



Don't Call Me Special: Reading and Discussion



Lesson title:

Don't Call Me Special: Reading and Discussion

Subject and topic:

ELA

Grade level:

1st

Duration:

45 minutes

Lesson summary:

This is an introductory lesson on physical disability using the book “Don't Call Me Special” by Pat Thomas. The educator will read aloud the book and ask questions about the text. Students will learn about making assumptions and what physical disability can look like, as well as how equipment can help students with disabilities access all parts of their life.

Standards:

- CC.1.3.1.C- Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- CC.1.3.1.I- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.

Objectives:

- SWBAT gain a better understanding of their own assumptions regarding physical disability
- SWBAT define the vocabulary words in the book by participating in a discussion following the reading of the book.

Essential Questions:

- EQ1: Why does the author dislike the word special?
- EQ2: Even though we are all different, how are we the same?



Vocabulary:

- Assume
- Unique
- Mobility equipment mobility device
- Disability

Lesson procedures

Lesson Preparation:

1. Obtain copies of “Don’t Call Me Special” by Pat Thomas
2. Ensure the classroom is set up for a read-aloud

Materials

- “Don’t Call Me Special”
- Vocab Worksheet
- Coloring worksheet
- Index cards cut in half
- Large wide mouth mason jar or plastic bowl

Procedures

1. Welcome students to class
 2. Ask them to sit in a comfy spot. Hold up the book and ask students “I know we aren’t supposed to judge a book by it’s cover, but can you tell me, what do you notice on the cover?” (5 minutes)
3. Gather some responses
 - a. Yes, there is a young girl using a wheelchair!
4. Okay let’s read through the book and we will discuss it as we go.
5. Discussion Questions (20 minutes):
 - a. Pages 6-7:
 - i. What are the children doing on the playground? Who do you think finds it hard to join in sports?
 - b. Pages 8-9:
 - i. Why does the narrator say you may have picked the girl in the wheelchair? Is that true? Who does the narrator say hates sports. Why?
 - c. Pages 10-11:
 - i. Why is it a problem when we assume things about people who are different from us? What happens when you make a guess or assume something about someone that may not be true?



1. Answer: You never really get to know who they are! Its best to ask someone "What's your story? Or "how are ya?"
 - d. Pages 12-13:
 - i. What does it mean to be unique? Discuss the questions on page 13.
 - e. Pages 14-15:
 - i. What do the children use to help them do their best? Discuss the questions on the bottom of page 14. What kinds of tools/equipment help children who have disabilities? Why are those tools so important?
 1. Prompt students to answer with so they can live and do all of the things kids do (access)
 - f. Pages 18-19:
 - i. Why do people with disabilities dislike being called special?
 1. Receive some answers and then share: Special is associated with weird or different as opposed to just another normal. Every person is different from one another in many ways. People with disabilities aren't special, they are completely normal. Their needs aren't special, they are different.
 - g. Pages 20-21:
 - i. Is it fair to assume or judge someone just because they may look or act different from you? How do you feel when people tease you or make you feel uncomfortable?
 - h. Pages 22-23:
 - i. How do helpers assist people with disabilities? Why do you think it would be upsetting if a helper did everything for you instead of letting you try to do it yourself?
 - i. Pages 24-25:
 - i. Do all of us learn things the same way at the same time? What can you learn from the information?
6. Jar Activity:
- a. After you discuss the book with students, hand out half an index card to each student. Ask students to write down one way you can be kind to another student in the class room on the index card. Ask all students to fold their card and place it inside the mason jar.
 - b. Say this will be our daily kindness jar. Every day one student will pull out a card and act out their moment of kindness for the day.
 - c. Can I have a volunteer for today? Have the volunteer pick a card and read it aloud, then try to carry out that act of kindness for a closing activity.

Homework:

Vocab worksheet and coloring pages



Sources for this lesson plan:

<https://www.museumofdisability.org/docs/1.-LESSON-PLAN-Dont-Call-Me-Special.pdf>

<http://poppingwheelies.net/friends1.html>

Related materials:

- Documents below

Evaluation:

Ask your students this question related to this lesson to gauge how much they learned. **Is being different OK? yes or no?**

Thank you for bringing the conversation about disability into your classroom.

Help us evaluate this lesson plan by visiting [our evaluation page to assess this lesson](#). You will find an evaluation both for you and your students to complete there.



Worksheet: Don't Call Me Special

Name:

Date:

1. What does Assume mean?

- A. To walk down the hallway really fast without a hall pass.
- B. When we assume something, we are making a guess without really knowing anything.
- C. To help someone with a disability around the school.

2. What does Equipment mean?

- a. Taking a snow day!
- b. A type of disability that some people are born with.
- c. The things that we use to make some of the jobs we have to do easier.

3. What does Unique mean?

- a. Totally normal, nothing remarkable or special.
- b. A type of wheelchair that can climb stairs.
- c. If something is unique it is the only one of it's kind. All people are unique because we are all different from each other.

Sentences: Fill in the blank

Jenny's wheelchair is only one piece of _____ that she uses throughout her busy day.

We are all _____, we are all different and one of a kind.

I _____ a person with a disability needed my help, when actually my help was not so helpful.

Word Bank: **unique** **equipment** **assume**





