



CHRYSANTHEMUM

By Kevin Henkes

Chrysanthemum loves her unique name until she goes to school and discovers that not everyone thinks her name is as wonderful as she does. Chrysanthemum learns how difficult and rewarding it can be to be different.



WITS Connection: Walk away, Ignore, Seek help

Questions and Activities



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Find a photo of a chrysanthemum to show students. Ask them to describe the flower's features.
2. Do you know a person or animal that also has a name of a flower?
3. Who do you think the main character is?
4. What do you think the problem is in the story?
5. On the pages where the name 'Chrysanthemum' appears, ask students to say her name aloud to promote engagement with the story.



POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. How did Chrysanthemum feel about her name before she started school? *She loved her name.*
2. Why did her feelings change when she started school? *She was teased about her name.*
3. What effect did the teasing have on Chrysanthemum? *She felt bad about herself and her name.*
4. What happened in the story to change Chrysanthemum's sadness? *She used her WITS. She walked away, ignored the behaviour and shared her feelings with her family.*
5. How could Chrysanthemum have reacted in a different way? Would it have made a difference?
6. What did we learn about other people's differences in this story?
7. What would you say to Chrysanthemum if you could?



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Visit www.teachingheart.net/kevinideasc.html to view a large collection of activities to use with this book.
- Have students study the meaning and origins of their names and talk with their parents to find out why they chose them.

- Fill a table with decorations such as sequins, feathers, ribbons and pieces of wrapping paper. Distribute construction paper to students and ask them to write their first name on the paper and then decorate it as they wish. Discuss how nobody likely decorated their name in the same way just like nobody in the class is identical.
- If you've read other Kevin Henkes books with your students, such as [Owen](#) or [A Weekend with Wendell](#), review the characteristics of Henkes' writing. *He uses repetition, personified mice as characters and humour in language and illustrations. He writes about feelings, anxieties and relationships.*
- Ask students to write a story using Henkes' writing style that includes characters using a WITS strategy.

Notes: