

Grab and Go Lesson Plan

The Power of Names

Objective

Students will learn the importance of names, celebrate unique identities and cultures connected to names, and practice correct pronunciation of classmates' names.

Materials

- Picture books with stories about unique names (See Booklist)
 - Name cards and markers
 - My Name Story Template (included)
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1. Introduction

One Word Activity:

- Write the word “name” on the whiteboard or chartstand.
- Invite students to think about the word – connections, visual images, feelings.
- Have them first share their thinking with a partner and then invite volunteers to share with the class.
- Record their ideas on the white board, creating a “word web” around the word “name”.

Set the Context:

- Tell the students that they are going to be making name cards for their desks shortly, but before they do, you want to spend some time talking about the importance of names.
- “A name is not just letters on a card. Names are special and unique and tell a story.”
- Discuss the importance of names and how names are often connected to family and culture.
- Explain that everyone’s name has a story, meaning, or special connection.

- Model by sharing your “name story” with the class – who named you or the meaning behind your name.

Discussion Prompt:

- Ask the students what they know about their name.
- Were they named after anyone in their family?
- Is their name connected to their culture or heritage?
- Invite a few students to share their name stories.



2. Read Aloud

- Choose 1–2 picture books from the book list about kids with unique names that focus on how characters' names are unique, culturally connected, or difficult to pronounce.

During the reading, pause to ask questions like:

- Why is it important to say someone's name correctly?
- How do you think the character feels when people can't pronounce their name?
- What do you notice about how the character feels about their name at the beginning versus the end of the story?
- Model your own thoughts or connections where possible.

After reading, invite students to share any connections they might have to the story:

- Has anyone experienced someone mispronouncing their name?
- How did it make them feel?
- Did they tell the person the correct pronunciation?
- Discuss the importance of pronouncing names correctly.
- Invite students to talk about what they think the connection is between the words *respect* and *name*.

3. Activity: Name Cards and Partner Introductions

- Pass out name cards. Invite students to use markers and create a colourful name card for their desks. (Emergent writers could colour pre-made block letter name cards)
- Make your own name card to show as an example.
- After students have completed their name cards, tell them that they are going to share their names and correct pronunciation with a partner. (You may want to do this the next day)

Model:

- My first name is Adrienne. The A is a long A, not a short A. Some people call me Andrea or Adrianna but it's Adrienne. Sometimes, people spell my name A-D-R-I-A-N but my name is spelled "A-D-R-I-E-N-N-E".
- My middle name is Sheila – which was my mum's first name.

Practice:

- Invite students to pair up and introduce themselves to their partner, using the correct pronunciation.
- Students can also share any name stories, tips on how to say their name properly, or mistakes people sometimes make.
- Partners can practice saying each other's names.

Share with the class:

- Invite pairs to stand and introduce their partners to the class, using the correct name pronunciation.
- Example: "This is Margareta. She is named after her Grandma. Margareta's dad and grandma come from Greece so her name comes from Greece, too. Some people accidentally call her Margaret but her real name is Margareta."

4. End the Lesson

- Discuss the importance of respecting and pronouncing others' names correctly.
- Discuss how everyone's name is a part of their story and how we can make people feel welcome by learning how to pronounce their names correctly.
- Tell the students that, as a class, we want to show respect to our classmates to start the school year, and one way is to pronounce their names correctly.

Return to the One Word word web:

- Reflect on the connections students made initially to the word "name".
- Invite students to think about new ideas they might be able to add to the word web. How has our thinking about names stretched?
- Using a different coloured marker, create a second word web outside the original web so both layers can be seen. (i.e. respect, name story, culture, family, pronunciation)

Extension Activities (*Optional*)

My Name Story:

- Pass out *My Name Story* template. *Students may need to ask parents about their name stories if they do not know them.*
- Older students can use the template as a starting point for a short writing activity, "My Name Story".

Name Wall or Name Gallery:

- Create a "Name Wall" in the classroom, where students can write their names along with a fun fact, meaning, or story.

My Name Story

Name: _____

My name is _____

My family culture is _____

I was named after _____

Something interesting about my name is _____

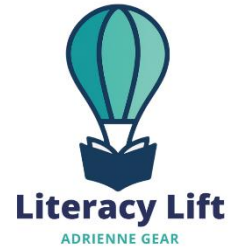
I think my name means _____

I am proud of my name because _____

If I could change my name, I would call myself _____



The Power of Names



[*My Name is Ai Lin*](#) - Maria Wen Adcock

[*My Name is a Gift. A heartfelt celebration of the names we're given*](#) - Zeshan Akhter

[*My Name is a Story*](#) - Ashanti

[*Thunder Boy Jr.*](#) - Sherman Alexie

[*My Name Is Saajin Singh*](#) - Kuljinder Kaur Brar

[*The Name Jar*](#) - Yangsook Choi

[*How Nivi Got Her Names*](#) - Laura Deal

[*Chrysanthemum*](#) - Kevin Henkes

[*Say My Name*](#) - Joanna Ho

[*Little Troublemaker Defends Her Name*](#) - Luvvie Ajayi Jones

[*My Name*](#) - Supriya Kelkar

[*Thao*](#) - Thao Lam

[*Alma and How She Got Her Name*](#) - Juana Martinez-Neal

[*What's Your Name?*](#) - Bethanie Deeney Murguia

[*The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name*](#) - Sandhya Parappukaran

[*Sora's Seashells*](#) - Helena Ku Rhee

[*My Name is Yoon*](#) - Helen Recorvits

[*My Name Is Cool!*](#) - Antonio Sacre

[*That's Not My Name!*](#) - Anoosha Syed

[*The Change Your Name Store*](#) - Leanne Shirliffe

[*Your Name is a Song*](#) - Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

[*Millions of Maxes*](#) - Meg Wolitzer

[*My Unique Name*](#) - Chynika Wright

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