

Chrysanthemum



READ ALOUD

Themes: Belonging, Bullying and teasing, Family, Identity, Self-worth

Author(s):

Kevin Henkes

Illustrator(s):

Kevin Henkes

Book Brief: A young mouse named Chrysanthemum loves her name until classmates tease her about it at school. With her family's support and a beloved music teacher's help, she learns to treasure who she is.

BEFORE READING

The Cover: Have students make predictions about the story based on the cover.

Vocabulary: Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [vocabulary guide](#).

The Pictures: Take a brief picture walk and ask students what they notice about Chrysanthemum.

Purpose for Reading: "As we read today, let's notice how Chrysanthemum's feelings change from the beginning of the story to the end, and what causes those changes."

Prior Knowledge: Ask students, "What do you know about your own names. Have you ever been teased, or seen someone teased? Talk about how teasing feels?"

DURING READING

Check for understanding & make connections:

- At the start, how do Chrysanthemum's parents feel about her name? How does she feel about it?
- When the class laughs at her name during roll call, how does Chrysanthemum feel? What clues in the words and pictures tell you?
- Why do Victoria, Rita, and Joe tease her? What do they say about her name?
- What do her parents do each evening to help her feel better?
- When Mrs. Twinkle reveals she is also named after a flower and might name her baby Chrysanthemum, how do the other students react? Why do they change?



Think Aloud: "When I see Chrysanthemum 'wilt' like a flower, I picture her shrinking and getting sadder. The author never says 'she was sad' he shows it by drawing her droop like a flower losing its bloom. That tells me how much the teasing hurts."

AFTER READING

Our Purpose: How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name by the end of the story? What made the difference in how she felt from the beginning?

Extending Our Thinking: Have students use [RIF's What's My Character Thinking](#) to map how Chrysanthemum feels at three different points.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more titles by Kevin Henkes:
 - [Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse](#) (1996)
 - [Wemberly Worried](#) (2000)
 - [Kitten's First Full Moon](#) (2005)