullying?
5. How do Chrysanthemum’s parents help her feel better each day when she comes home from school?
6. What happened at school to help Chrysanthemum feel good about her name again?
7. How did Jo, Rita, and Victoria change after they met Mrs. Twinkle?
8. Chrysanthemum dreams that her name is Jane. (“It was an extremely pleasant dream.”) Do you like your name? Why or why not?
9. If you could change your name to any name in the world, what name would you choose?
10. Read and discuss the epilogue. Why do you think the author chose to include this in the story?

ACTIVITIES

1. Making Connections. What if Mrs. Twinkle had not come to Chrysanthemum’s rescue? What could Chrysanthemum have done to get the girls to stop badgering her? What good advice could you give her, based on your own experience, about how to deal with bullies and people who say mean things? Talk this over as a group.

2. When I’m Feeling Down. “Chrysanthemum felt much better after her favorite dinner (macaroni and cheese with ketchup) and an evening filled with hugs and kisses and Parcheesi.”

What are the foods and games and other comforts that help you feel better when you are feeling down? Write and illustrate and then share responses:

“When I’m feeling down, I feel better when I __________”

3. Beautiful Words. Chrysanthemum’s father has a way with words. Her mother says, “Your name is beautiful.” Her father adds, “And precious and priceless and fascinating and winsome.” Of her cruel classmates, her mother says, “They’re just jealous.” Her loquacious father says, “And envious and begrudging and discontented and jaundiced.”

Explore synonyms and antonyms. Children can work in pairs and come up with two opposite adjectives, and then four synonyms for each, writing and illustrating the following:

Yesterday I felt _______ And _______ and _______ and _______ and _______.

But today, I feel _______. And _______ and _______ and _______ and _______.

Pick a pair of words (tired; awake) to use as models for brainstorming, and show how you can use the dictionary, thesaurus, and the website www.thesaurus.com to come up with a host of interesting (and captivating and engrossing and intriguing and unusual) synonyms.

4. Name Games. Celebrate names by making decorative name cards. Children can write their names with colored markers on strips of cardstock paper and decorate them with beads, buttons, glitter, and bits of shiny ribbon. Take digital pictures of each child, print them out, and make a class bulletin board of names and faces labeled with their fancy name cards.

Victoria says of Chrysanthemum, “I’m named after my grandmother. You’re named after a flower!” As a homework assignment, children can ask their parents to tell and write down the stories of how they got their perfectly perfect names.

5. Name Garden. Provide precut construction paper petals to students. Have them write each letter of their first name on a petal and use them to create a name flower. Help students paste the petals on a sheet of paper and then share responses:

“When I’m feeling down, I feel better when I __________”

Pick a pair of words (tired; awake) to use as models for brainstorming, and show how you can use the dictionary, thesaurus, and the website www.thesaurus.com to come up with a host of interesting (and captivating and engrossing and intriguing and unusual) synonyms.

Correlates to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details: RL.K.1, RL.K.2; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: RL.K.7, RL.K.8; Reading: RL.1.1, RL.1.3; Writing: W.K.1, W.K.2; Craft and Structure: RL.1.4.

CHRYSANTHEMUM: Perfect for learning to love your name!
LILLY’S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE: Perfect for learning to love school!

ABOUT THE BOOK
Lilly loves everything about school, especially her teacher, Mr. Slinger. Lilly just can’t wait until Sharing Time to show off her movie star sunglasses, her shiny quarters, and her purple plastic purse; she continually interrupts Mr. Slinger to show her classmates her new possessions. Finally, when Mr. Slinger takes Lilly’s things away from her, Lilly draws a mean picture of him. It isn’t until Mr. Slinger gives her belongings back to her with a kind note and snacks that Lilly realizes she owes Mr. Slinger an apology.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. Why did Mr. Slinger take away Lilly’s beautiful purse?
2. Why did Lilly get angry with Mr. Slinger?
3. What do you think Mr. Slinger thought and did when he opened his book bag and found the mean picture that Lilly drew of him?
4. “I do not want to be a teacher when I grow up,” Lilly said as she marched out of the classroom. Why did she change her mind when she got outside?
5. Lilly runs home and tells her parents everything. How do you think they reacted?
6. She even put herself into the uncooperative chair. What infractions would land a child in the uncooperative chair? Why does Lilly put herself there? How does it help her?
7. Look at Lilly’s parents together with her and baby Julius in the kitchen. Her father is baking tasty No-Frills Cheese Balls for Lilly to take to school. Why is he doing that? Her mother writes a note to Mr. Slinger, though the contents are never revealed to us. What do you think her note said?
8. How does Lilly apologize to Mr. Slinger for her behavior?
9. How does Lilly’s apology affect her, Mr. Slinger, and the class?
10. What would have happened if Lilly had not apologized to Mr. Slinger?

LILLY’S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE: Perfect for learning to love school!

ACTIVITIES
1. Making Connections. How have you apologized or made amends when you’ve done something wrong? What did you say? What is the best apology you ever gave? How did you feel afterward?
2. Loving School. Lilly says, “I love school!” Wowed by her teacher, Mr. Slinger, she says, “I want to be a teacher when I grow up.” Talk over and share: What do you love about your school? What’s so special about Mr. Slinger? What makes a great teacher?
3. The Lightbulb Lab. One thing Lilly loves at school is Mr. Slinger’s Lightbulb Lab, a kidney-shaped table situated at the back of the classroom, with a sign on the wall proclaiming “Where Great Ideas Are Born.” There, students can express their ideas creatively through drawing and writing. Talk over why it’s called the Lightbulb Lab. If you don’t already have such an area in your classroom, why not set one up?
4. What’s in the Purple Plastic Purse? Using ingenuity and your own innate creativity, buy, borrow, modify, or create your own purple plastic purse as a prop to use after reading the story aloud. Place it in a variety of objects that begin with the letter “P” such as: a Popsicle stick, a potato, a stuffed pig, a puppet, a pea pod, a pearl, a pencil, or even a pair of pants.
5. Riddle Time. Explain the format of a riddle and write an example with the class. Ask students to make a list of objects (nouns) that are their favorite or special possessions. Then ask each student to select one of the objects and to write a riddle that’s a clue to the object’s identity. The students can present their riddles to the class, and their classmates can guess what the objects are.

Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse

BY KEVIN HENKES

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Interest Level: K-3
Guided Reading Level: M
Themes: Friendship, Family, School

IDEAS AND DETAILS: RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.K.3, RL.1.3; INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS: RL.K.7, RL.1.9.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL.1.1, RL.1.3.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Speaking and Listening: SL.2.1.A, 2.1B; SL.2.2.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Craft and Structure RL.2.4.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL.2.1, RL.2.3.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Speaking and Listening: SL.2.1.A, 2.1B, SL.2.2.

IDEAS: RL.K.7, RL.1.7.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details RL.2.1, RL.2.3.

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Speaking and Listening: SL.2.1.A, 2.1B, SL.2.2.

THEMES: Friendship, Family, School

GUIDED READING LEVEL: M
INTEREST LEVEL: K-3

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THE YEAR OF BILLY MILLER: Perfect for starting the new school year!

THE YEAR OF BILLY MILLER

ABOVE THE BOOK

Billy's mom is a teacher and his dad works at home as an artist, spending his days finding objects he can use for his found-art sculptures. When Billy begins second grade, he is scared and unsure of how he will perform in school. To make matters worse, there is a new girl who sits at his table, and she constantly criticizes him. As the school year progresses, Billy Miller does well and overcomes his insecurities. He helps his dad with a unique found-art idea, he makes a true-to-life bat cave diorama, and he writes his mom the perfect poem. The Year of Billy Miller proves to be the best year Billy could have hoped for.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Billy's father support and encourage him when he is fearful or troubled?
2. What are some of the situations Billy worries about? How does Billy's worrying affect his actions?
3. How does Billy feel when Ms. Silver tells him he is not smart? Why is it such a relief for him to hear praise from his teacher?
4. What are some of the situations Billy worries about? How does Billy react to his father when he hears this phrase?
5. How does Billy feel when his attempt to stay awake all night fails? Why was it so important to him to achieve his goal of staying up all night?

1. Throughout the book, Emma says unpleasant things to Billy, and her comments motivate him to action. What does Billy accomplish because of Emma's remarks?
2. Why does Emma say unpleasant things to Billy? What does Billy accomplish because of Emma's remarks?
3. How does Billy decide whom to write his poem about?
4. Does Billy's feeling toward his sister change?
5. How does Billy tr eat Sal? Why does she irritate him so much?

ACTIVITIES

1. Chinese New Year. Ms. Silver teaches her students about Chinese New Year. Ask each of your students to select one of the animals in the traditional twelve-year lunar year cycle. Have students draw a picture of the animal and write a short explanation of its meaning. Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Text Types and Purposes W.2.3, Production and Distribution of Writing W.2.5; Research to Build and Present Knowledge W.2.7; Language: Conventions of Standard English L.2.1.

2. Found-Art Sculpture. Ask students to bring small items from home that they find interesting and unique. They can ask their parents to help them look in the garage, attic, or drawers. Once the objects are collected, supply the students with glue, cardboard, string, and other art supplies so they can make a found-art sculpture. Students can present their sculptures to the class and discuss the meaning behind their sculptures. Display the sculptures in the school library. Correlates to Common Core Standard Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.2.4.

3. Diorama-Rama. Ask students to create a diorama of one of their favorite rooms. It could be a room in their home or a room in a place they enjoy visiting: the zoo, museum, or Grandma's house. Students can share their dioramas by telling the class where the room is located and what it means to them. Correlates to Common Core Standard Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.2.4.

4. Found Family Poetry. Ms. Silver asked her students to write a poem about a family member. In turn, ask your students to write a "found" poem. Each student can select one family member and write a poem about that person by "finding" at least 10 phrases or parts of sentences from anywhere in The Year of Billy Miller and using those phrases as a starting point for their found poem. Students can revise and add to their phrases so that they're relevant to their family member. Then plan a poetry slam for your class to read their poems for their classmates and families. Correlates to Common Core Standard Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge W.2.6; Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.2.4.

5. Dialogue with a Difference. Have students read the conversation between Ms. Silver and Billy on pages 45–50 and discuss the fact that the scene is written from Billy's point of view. Then, as a class, rewrite the scene from Ms. Silver's point of view, to demonstrate how meaning can change depending on point of view. Then ask students, with a partner, to select a scene in the book where Billy has a conversation with one of the other characters. Ask students to rewrite the dialogue from the other character's point of view. Have students perform the "new" scene for their classmates. Correlates to Common Core Standard Reading Literature: Craft and Structure RL.2.6.

Correlates to Common Core Standard: Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.2.4.
Teaching materials in this guide prepared by Susan Geye, Coordinator of Library Services, Everman Independent School District, Everman, Texas, and Judy Freeman, a children's literature consultant and workshop presenter. Teaching materials for *A Parade of Elephants* and *Egg* prepared by Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

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