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Trade Book Sheet

Title of book: Russ and the Almost Perfect Day

Author's name: Janet Elizabeth Rickert

Publisher: Woodbine House

Copyright year: 2000

Reading level: Grade 2

Genre: Multicultural

Synopsis of story: This is the story of Russ, a child with Down Syndrome. Russ' day starts with a breakfast of s'mores, time to watch television before he goes to school and even finding \$5.00 on his way to school. His school day is great until he gets to lunch. He had decided that he would buy himself and his friend an ice cream bar with the money he found. Unfortunately, he finds out that a classmate has lost her \$5.00 she was to use for lunch. Russ has to make a decision. Should he keep the money and get ice cream or should he return the lost money to his classmate. Russ returns the girl her money and he still has a great day for the rest of the day!

Standard: 4.3.3 Use knowledge of the situation, setting, and a character's traits, motivations, and feelings to determine the causes for that character's actions.

Activity: Inferring Character Traits by Donna Calder <http://www.eduref.org>

Materials

- Overhead, transparency, chalkboard
- Good story to read
- Large piece of drawing paper
- Pencils or markers
- Writing paper

Read and discuss the book Russ and the Almost Perfect Day. (Other Russ books are available and can also be read to get an even better idea of what Russ is like)

Reread the book if necessary.

Ask: Who is the main character?

Do: Write that name in the center of a large piece of paper.

Ask: What is he/she like?

Do: Write descriptions under the name, then draw a box around the name and all descriptors.

Ask: Who else is important in the story?

Do: Write their names evenly spaced around the center box.

Ask: How does the main character feel about them?

Do: Write responses on arrows running away from the center box toward the outer boxes.

Ask: How does each minor character feel about the main character?

Do: Write responses on arrows running from the outer boxes toward the center box.

Have the students select a character from the story and write a bio poem about that character.

Format to follow:

First name _____

Four traits _____

Related to _____

Cares deeply for _____

Who feels _____

Who needs _____

Who gives _____

Who would like to see _____

Resident of _____

Standard: 4.5.1 Write narratives (stories) that

- Include ideas, observations, or memories of an even or experience.
- Provide a context to allow the reader to imagine the world of the even or experience.
- Use concrete sensory details.

Activity: Lemon Writing Adapted from a lesson by Jody K Vilschick <http://www.eduref.org>

Materials

- Six lemons
- Six brown paper grocery bags

Day One

1. Read the book to the entire class.
2. Discuss the book in detail highlighting Russ' disability.
3. Divide the class into 6 groups.
4. Give each group a lemon.
5. Ask the students to individually answer the following questions.
 - What are lemons used for?
 - What songs or stories can you think of that have been written about lemons or used lemons in the title?
 - Describe your group's lemon without using "yellow" or "sour."
 - What does your lemon smell like?
 - What does your lemon feel like?
 - If you were a lemon, where would you have been born?
 - If you were a lemon, what experiences might you have had before arriving in the classroom?
 - If you were a lemon, how might those experiences shaped how you see yourself?
 - If you were a lemon, how did your experiences shape your characteristics, or vice versa?
 - If you were a lemon with a different color, shape, texture, or smell would you still be a lemon?

6. Next, the teacher will ask the students to share some of their answers with those in their groups and discuss any other possible answers that could have been written down.
7. The teacher will ask students working in their groups to name their lemon and continue to get to know their lemons, carefully noting the lemon's characteristics and determining what makes it different from other lemons they have seen. Then the teacher will ask students to put their lemons in a big brown bag. After the lemons have been collected, the teacher will ask each group to send up a representative to identify and retrieve its lemon. They will be able to do so!
8. Then the teacher will ask the students to explain how they knew the lemons belonged to their group. The goal here is to elicit the concept that although each lemon is similar to other lemons, each has markings and characteristics that make it an individual; despite these differences, they are all equally lemons. The teacher will discuss with the class the following questions:
 - How are your brothers and sisters like you, but different as well?
 - How are people in your school like you, but different as well?
 - How are people in your town like you, but different as well?
 - How are people with disabilities like you, but different as well?

Day Two

1. As students come in, the teacher will ask the students to write two sentences describing their group's lemon from memory.
2. The students will reconvene in their groups and review their notes from the day before. The teacher will ask the students to retrieve their lemons and work together (in groups) to write a biography for their lemon and then prepare to share or act out the diary with the class.
3. The groups will share or act out an event or events from their lemons' biography.
4. The teacher can introduce a lesson on writing biographies, journal writing, or the diary genre.