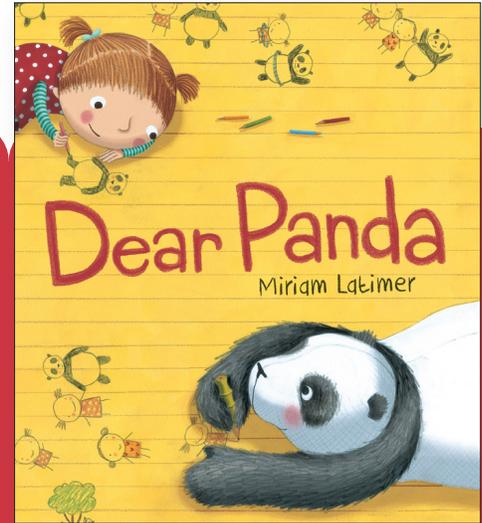


Dear Panda

BY MIRIAM LATIMER

Target grades: Kindergarten, 1, 2
Reading levels: Fountas & Pinnell: K
Lexile® Measure: AD 680L
Reading Recovery: 18
978-1-77147-078-0 \$18.95 CDN / \$17.95 US



READING LITERATURE STANDARD 1

RLK.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 2

SLK.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL 2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Living in a new house and about to start at a new school, Florence feels sad that she had to leave all her friends behind. So she decides to write a letter to the panda who lives in the zoo next door, asking him to be her friend. Happily, he obliges. Soon, when Flo is asked to stand up in front of her whole class and talk about herself, it only seems right to tell everyone about Panda, and then to invite him to come for a visit. Thanks to Panda, Flo meets Bea, a little girl who shares her love of pandas — and swimming, and hula-hooping, and all kinds of other things.

KEYS TO THE STORY

After reading *Dear Panda* aloud, ask students:

- **Who** is the main character in the story?
- Are there other human characters in the story? **Who** are they?
- Are there other animal characters in the story? **Why** or **why not**?
- **Where** does the story take place/**What** is the setting? **How** does the setting change as the story moves along?
- Does Flo have a problem at the beginning of the story? **What** is it?
- **When** do the events of the story change? **What** events mark the start of each change?
- **How** does Flo respond?

Additionally, ask Second Grade students to think about why Bea is the perfect friend for Flo. Ask: What traits do Flo and Bea share that make them a perfect match? Cite specific details from the text.

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SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 3

SL.K.3 Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

SL.1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

SL.2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 4

SL.K.4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

SL.2.4 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Read *Dear Panda* aloud with your students and discuss the story. Then, begin this activity by reading one or two primary-level informational books or articles about pandas with students. You may want to choose from these titles:

- *Giant Pandas* by Lyn A. Sirota (Capstone Press, 2010)
- *Giant Pandas* by Kari Schudtz (Bellwether Media, 2012)
- “Giant Panda,” *National Geographic Kids*.

kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/kids/en_US/animals/giant-panda

Next, invite students to ask clarifying questions about information they did not understand in the shared resources. After student questions have been answered, turn the tables and ask them specific questions about giant pandas that can be answered by referring to the informational text you have shared.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF

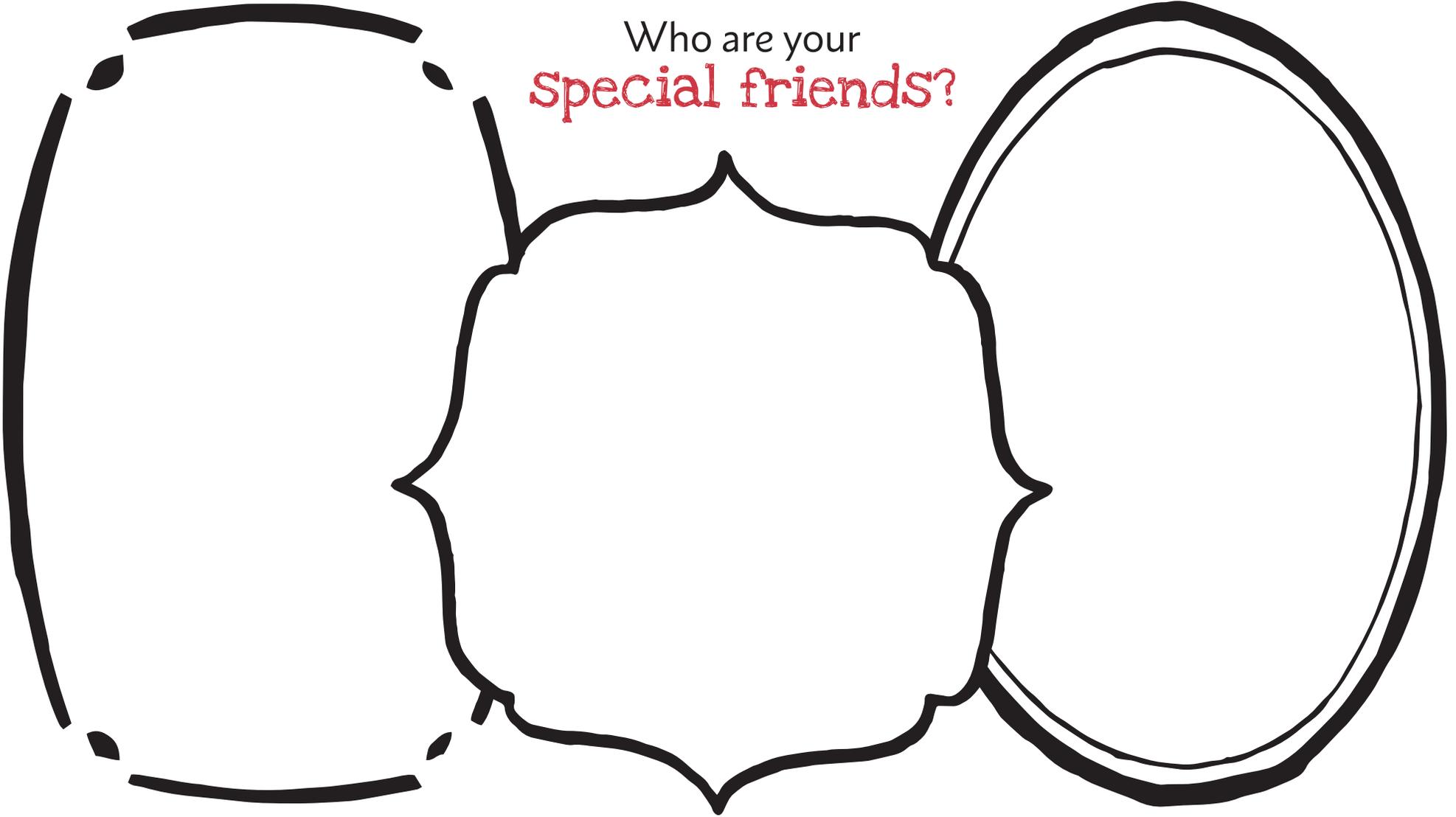
Read *Dear Panda* aloud and discuss with students. Then ask them to consider the request that Miss Brook makes in her letter to Florence: “We’d love you to stand up in front of the whole class and tell us about yourself. You can tell us about your favorite food, your favorite game, and any special friends you have.”

Invite students to respond to Miss Brook’s request. Ask them to plan what they will say, using the **Let Me Introduce Myself** graphic organizer. Then, when their responses are recorded, ask them to present the information, adding appropriate and relevant details and expressing their ideas and feelings clearly.

The graphic organizer is titled "Let Me Introduce Myself" and is designed as a template for students to write their responses. It features three large, rounded rectangular boxes arranged horizontally. The top box is labeled "Who are your special friends?". The bottom-left box is labeled "What is your favorite food?". The bottom-right box is labeled "What is your favorite game?". At the bottom right of the graphic, there is a small Owlkids logo and the URL "Owlkidsbooks.com/ResourcesActivities/CommonCore".

Let Me Introduce MySelf

Who are your
special friends?



What is your
favorite food?

What is your
favorite game?

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READING LITERATURE STANDARD 9

RL K.9 With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

RL 1.9 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

WRITING STANDARD 3

WK.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W 1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W 2.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

WRITING STANDARD 7

WK.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).

W 1.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

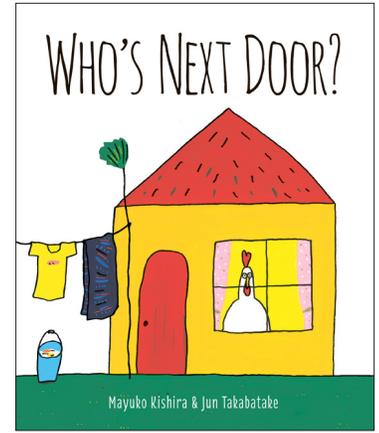
W 2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

NEW NEIGHBORS

Sometimes characters in very different stories have similar experiences when two books share the same themes. Two Owlkids books tackle the themes of moving and making new friends: *Who’s Next Door?* and *Dear Panda*.

Read and discuss each story individually, working to clarify an understanding of characters, setting, and plot (major events). Once students have a solid understanding of the two books, ask them to consider the role that letter writing plays in each of the stories. Ask this series of questions:

- Why does Chicken write a letter to his new neighbor?
- Is it the same reason that Flo writes a letter to her neighbor, Panda?
- Which character gets the reply that she most desires?
- Does letter writing continue to play a role in the action of each story?
- How would each book be different without the letters?
- Would Chicken and Flo have met their neighbors Owl and Panda without the letters? Why or why not?



DEAR ZOO FRIEND

This project has a dual writing focus on both research and narrative letter writing. After reading *Dear Panda* aloud to students and discussing it, invite students to join you in a short research and writing project about zoo animals. Choose some zoo animals to focus on. Your project might be full-class for Kindergarten and First Grade and either small-group or individual for Second Grade.

Supply students with informational resources written at appropriate reading levels for their information gathering. A trip to the library will yield many informational books written at the appropriate Lexile and text complexity level for your students. With students, gather and record pertinent facts about each animal’s eating habits and general behavior.

Next, return to *Dear Panda*. Ask students to re-read the letter exchange between Panda and Flo. Invite them to compose, as a group or individually, a set of letters between themselves and the animals they have researched, including as many of the new facts they have found as possible.

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