
Literature Selection: *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka

Summary

Yo! Yes? is a cheerful story about a two boys who become friends. Raschka uses simple words and punctuation to make this story come alive! A great read aloud. The language can be used as a springboard to discuss cultural differences.

Suggested Activities

- The Power of Punctuation (Choral Reading)
- Writing Assignment
- Drama - Acting it out!
- Book Making

The Power of Punctuation

After reading this book with your students and discussing the story line, re-read it, focusing on the punctuation and oral expression. Have your students practice their oral expression as you read. Discuss the function of the punctuation used so that all of the students understand at a comma there is a pause and with an exclamation mark there is excitement. Experiment saying words with different punctuation marks to demonstrate to the students that punctuation can make a difference in the meaning that is conveyed, even through a single word! (Me? Me! Me.) Also, give the students a card with a punctuation mark on it and instruct them to say something using the correct punctuation. The other students guess which punctuation mark the student is expressing. Once the students understand the punctuation symbols used in the book, split the class in half. Have one group read the one child's lines while the other group reads the other child's lines (choral reading). Encourage the students to say their lines with as much expression as possible.

Writing Assignment

Have students brainstorm simple words that they can use to create their own stories of friendship that will be similar to *Yo! Yes?*. If the class has students who speak different languages, use this activity as an opportunity for these children to teach their classmates a few words of their native tongue. If in pairs, one student can write their lines in English, while the other student responds to the English words in his or her lines in their native language.

Drama -- Acting it Out

Have the pairs perform their stories of friendship for the class, focusing on the expression used as a result of their choice of punctuation.

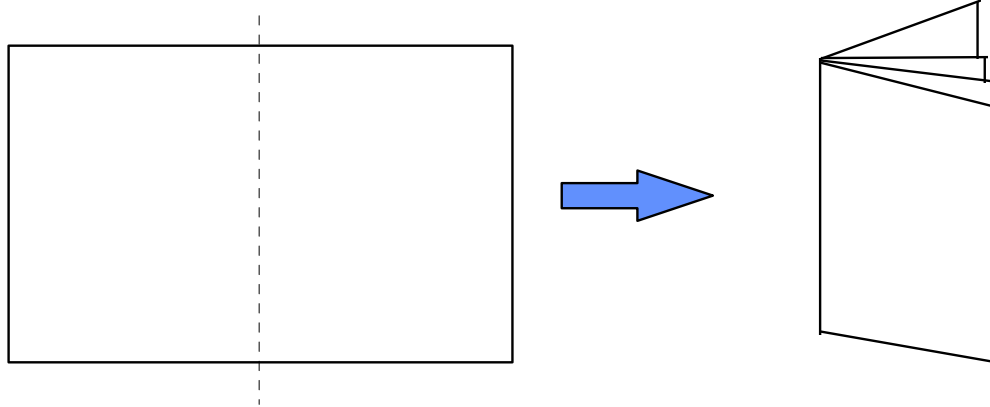
Book Making

After the students have performed their stories and made the changes they feel are necessary, the friendship stories can be put into "real books". Bookmaking is a motivating activity because most children are very eager to make their writing look as "real" as possible. The finished books can be shared with younger students. Before the students do their illustrations discuss the influence that line, shape, color and texture have on how people feel when they look at story illustrations (for example, red, orange and

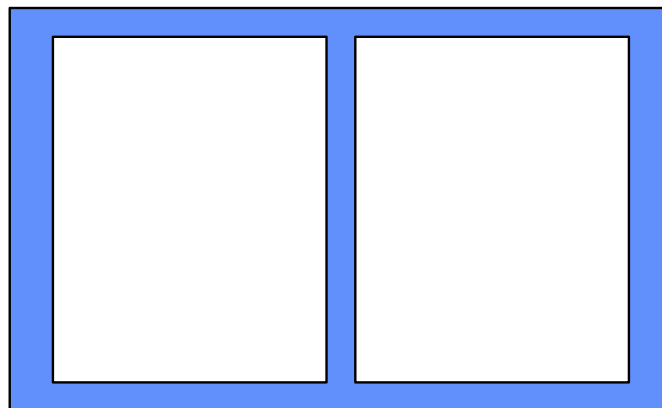
yellow are warm colors whereas, blues and greens are cool). Consider making one big book for the reading center or for students to share with a younger grade.

Book Making

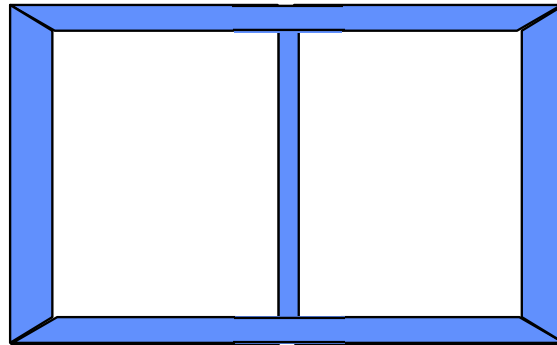
- Take six sheets of plain white paper. Line the paper up and hold it together while folding all six sheets in half. Sew along the crease using fairly large stitching so the paper doesn't tear apart. This makes the pages of the book. Set aside.



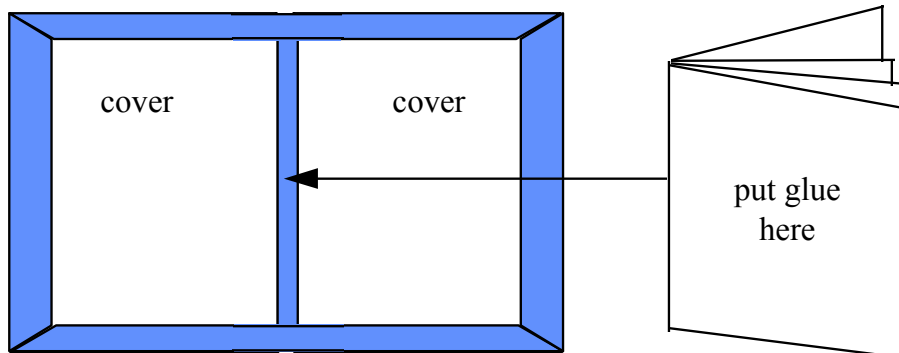
- Lay the fabric (15"x11") patterned side down onto the table. Lay two pieces of 6"x9" cardboard on top of the fabric leaving 1/2" between the pieces of cardboard. Pick up cardboard pieces, apply glue to one side and place cardboard back where it was putting glued side on fabric. Hold firmly.



- Then fold up the edges of the cloth, like you wrap the ends of a present. Glue them in place.



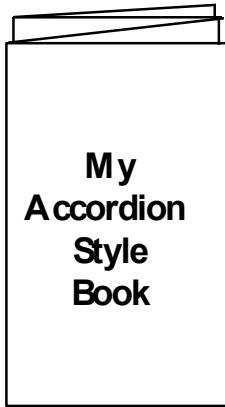
- Take the sewn pages and put glue on the front cover. Place the crease of the sewn book in the 1/2" space left between the cardboard pieces. Press the cover, glue side down into the cardboard. This page should cover the rough edges of the fabric. Do the same to the back cover. Close the book and place heavy item on top to press out air bubbles and to keep book flat while it dries. (Check to make sure no glue has escaped so that the pages don't get glued together).



Put spine of sewn booklet into space between covers while gluing front and back sheets of paper of booklet to front and back cover.

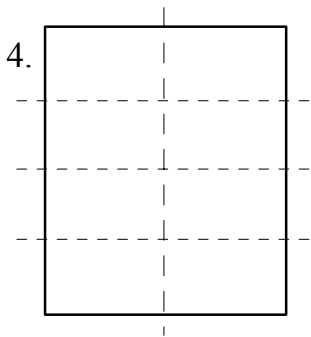
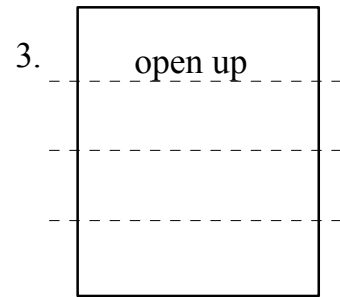
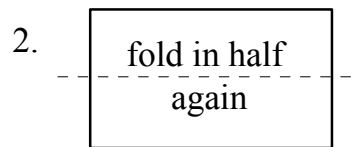
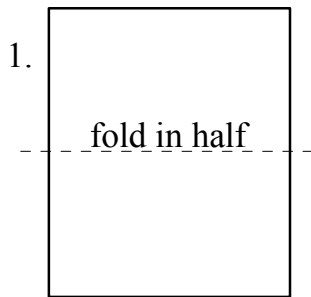
- The books are ready for students to write and draw in them.

More Book Making Ideas

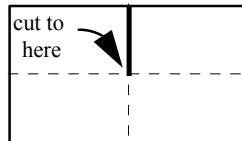


The accordion style book is very easy to make. Take a piece of paper and fold it as illustrated (like a brochure). Students can then glue in illustrations and text (not too much glue or the pages wrinkle!!)

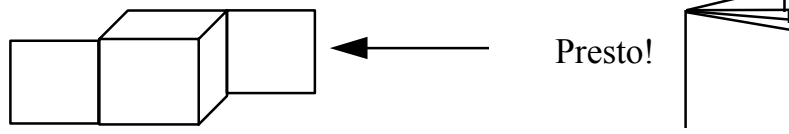
A Tiny Book for Tiny Hands



Fold vertically in half and open up. Then fold in half the way you folded it in step 1. Cut down middle fold until the scissors hit the other fold line.



5. Open the sheet up and fold vertically like done in the first part of step 4. Push the ends towards the middle and the slit in the paper will open up, keep pushing until the slit closes. Press the book flat.



Literature Selection: *Mrs. Katz and Tush* by Patricia Polacco

Summary

Larnel begins a friendship with Mrs. Katz when he asks her to take in an abandoned kitten. As Larnel and Mrs. Katz take care of the kitten together their friendship grows stronger. Readers learn about Larnel’s cultural history and Mrs. Katz’s Jewish heritage and the special times the two of them spend together.

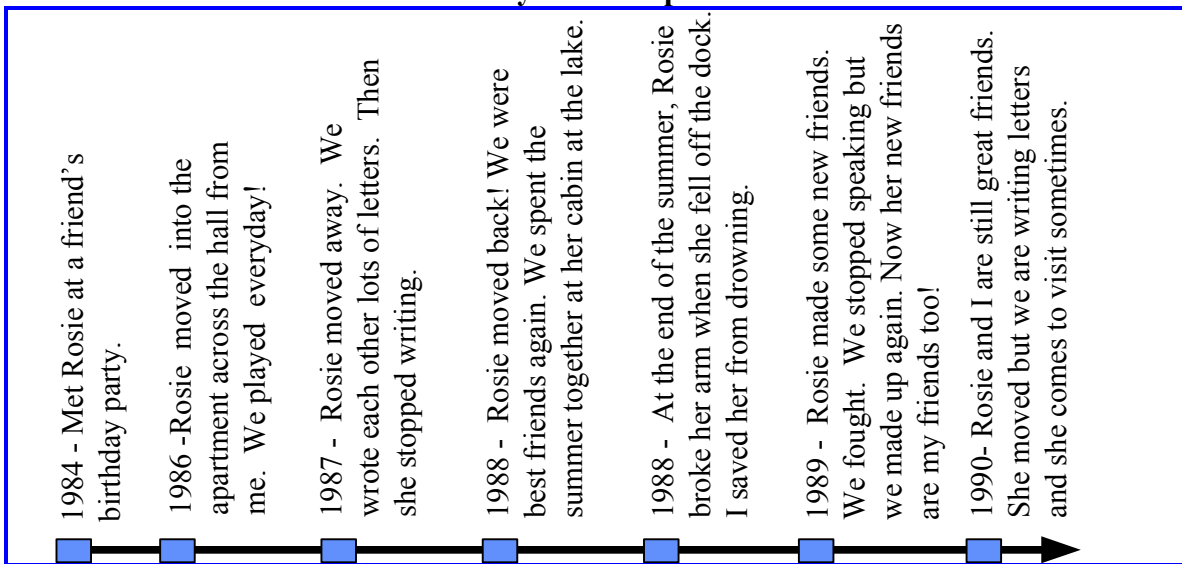
Suggested Activities

- Time Line a Friendship
- Learning About Cultures
- Friendly Action Search
- FlipFlap Book

Time Line a Friendship

Although Patricia Polacco gives readers no exact dates when Larnel and Mrs. Katz first met, students learn about some of the special events in their friendship and about how Larnel and Mrs. Katz met. Eventually, readers learn of Mrs. Katz death and Larnel’s life long friendship with her. In this activity students will time line a friendship they have or have had in the past. On the time line students will record special events or dates that have a significant meaning to them and the development of the friendship. The finished time lines should look something like this:

Time line of my friendship with Rosie.



“Friendly” Action Search

Readers know that Larnel and Mrs. Katz are good friends because they do some really nice things for each other. Have students re-read the book, searching for and identifying actions of either character that prove that the characters have “friendly” characteristics. Students may identify any of the following actions from the book as “friendly” actions:

- Larnel stopped in to see Mrs. Katz by himself to see if she wanted the kitten.
- Larnel kept his promise and helped Mrs. Katz with Tush.
- Larnel went with Mrs. Katz to the cemetery to say kaddish for Myron.
- Larnel helps Mrs. Katz look for Tush.
- Larnel prayed for Tush to return to Mrs. Katz.
- Mrs. Katz hand knitted a sweater for Larnel.
- Mrs. Katz left Larnel her book when she passed away.
- Mrs. Katz baked kugel for Larnel.
- Mrs. Katz got Larnel dancing with her.
- Mrs. Katz invited Larnel to go to the cemetery.
- The neighbors found Tush and returned her.
- Larnel spends Passover with Mrs. Katz so she is not alone.
- Larnel read at her gravesite and kept her memory close to his heart throughout the years.

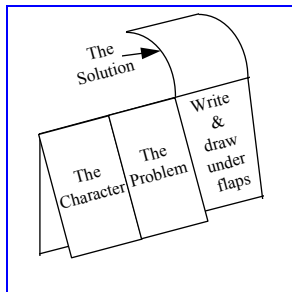
Students should be able to explain why they feel the action can be classified as a friendly action. Some questions students may want to ask themselves to help classify the actions are:

1. How does this action make others feel?
2. How does this action make the character feel?
3. Why does the character do it?

Learning About Cultures

Larnel and Mrs. Katz come from different cultural backgrounds but through their friendship they learn about themselves and each other's cultural background. Larnel learns a great deal about Mrs. Katz's Jewish heritage and he discovers similarities shared between his African American heritage and her Jewish heritage. Have students identify some of the Jewish traditions that Larnel learns about from Mrs. Katz. Then, have students interview one another to learn more about each other's cultural background and family traditions. Once the students have had enough time to interview one another, students introduce their partner to the rest of the class by summarizing the information that they have collected through the interview.

FlipFlap Book



Students pick a character from the story, identify one problem that the character has experienced in the story, and identify the solution to the problem. Then, fold a piece of 9" x 11" paper in half lengthwise and cut from one side to the middle fold line to create three equal sized flaps as illustrated. Close and label the flaps (The Character, The Problem and The Solution). Under the appropriate flap, students draw or write (or both) the information. Students can exchange their FlipFlap Books and try to figure out who the character is by reading about the problem or solution and so forth.

Students can also create their own labels for the flaps to summarize information about Mrs. Katz's Jewish culture.

Additional Literature Suggestions

***Iggies's House* by Judy Blume** (novel)

A Black family moves into Winnie's neighborhood and Winnie learns first hand about racism and fear. She also learns how to be a good friend.

***The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida**

A Japanese-American girl remembers the friend she had to leave behind when she was forced to live in an internment camp during World War II.