

School's First Day of School

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Ages: 4-8, Grades PreK-3

Themes: School Stories, New Experiences

SUMMARY

Frederick Douglass Elementary has just been built and is anxiously awaiting the first day of school. Janitor gets him prepared by polishing his floors and windows and explaining that soon he'll be filled with children. School isn't sure what to think until the children actually arrive and there are more of them than he could have possibly imagined. Children will delight at experiencing the first day of school through the eyes of the school itself and are sure to recognize some of the school's first day feelings.

Common Core Connections:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will make text-to-self connections.
- Students will discuss point-of-view.
- Students will use *School's First Day of School* as a mentor text to write a short story about their school's first day.
- Students will identify how the school changed from the beginning to the end of the story, including making inferences about his feelings.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the first day of school with children. Guiding questions: (scribe students' ideas on chart paper or white board)

- What did we do on the first day of school?
- How was the first day different than the other days?
- How did you feel on the first day of school?
- What did you learn on the first day of school?
- Was there anything that surprised you on the first day?
- How have you changed since the first day of school?

Tell students that they're going to watch a movie about the first day of school. Encourage students to watch and listen for similarities and differences with their first day.

Introduce point of view to the students. Practice identifying point of view by having pairs of students describe an object from different angles or show pictures of an object or landmark from different points-of-view. Read aloud or revisit familiar books with the students. Guiding questions:

- From who's point-of-view is the story told? How do you know?
- What type of information does the author include to identify the point-of-view? (character feelings, character motivations, the word "I")
- How would this story be different if it was told from another character's point-of-view?

Tell children that they are going to watch a movie about the first day of school and that the movie is told from the school's perspective. Encourage students to watch and listen for ways that the school's first day experience was similar and different from their own.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Revisit the Before Viewing discussions. Guide students to make text-to-self connections using a graphic organizer. Set up a T-chart labeled, "Same as School/Different from School." Guiding questions:

- Look at the activities that you listed from your first day of school. Did any of these happen on School's first day? Scribe onto T-chart.
- What did you do on your first day that School didn't? What did School do that you didn't? Scribe onto T-chart.
- How do you think our school felt on the first day? Why do you think that?

Culminate the discussion by having students illustrate something that happened on their first day of school and write a sentence describing the picture from the school's point-of-view. Example: The school learned how to say the Pledge of Allegiance when it came out of his loudspeakers.

Lead a discussion about how the School's feelings changed from the beginning to the end of the movie. Begin by brainstorming feelings words with students. List the words that they come up with, along with a visual that shows the feeling. For more support, consider using a pre-made feelings chart. Then, replay, or read the beginning of the story.

Ask:

- How does the School feel?
- What in the movie/book shows you or tells you how he feels?
- Why does he feel that way?

After discussing, write on chart paper: In the beginning of the story, the school feels _____ because _____.

Then replay, or read, the middle of the story. Ask the same questions and write: In the middle of the story, the school feels _____ because _____.

Repeat the activity for the end of the story. Summarize with a statement: School's feelings change from _____ to _____ because _____.

Use the illustrations that children made in the previous activity for a shared writing activity. Guide students through the writing process by modeling:

- 1) Lay out or display all of the children's illustrations.
- 2) Order them chronologically, from the beginning of the school day to the end of the school day, with students' assistance.
- 3) Ask students how they think the school was feeling at different parts of the day and why. Write the feelings on big labels and affix near the corresponding pictures.
- 4) Compose a story, with students' input, describing the first day of school through the school's eyes. Use some of the sentences that students used to describe the pictures they drew. Think aloud as you write, narrating the decisions you make as an author. Elicit students' ideas and vocabulary words. To culminate, copy the story onto chart paper and add students' illustrations, making a big book.

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