

An Educator's Guide to
Patricia Polacco



The materials in this guide are aligned to **Common Core State Standards** for grades K-5
PenguinClassroom.com

An Educator's Guide to Patricia Polacco

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the Patricia Polacco Read-Aloud curriculum lesson plans. Patricia Polacco's stories and illustrations explore a variety of themes. She distinguishes her texts for children by tackling difficult topics, such as childhood illness, learning difficulties, and family and ethical challenges that relate to school-age children. Patricia Polacco's writing also highlights historical events and cultural traditions. Her books are often either biographical or autobiographical in content. The lesson plans have been developed to support you and your colleagues using these books as a read-aloud of a thematic unit of study or as a single read-aloud text. The lessons are aligned with Common Core State Standards for grades K–5.

Each lesson plan includes:

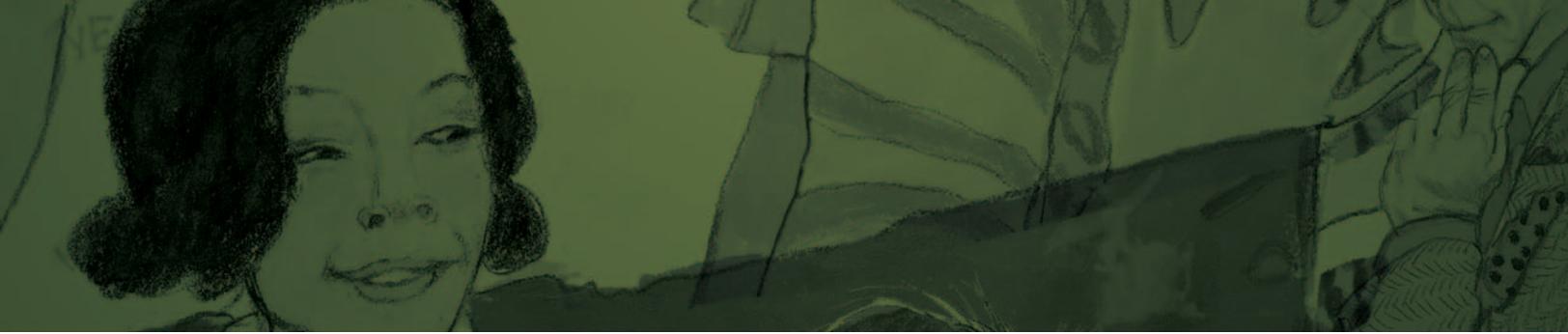
- Themes included in the text
- A suggested daily plan to follow
- Suggested appropriate grade levels
- Classroom discussion questions
- An optional written response
- Theme-related links to other Polacco read-aloud texts
- Common Core Standards for reading, writing, speaking, and listening

Along with these lessons, an accompanying discussion guide supports you as the teacher facilitator. Recommendations for paired, group, and whole-class discussion routines are included in the guide. This guide can be used to support students' listening and speaking comprehension, as well as a strategy to clarify thinking and broaden understanding of the text. The optional writing task can be used as another resource for classroom talk and assessment of standard based learning.

The Common Core Standards for reading demand close reading of complex texts. We present these lessons as a resource to support your curriculum alignment. We hope that they become an integral part of your literacy curriculum.

- Penguin School & Library

This guide was co-written by Barbara McLaughlin and Mary Hurley. Barbara is a Literacy Consultant based in Boston, MA. She was the Senior Program Director for the Elementary ELA Program in the Boston Public Schools from 2008–2012 and the Director of Reading First for Boston Public Schools from 2004–2008. She was a classroom teacher and a reading specialist for over 20 years. She holds a B.S. in Elementary Ed., an M.Ed. in Reading, and an MA in Children's Literature. Mary Hurley is currently a reading coach for the Boston Public Schools in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. She holds an M.A. in Elementary Education, with certifications in Reading, ESL, and Reading Recovery. She has over 20 years as a classroom teacher and literacy specialist. She also serves as a District Professional Development provider.



Use Penguin's Read-Aloud Classroom Discussion Guide

Discussion Goal

The goal of classroom discussion during read-aloud is to involve all students in a sustained oral discussion of the text through facilitated guiding questions to build meaning of a text for comprehension. The second goal is to increase students' language development and use of academic vocabulary.

Teacher's Role

The teacher guides the discussion using the questions and allows students to discuss the meaning. The teacher sets up discussion structures so that all students can respond. Students can have pair partners or work in threes or more to talk to each other about the question. The teacher requires students to support their understanding with evidence from the text.

Students' Role

The student role is to be an active listener during the read aloud and an active participant during the discussion. The student is respectful of others' ideas and asks for clarification if necessary.

Students engage in conversation with their talk partners in a respectful and thoughtful way. Students will be able to demonstrate comprehension by responding to the teacher's guiding questions.

Before Read-Aloud:

Turn and Talk partners have been assigned. These will change throughout the year. Students should have some time to practice this routine a few times before. Students sit in a location that allows them to turn to a partner during the discussion.

During Read-Aloud

Listen to the students to assess how they comprehend and how they are participating in the academic discussion of a text. Reread sections of the story if necessary.

After Read-Aloud

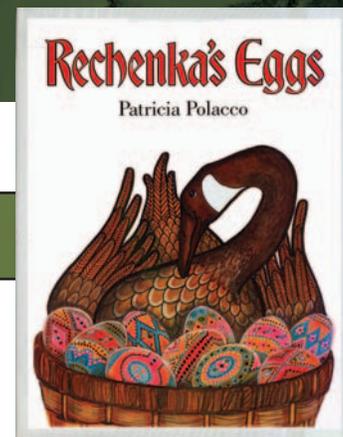
Using culminating question students will demonstrate comprehension of the text through a written response. The response must include evidence from the text to support student understanding.

Common Core Standards: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening SL.1, SL.2, RL.3, SL.6. Other standards may apply based on the grade level.

Rechenka's Eggs

Genre: Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): K-1

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.K.1, RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.K.10; RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.10, W.K, SL.K.1, SL.1.1



Important Points for Teachers

- Read-aloud in one sitting
- Understanding elements of fairy tale (good characters, magic happens, problem solution)
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Representation of theme of kindness

Please note: The first page of the text begins on page 3.

Themes

- Spring is season of rebirth
- Holiday tradition
- Values: rewarding kindness

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 5: How does the author describe Babushka?
- Stop at end of page 7: What does Babushka do for the wounded goose?
- Stop at end of page 11: As Rechenka recovers, what happens in Babushka's home?
- Stop at end of page 17: What does Rechenka do to help Babushka?
- What does Babushka do in the spring? What does Rechenka do?

Question about what happens in springtime

- Stop at end of book: What does Rechenka leave for Babushka at the end of the story?

Oral/Written Response Options

- Rechenka repays Babushka for her kindness. Give evidence from the text that describes what Rechenka did for Babushka.

Polacco's story is truly rewarding; Babushka's gift for coloring eggs comes across in a splendid array of folkloric patterns, minute detail and batik-like paintings. Babushka is given credit, but the artistry is Polacco's. Intricate designs and opulent colors shade every page, right down to the onion-shaped domes and peasants' festival garments.

—*Publishers Weekly*

Chicken Sunday

Genre: Fiction **Suggested Grade Level(s):** 2-3

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.2.3, RL.3.3; W.2.1, W.3.1; SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.3.1, SL.3.2

Important Points for Teachers

- Read-aloud in one sitting
- Fictionalized memoir from the author's childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Role of food is important in celebrations and as a reflection of a culture
- Figurative language may need to be explained, e.g. "a voice like slow thunder and sweet rain."

Discussion Questions

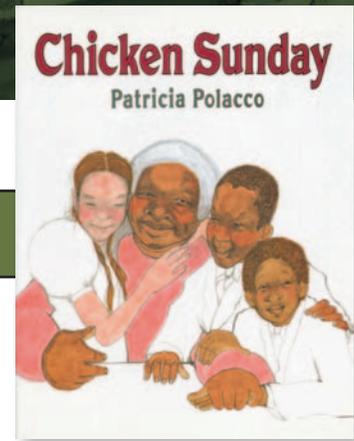
- Stop at end of page 7: Why are "Chicken Sundays" special for Miss Eula and the children?
- The narrator says, "We wanted to get her that hat more than anything in the world." Why did they want to do that?
- Stop at end of page 12: What is the children's plan to earn money for the hat? How does it work out for them?
- What does Miss Eula tell the children they'll have to do?
- Stop at end of page 21: What does Mr. Kodinski say and do when the children give him the Pysanky eggs?
- How does Mr. Kodinski show how he feels about the children now? Give specific examples from the text.
- Stop at end of book: Why do you think Mr. Kodinski doesn't take the children's money for the hat?
- The narrator says, "When it was time for her solo, we knew that she was singing just for us." Why is Miss Eula singing to the children?

Written Response Options

- What lesson do the children learn in this story? Support your response with specific examples from the text.
- At the beginning of the story, the children think Mr. Kodinski is mean. How do their feelings change about him? Support your response with evidence from the text.

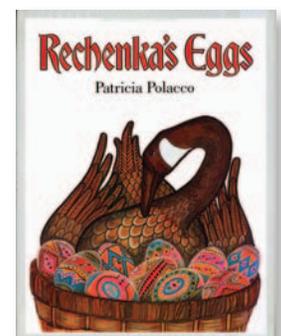
Connections to Other Texts

Rechenka's Eggs also describes the tradition and beauty of the Easter eggs that are painted in Russia.



Themes

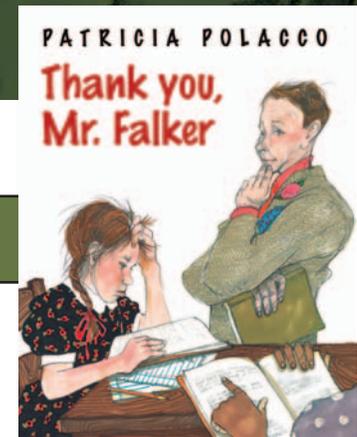
- Intergenerational friendship
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Importance of honesty



Thank You, Mr. Falker

Genre: Fiction **Suggested Grade Level(s):** 2–3

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.2.3, RL.3.3, RL.2.7, RL.3.7; L.2.6, L.3.6; W.2.2, W.3.2; SL.2.1, SL.3.1, SL.2.2, SL.3.2



Important Points for Teachers

- Begin with page 1 (in italics)
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break it up into two sessions
- This is a memoir from the author's childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text

Discussion Questions

- Grandpa poured a drop of honey on a book when Trisha was five. What was the meaning of this family ritual?
- Stop at end of page 9: What made Trisha feel “different” in school?
- What example did Trisha's grandmother use to explain to Trisha what it meant to be different?
- Stop at end of page 11: How does the author describe Trisha's reading ability in school?
- Stop at end of page 15: What was school like for Trisha when she moved to California and went to a new school?
- Stop at end of page 21: What changed for Trisha in fifth grade? What made her happy?
- Stop at end of page 25: How did Trisha react when Eric teased her?
- Stop at end of page 27: How did Mr. Falker discover Trisha's reading difficulty?
- Stop at end of page 31: What did Mr. Falker do to help Trisha?
- Stop at end of the page 33: At the end of the story, Trisha performed the same ritual for herself that her grandfather had performed for her when she was five. Why do you think this was important for Trisha to do now?

Themes

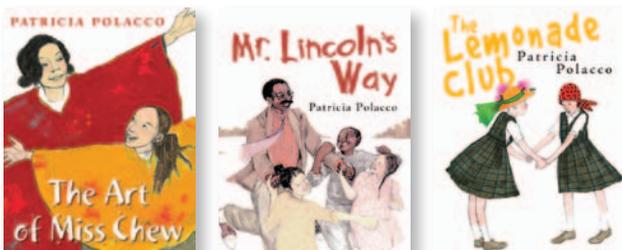
- Artistic talent
- Reading difficulties
- Teacher-student relationships

Written Response Options

Trisha loved books and wanted to learn to read. Explain the journey Trisha took from first grade to fifth grade in her desire to learn to read. (Informative/Explanatory Writing)

The author states, “But right from the start it didn't seem to matter to Mr. Falker which kids were the cutest. Or the smartest. Or the best at everything.” What evidence from the story supports this statement?

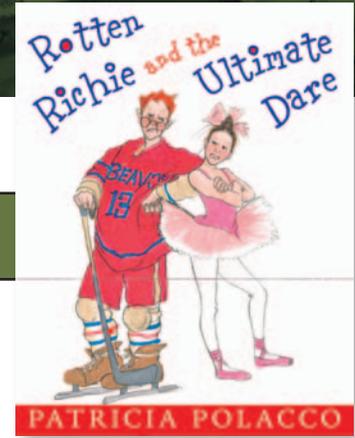
Connections to Other Texts Like *The Art of Miss Chew*, *Mr. Lincoln's Way*, and *The Lemonade Club*, *Thank You, Mr. Falker* depicts a teacher who reaches student's through understanding and dedication. He celebrates their talents and helps them through the difficulties in school.



Rotten Richie and the Ultimate Dare

Genre: Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): 2–3

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.2.1, RL.3.1, RL.2.3, RL. 3.3, RL.2.4, RL.3.4; L.2.4, L.2.6, L.3.4, L.3.6; SL.2.1, SL.3.1; W.2.2, W.3.2



Important Points for Teachers

- Introduction should only include title and author
- Read-aloud in one sitting
- Fictionalized memoir from the author's childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- First-person narration is conversational
- Vocabulary: descriptive language that sets tone of narrator

Introduction

Read page 1 as an introduction. (Left of dedication page)

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 6: The narrator tells this story in the first person using the word “I.” In these first pages, what other character does the narrator introduce? What does this introduction reveal about the character?
- Stop at end of page 15: Why does the narrator dare her brother? What is the result of the dare?
- Stop at end of page 25: Describe the narrator's experience at the hockey game. What did the narrator learn about her brother's sport when she decided to meet his challenge?
- Stop at end of page 39: What did Richie learn about his sister's interest when he took on her dare? Describe Richie's experience at the ballet recital.
- Stop at end of book: At the end of the book, Richie says, “Truce, then, Slapshot.” What does *truce* mean in this book?

Written Response Options

- What lesson do Richie and his sister learn about each other through their experience? Give specific evidence from the text.
- The siblings' feelings change about each other in this story. What makes their feelings change? Give specific evidence from the text.

Themes

- Sibling rivalry
- Problem solving
- Respect

“The sibling relationship is realistically depicted with honesty, childlike humor, and dead-on dialogue. This story can be enjoyed independently or shared aloud; either way, youngsters will easily relate to the rivalry, the dares, and the resolution. An outstanding book from a popular author.”

—*School Library Journal*

The Junkyard Wonders

Genre: Fiction **Suggested Grade Level(s):** 3–4

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.3.3, RL.4.3; W.3.1, W.4.1; SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.3.2, SL.4.2; L. 3.5, L.4.5

Important Points for Teachers

- Begin with note at beginning of the book (page 1)
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break up into two sessions
- This story is based on an experience from the author’s childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Explore figurative language with your students

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 1: Why do you think the author started the book this way?
- Stop at end of page 4: Trisha says, “My heart sang as I walked to school?” How is she feeling?
- Based on the text and illustrations, do you think things will be different for Trisha in her new school?
- Stop at end of page 12: (Post Mrs. Peterson’s definition of *genius* on chart paper. Reread it with the students and discuss its meaning.) Why do you think Mrs. Peterson began the school year with this definition?
- Trisha says, “I found a soulmate in Thom.” What does she mean?
- How is Trisha feeling about her new school?
- Stop at end of page 18: How does being part of a tribe change things for Trisha?
- Stop at end of page 24: Why does Mrs. Peterson take the class to the junkyard?
- Mrs. Peterson tells the tribes to find objects and create something new with them. She says, “Forget what the object was... imagine what it could be!” What is she trying to teach the students with this project?

(The teacher can choose to stop here and finish the book in another session or continue with the reading.)

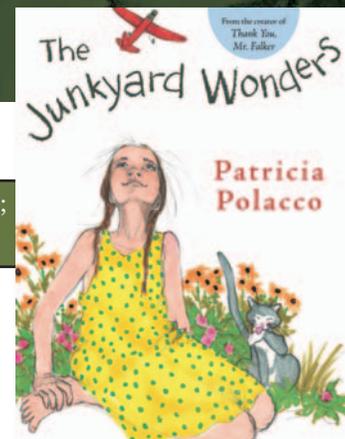
- Stop at end of page 30: How does each member of the Vanilla Tribe contribute to the plane project?
- Stop at end of page 36: Why do you think Ravanne finally spoke?
- What is Barton’s plan to ruin the Vanilla Tribe’s dreams?
- Stop at end of page 46: Mrs. Peterson tells the class, “We are going to launch the Wonder tomorrow... just as we planned.” What does that tell us about her?
- Why is the successful launching of the plane so important to the students?
- Read the postscript: Why do you think Patricia Polacco included this information at the end of the book?

Written Response Options

- How do the students in the junkyard class prove that they are wonders? Include details from the text in your response.

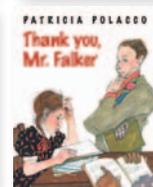
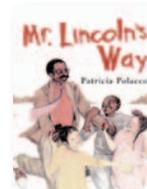
Connections to Other Texts

- *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, *The Art of Miss Chew*, and *The Junkyard Wonders* all describe teachers who had an impact on Patricia Polacco’s life. Discuss with the students how each one contributed to her life and career.
- *Thank you, Mr. Falker*, *Mr. Lincoln’s Way*, *Bully*, and *The Junkyard Wonders* all deal with the subject of bullying. Discuss with the students how this topic is dealt with in these books. What message does Patricia Polacco send about bullies in each of these books?



Themes

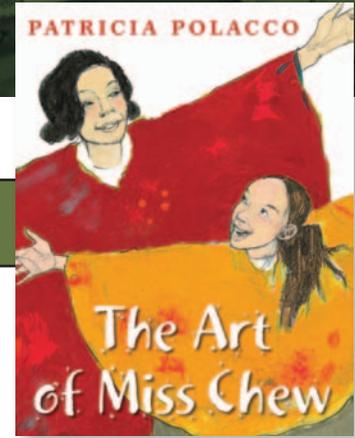
- Reaching one’s full potential
- Developing self-esteem
- Importance of teamwork
- Teacher-student relationships
- Bullying
- Overcoming difficulties



The Art of Miss Chew

Genre: Fiction **Suggested Grade Level(s):** 3–4

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.3.3, RL.4.3; W.3.1, W.4.1; SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.3.2, SL.4.2; L. 3.5, L.4.5



Important Points for Teachers

- Begin with note at beginning of the book (page 1)
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break up into two sessions
- This is a memoir from the author's childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Explore the meaning of figurative language with students

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 1: What does the author tell us here about herself?
- How does this information “set the stage” or give us a hint as to what will happen in this memoir?
- Stop at end of page 6: How did Mr. Donovan help to solve one of Trisha's problems?
- What was stopping her from being truly happy?
- Stop at end of page 11: How does Mr. Donovan solve Trisha's other problem?
- The author says, “I danced on air all the way home that day.” What does that tell us about how she's feeling?
- Stop at end of paragraph 1 on page 14: Miss Chew calls art “the language of emotion and images.” What does she mean by this?
- Continue the page and read to end of page 17: Miss Chew has the students draw saltshakers over and over in order to make them truly “see” them. What does she mean when she says, “Don't just look at them, see them!?”
- Stop at end of page 21: How does Miss Chew explain what negative space is?

(The teacher can choose to stop here and finish the book in another session or continue with the reading.)

- Stop at end of page 23: When Mr. Donovan leaves for Ireland, how do things change for Trisha?
- Stop at end of page 28: What does Miss Chew think is Trisha's problem with reading, and what is her plan to help her?
- Stop at end of page 32: How are Miss Chew and Mr. Donovan different from Mrs. Spaulding?
- Complete reading the book: What does Miss Chew mean when she says to Trisha, “...you have most certainly learned the language of art”?
- Why do you think Miss Chew gave Trisha one of her painting smocks?
- What does Trisha mean when she says the art show was the defining moment in her young life?

Written Response Options

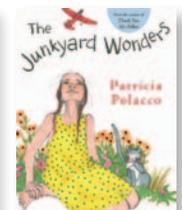
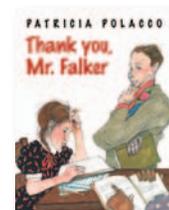
- Describe the importance of Miss Chew in Trisha's life. Use specific details from the text in your response.

Connections to Other Texts

- *Thank You, Mr. Falker* and *The Junkyard Wonders* also describe teachers who had an impact on Polacco's life. Discuss how *The Art of Miss Chew* could also be considered a thank-you note to a beloved teacher.

Themes:

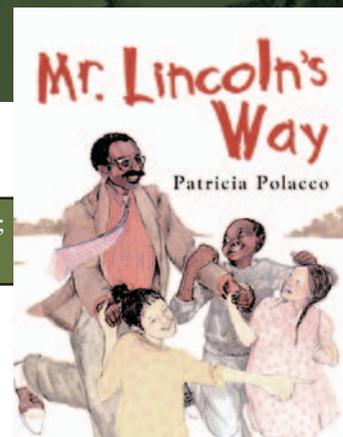
- Intergenerational friendship
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Importance of honesty
- Artistic talent
- Reading difficulties
- Teacher-student relationships
- Overcoming difficulties



Mr. Lincoln's Way

Genre: Fiction **Suggested Grade Level(s):** 3–4

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.3.3, RL.4.3; W.3.1, W.4.1; SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.3.2, SL.4.2; L. 3.4, L.4.4



Important Points for Teachers

- This book deals with racial prejudice; students should be allowed to ask questions and share their feelings
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break up into two sessions
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- This text contains many words that may not be known to students; engage in discussions around words that are central to understanding the text, encouraging students to use context clues and knowledge of word roots and affixes to determine word meanings

Themes

- Racial prejudice
- Developing self-esteem
- Principal-student relationships
- Bullying

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 4: Why do the children think Mr. Lincoln is cool?
- Stop at end of page 9: How does Eugene Esterhause treat the other students?
- Why do you think Mr. Lincoln wants to help Eugene?
- Stop at end of page 15: Why does Mr. Lincoln give Eugene a book about birds?
- Stop at end of page 21: How do Mr. Lincoln and Eugene transform the atrium?
- How has Eugene changed? What do you think caused the change?

(The teacher can choose to stop here and finish the book in another session or continue with the reading.)

- Stop at end of page 27: Eugene was mean again to some students. What does he tell Mr. Lincoln about his father that explains his behavior?
- How does Mr. Lincoln help Eugene understand that his father's thinking is not right?
- Why does Mr. Lincoln call his students his little birds?
- Stop at end of page 40 :How do Eugene and Mr. Lincoln help the ducklings?
- Why do you think Mr. Lincoln arranges for Eugene's "grampa" to be at the school that day?
- Eugene says, "Hey, you showed me the way out, Mr. Lincoln." What does he mean?

Show the students the endpapers.

- Who do you think this man is?
- How did Eugene keep his promise to Mr. Lincoln?

Written Response Options

- How does Mr. Lincoln change Eugene's life? Use evidence from the text in your answer.
- What lesson does Eugene learn from Mr. Lincoln?

Connections to Other Texts

Mr. Lincoln's Way, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, *The Art of Miss Chew*, and *The Junkyard Wonders* all describe adults who have an impact on students' lives. Explore with students how these relationships shape the lives of children. *Mr. Lincoln's Way*, *Bully*, *The Butterfly*, and *Pink and Say* all contain elements of racial intolerance. What message does Patricia Polacco try to convey in these books?



The Butterfly

Genre: Historical Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): 4–5

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.4.3, RL.5.3; W.4.1 W.5.1, W.4.9, W.5.9, SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.4.2, SL.5.2; L. 4.5, L.5.5

Important Points for Teachers

- This book deals with disturbing historical events; students should be allowed to ask questions and share their feelings; it's important to emphasize that although this evil took place, there were good people who fought it at great risk to themselves
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break up into two sessions
- This story is based on the experiences of Polacco's aunt and great aunt during World War II
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Explore the meaning of figurative language with students

Discussion Questions

- Show students the endpapers and illustrations up through page 3: How do the endpapers set the tone for the book?
- What can we tell about how Monique and her mother are feeling about the Nazi soldiers?
- Show the illustrations on pages 4 and 5: Why do you think Monique and her mother look happy now?
- Stop at end of page 9: What does Monique's mother say when Monique tells her about the ghost? Do you think she's telling the truth?
- Stop at end of page 15: What happened to Monsieur Marks? How does Monique's mother try to console Monique and Denise?
- Stop at end of page 19: Who is the ghost? What surprising thing does Monique learn about her mother?
- Stop at end of page 23: What does the Nazi soldier do to the butterfly? How does this make Monique fearful for her new friend Sevrine?
- Stop at end of page 25: What does Monique bring to Sevrine for their midnight parties? What is the importance of each item?
- Stop at end of page 27: Why does Sevrine want to let the beautiful papillon (butterfly) go?

(The teacher can choose to stop here and finish the book in another session or continue with the reading.)

- Stop at end of page 33: Why it is urgent that Sevrine and her family leave Monique's house? Why do the adults bury Sevrine's family's belongings? What might happen if they were found?
- Stop at end of page 37: How do Monique and Sevrine show their friendship when they have to leave each other?
- Stop at end of page 45: Why was Monique afraid the Nazi soldiers would find the necklace? Why didn't she let it go? How do the butterflies that fill Monique's garden fill her with hope?

Read the Author's Note:

- What have we learned about the French underground and resistance?
- What happened to Sevrine and her parents?

Written Response Options:

- Describe how Monique was a good friend to Sevrine. Support your response with specific evidence from the text.
- How do Monique and her mother exhibit courage? Support your response with specific details from the text.

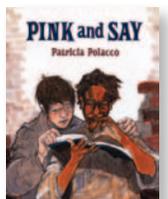
Connections to Other Texts:

- *Pink and Say* also deals with the horrors of war and how friendship can blossom under unusual circumstances. In this text, Pink's and his mother's acts of bravery and kindness save Say's life, just as Monique and her mother strive to save Sevrine and her parents.



Themes

- Jewish holocaust
- Courage
- Friendship
- War



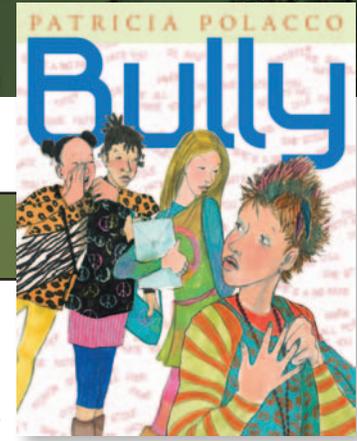
Bully

Genre: Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): 4–5

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.4.3, RL.5.3; W.4.1, W.5.1, W.4.9, W.5.9; SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.4.2, SL.5.2; L. 4.4, L.5.4

Important Points for Teachers

- This book deals with bullying, something that affects many children; be sensitive to the possibility that some of your students may be victims of bullying; students should be allowed to ask questions and share their feelings
- Show illustrations to students during the reading
- Read-aloud in one sitting or break up into two sessions
- Students should have the opportunity to “turn and talk” with a partner
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- This text contains many words that may not be known to students; engage in discussions around words that are central to understanding the text, encouraging students to use context clues and knowledge of word roots and affixes to determine word meanings



Themes

- Bullying
- Friendship
- Courage

Discussion Questions

- Show students the beginning pages of the text, and ask them to make predictions.
- Stop at end of page 9: How does Lyla’s friendship with Jamie help her adjust to her new school?
- What sets Gage, Kenyon, and Maeve apart from the other students?
- Stop at end of page 15: Lyla feels uneasy after Gage’s reaction. What does it mean to feel uneasy?
- Why do you think Jamie tells Lyla to be careful around Gage and her friends?
- Stop at end of page 21: Why does Lyla want a cell phone and laptop? What does Lyla admire about Jamie? Why?
- Stop at end of page 27: Why does Gage want to make Lyla over? What does this say about their friendship? Lyla is “torn” when her friends make fun of Jamie. What does this mean about how she is feeling?

(The teacher can choose to stop here and finish the book in another session or continue with the reading.)

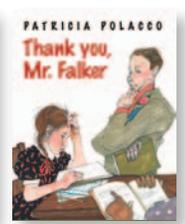
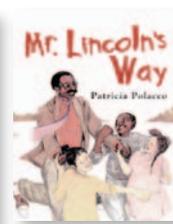
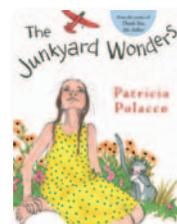
- Stop at end of page 33: At first, Lyla likes being part of the popular girls. What happens that changes her feelings about them? How does Jamie explain why some people are bullies?
- When she stands up for Jamie against Gage, what does Lyla mean when she says, “I was walking on air?”
- Stop at end of page 41: Why do you think Gage, Maeve, and Kenyon are friendly to Lyla after the state test?
- How does Lyla’s life change after she is accused of cheating?
- Why do you think Gage pretends to support Lyla?
- Stop at end of page 46: How does Jamie prove his friendship to Lyla?
- At the end of the book, Lyla asks the reader, “What would you do?” Turn to your partner and discuss how you would answer her.

Written Response Options:

- Lyla’s dad explains Gage’s behavior by saying, “...in order for people like Gage’s candle to glow brighter, she has to blow out yours.” What does he mean?
- What does Lyla learn about friendship? Use specific details from the text in your answer.

Connections to Other Texts:

Bully, *Thank you, Mr. Falker*, *Mr. Lincoln’s Way*, and *The Junkyard Wonders* all deal with the subject of bullying. Discuss with the students how this topic is dealt with in these books. What message does Patricia Polacco send about bullies in each of these books?



Pink and Say

Genre: Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): (3) 4–5

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.4.1, RL. 5.1, RL.4.3, RL.5.3; L.4.1, L. 5.1
SL.4.1, SL. 5.1, SL.4.2, SL. 5.2; W.4.1, 5.1

Introduction

Page 3 should be read aloud to set the context for students that this story has been handed down from Sheldon Russell Curtis to his daughter Rosa and retold many times.

Important Points for Teachers

- Read whole text through first
- Reread text and stop for discussion
- Reread sections for clarification if necessary
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Retelling of account passed down through time
- Authentic language

Themes

- Friendship
- Honesty and Bravery
- Historical context of Civil War

Discussion Questions (After Reading Introduction)

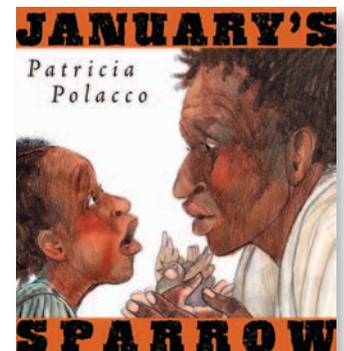
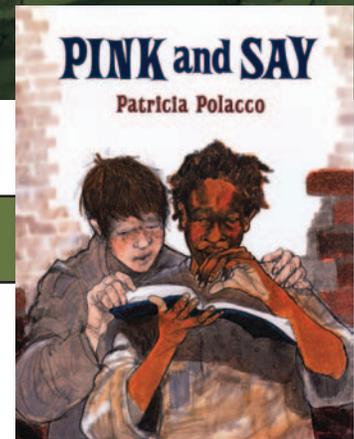
- Stop at end of page 7: Sheldon and Pinkus are soldiers that meet for the first time. What impact does this meeting have for Sheldon?
- Stop at end of page 12: Where does Sheldon find himself when he awakes in the morning?
- Stop at the end of page 15: Why is Moe Moe Bay the only one left in the area?
- Why did she stay behind?
- Stop at end of page 21: What do Pink and Say learn about each other?
- Stop at end of page 25: Pink and Say share something special about themselves. What is it and how is it important to them?
- Stop at end of page 33: What does Moe Moe teach Say before she is killed by marauders?
- Stop at end of page 38: What happens to Pink and Say when they leave to find their troops?
- Describe the last meeting of Pink and Say.
- Stop at the end of book: What was the fate of the two soldiers at the end of the book?

Written Response Options

Sheldon Russell Curtis has retold this story of a fellow union soldier, Pinkus Aylee, to honor his memory. Do you agree that Pink should be honored? Give sufficient evidence to support your position.

Connections to Other Texts

January's Sparrow describes the flight of slaves from the South to the free states in the North. It is a precursor of the Civil War and could be used prior to *Pink and Say* to give historical context of the Civil War.



The Lemonade Club

Genre: Fiction Suggested Grade Level(s): 4–5

Common Core State Standards Addressed: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.5.1, RL.5.2, R.L.5.3; L.4.5, L.5.5; SL.4.1, SL.4.2, SL.5.1, SL.5.2



Important Points for Teachers

- Read-aloud in one sitting
- Fictionalized memoir from the author's daughter's childhood
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of page 9: What made Miss Wichelman special to all her students in her class?
- What life lessons did she try to instill in her students?
- Stop at end of page 17: What was the “terrible announcement” Miss Wichelman made to the class, and how did the students react?
- Stop at end of page 17: What does the author mean by the sentence “As days passed Traci and Miss Wichelman were permanent fixtures at Marilyn’s house”?
- Stop at end of page 22: What news helped cheer up Marilyn?
- Stop at end of page 27: When Marilyn returned to school what made her mother catch her breath?
- Stop at end of page 33: What did Traci and Marilyn learn about Miss Wichelman?
- Stop at end of book: How did Marilyn and Traci and the class honor Miss Wichelman on her wedding day?

Themes

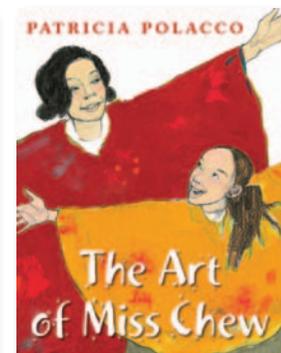
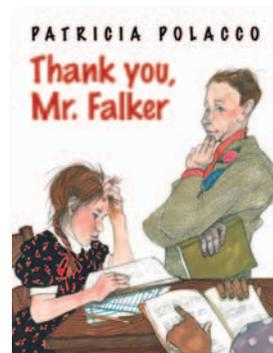
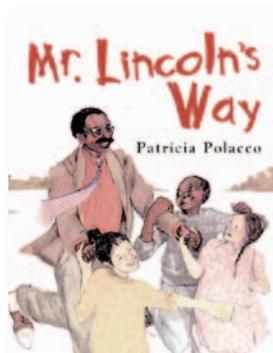
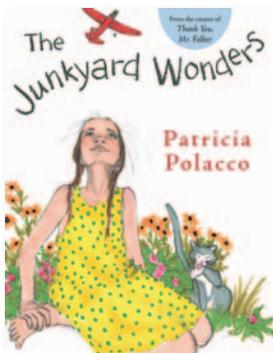
- Childhood friendship
- Confronting illness: cancer
- Student-teacher relationship
- Courage
- Inspirational teacher

Written Response Options

- Miss Wichelman inspired her students by saying, “If you can dream it... you can BE it” and “just add water and sugar to lemons and make lemonade.” How did Miss Wichelman demonstrate these lessons to her students?
- Traci was Marilyn’s best friend. Explain how Traci showed her friendship to Marilyn. Give specific examples from the text.

Connections to Other Texts

The Lemonade Club is a school story with an inspirational teacher who has compassion for her students. Other Polacco books that have a similar theme are *The Art of Miss Chew*, *Mr. Lincoln’s Way*, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, and *The Junkyard Wonders*.



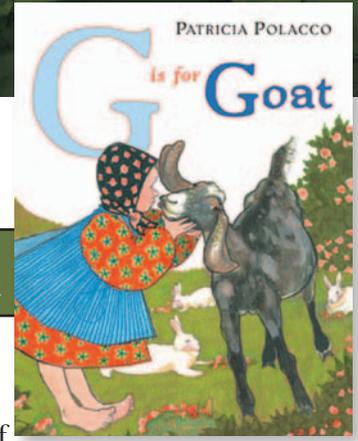
G is for Goat

Genre: Fiction/Rhyming Alphabet Book **Suggested Grade Level(s):** Preschool to Kindergarten

Common Core State Standards Addressed: Foundational Reading Standards
Phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics, letter recognition, and vocabulary development

Overview:(for teacher reference only):

This rhyming alphabet book centers on goats traveling through the countryside. Patricia Polacco introduces us, letter by letter, to many goats and the personality of goats, ending with a wonderful surprise!



Theme

- Country living

Important Points for Teachers

- Read-aloud in one sitting
- Student responses should include specific evidence from the text
- Connect goats' antics from page to page as letter names are introduced
- Rhyme is prevalent and rereading can support Reading Readiness

Discussion Questions

- Stop at end of book: What surprise did the sick goat have at the end of the book?

Oral Language Development and Vocabulary

Categories of words associated with animal life in the country: billy goat, buck, nanny, doe, hay, ram, vet

Descriptive language: floppy, munch, nibble

Connections to Other Texts



Awards and Accolades for Patricia Polacco

Patricia Polacco is the recipient of over 75 awards and honors including:

New York State Association of Educators and Librarians Best Book of the Year (*Pink and Say*)

CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People (*January's Sparrow*)

Author of the Year 2004 from the Michigan Reading Association (*An Orange for Frankie*)

California Children's Book Award

Parents Choice Award

New York Times Pick of the Year

IRA Teachers Choice Award

Michigan Notable Book

The Golden Kite Award (*Chicken Sunday*)

An Educator's Guide to Patricia Polacco



About Patricia Polacco:

Born Patricia Ann Barber in Lansing, Michigan, to a mother of Russian and Ukrainian descent and a father of Irish descent, Patricia Polacco grew up in both California and Michigan. She spent the school months in Oakland, California, and summers in her beloved Michigan. She continued to study in the United States and Australia, earning an M.F.A. and Ph.D in art history, specializing in Russian and Greek painting and iconographic history.

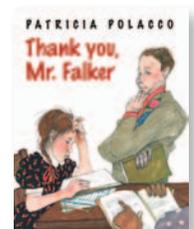
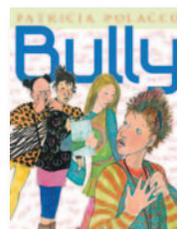
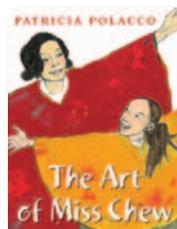
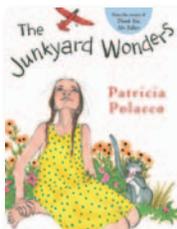
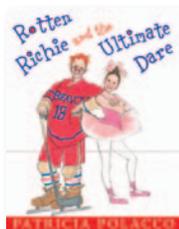
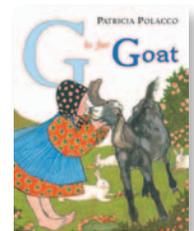
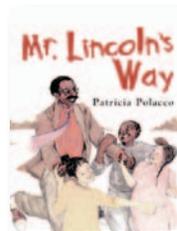
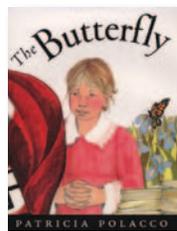
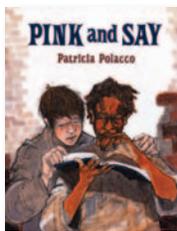
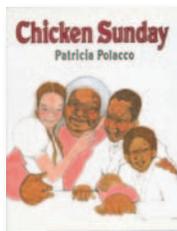
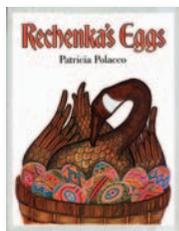
Patricia's roots can be traced to a tiny village in Michigan close to her babushka's (her grandmother's) farm. Many of her fondest memories of family and community come from growing up in that place. She believes that it is a sense of family and community that is sought by people who return to live in small towns. Patricia found herself drawn back to small-town life herself, and in 1996, returned to Union City where she grew up.

Personal Interests

Just like the brave and independent character of Aunt Chip and others, Patricia has taken her small town to heart. She is determined to keep it healthy and bustling. "I would like to do a series of stories totally based here in Union City. My hope is that children will get their families to visit this magical little town after reading these books." Patricia's *Meteor!*, *Mrs. Mack*, *Welcome Comfort*, *The Graves Family*, *The Graves Family Goes Camping*, and *Something About Hensley's* all take place in and around Union City.

In addition to including familiar places in her books, close family members, distant relatives, and favorite friends have found their way onto Patricia's pages. She describes her family members as marvelous storytellers. "My fondest memories are of sitting around a stove or open fire, eating apples and popping corn while listening to the old ones tell glorious stories about their homeland and the past. We are tenacious traditionalists and sentimentalists... With each retelling our stories gain a little more umph!"

Patricia's art consists of signature Pentel markers, acrylic, and colored pencils. Many of her stories focus on what is nearest and dearest to her heart: family, friends, and familiar places, like Union City.



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