

Chrysanthemum

Synopsis Chrysanthemum's parents think she is perfect when she is born, so they give her a perfect name. Chrysanthemum loves everything about her life and her name until she starts school, where some of her classmates make fun of her because of her name. Each evening, Chrysanthemum's parents boost her up, and each day she faces teasing and becomes increasingly miserable. Then the music teacher, Mrs. Twinkle, teaches Chrysanthemum to love her name again.

Introduction: Explore Fiction

Point out Chrysanthemum on the cover of the book. *Chrysanthemum is named for this flower, and she thinks her name is perfect. However, when she starts to school, some of the girls in her class make fun of her name. Chrysanthemum becomes very upset, but one of her teachers helps her to see things differently.*

As you can see, Chrysanthemum is a mouse. In fact, all the characters in this fiction book are mice, but the mice act like people. They wear clothes and talk and go to school. And the situations in the book could happen to people.

Vocabulary

Tier Two: appreciate, begrudging, discontented, dreadful, envious, jaundice, scarcely, wilt

Tier Three: chrysanthemum, delphinium, epilogue, Parcheesi, trifle, winsome

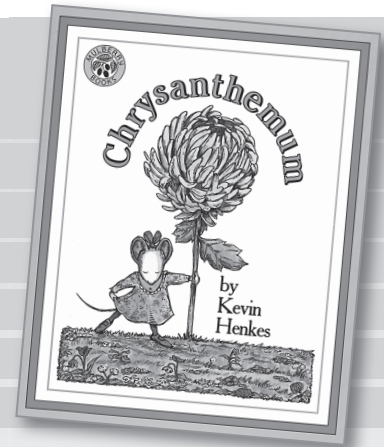
Word Work

2.21.A.iii Understand and use the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking: Adjectives (e.g., descriptive: old, wonderful; articles: a, an, the).

2.21.A.iv Understand and use the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking: Adverbs (e.g., time: before, next; manner: carefully, beautifully).

2.5.B Use context to determine the relevant meaning of unfamiliar words or multiple-meaning words.

Introduce vocabulary in context as it appears within the book before or during reading. Read aloud the first page of text as students follow along. *How do Chrysanthemum's parents describe her? (absolutely perfect) Perfect is an adjective that describes Chrysanthemum, who is a mouse (person). However, her parents didn't think saying she was perfect was enough, so another word is added to that description. That word is absolutely. That means that Chrysanthemum is more than perfect. Adjectives describe people, places, and things. Adverbs are sometimes added to tell more about the adjectives. Perfect is an adjective describing Chrysanthemum, and absolutely is an adverb describing perfect.*



Author: Kevin Henkes

Genre: Fiction

Guided Reading Level: L

TEKS: 2.C, 2.4, 2.5.B, 2.6.A, 2.15.B, 2.21.A.iii, 2.21.A.iv

English Language Support

Offer realia, gestures, or photos to support the introduction of the new vocabulary. Show photos of the flowers mentioned in the book (chrysanthemum, delphinium, lily of the valley, daisy, marigold, carnation). Post the photos and label them. Point out the kinds of clothes that Chrysanthemum wears: a dress, a jumper, and her outfit with seven pockets. Bring in a Parcheesi game or show photos of a Parcheesi board and briefly describe the game. (Parcheesi is a board game played with dice. Each player has four playing pieces called *pawns*, and the object is to get all four to the center circle first.)

Understanding the Text

Literal: *How do Victoria and the other girls make fun of Chrysanthemum's name? (They tell her it is too long, it won't fit on a name tag, and it is a kind of flower. Victoria says that flowers live in a garden with worms and other dirty things.) How does Chrysanthemum react to what they say? (She wants to change her name, she walks to school very slowly, and she has a nightmare).*

Interpretive: *Why do you think Victoria and the other girls end up wanting to change their names to Marigold, Carnation, and Lily of the Valley?*

Applied: *Chrysanthemum loves her name until she goes to school where others make fun of her name and her opinion totally changes. Why do you think people care so much what others think?*

Phonics and Word Recognition

2.C *Decode words by applying knowledge of common spelling patterns.*

Point out that in the name *Chrysanthemum*, the *ch* makes the /k/ sound instead of the /ch/ sound. Explain that many words from the ancient Greek language pronounce the *ch* as /k/. Provide clues to other words that have the /k/ sound of *ch* and write them where all can see: *school, character, echo, anchor, Christmas, choir, chemistry, and technology.*

Fluency

2.5.B *Use context to determine the relevant meaning of unfamiliar words or multiple-meaning words.*

Call students' attention to the page where Chrysanthemum returns home after her first day of school. Read the page aloud. *What four adjectives does Chrysanthemum's father use to describe her name? (precious, priceless, fascinating, winsome) If you are unsure of their meanings, you can guess that they are favorable because he was trying to make Chrysanthemum feel better.* Discuss the meaning of these words.

Call students' attention to the page where Chrysanthemum returns home after her second day of school. Read the page aloud. *What four adjectives does Chrysanthemum's father use to describe her classmates? (envious, begrudging, discontented, jaundiced) If you are unsure of their meanings, you can guess that they are unfavorable because he was trying to make Chrysanthemum feel better.* Discuss the meaning of these words.

Reading Literature

2.6.A *Identify moral lessons as themes in well-known fables, legends, myths, or stories.*

2.4 *Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to read aloud grade-level appropriate text with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension.*

Discuss with students the lesson in this book. (When you make fun of others, it really affects them in a negative way. People should not say hurtful things to others.)

Present the book as Readers Theater. Assign different students to be the characters in the book. Have them read the dialogue as the characters would. Be sure that students pronounce the words correctly and read with proper expression. Invite another class to attend a performance.

Writing

2.15.B *Use common graphic features to assist in the interpretation of text (e.g., captions, illustrations).*

The illustrations in *Chrysanthemum* are outstanding. Ask students to choose their favorite illustration and write a paragraph about what it shows and why it is their favorite. Provide time for sharing.