Little Trisha is overjoyed at the thought of starting school and learning how to read. But right from the start, when she tries to read, all the letters and numbers just get jumbled up. Her classmates make matters worse by calling her "dummy" and "toad." Then in fifth grade, a new teacher comes. He sees right through the sad little girl to the artist she really is. And when he discovers Trisha's secret -- that she still can't read -- he sets out to help her prove to herself that she can. And will! The autobiographical "Thank you, Mr. Falker" is a story close to the author's heart. It is her personal song of thanks and praise to teachers like Mr. Falker, who quietly but surely change the lives of the children they teach.

**Related Activities**

- Discuss and then write about someone who has made a difference in your life.

- Discuss and then write about something that you have ever been teased about.

- Discuss and then write about the talent that saved Trisha in the book.

- Discuss and then write about a talent that has saved you.

- Write a thank you letter to a person that has made a difference in your life.
More Activities

• Compare the art in several books by Patricia Polacco.
  
  What are the similarities in the art work?

  What are the differences in the art work?

• Make a display of photographs or illustrations that show your talents.

Internet Activities

Patricia Polacco, who wrote Thank You, Mr. Falker, has often spoken about her difficulty in learning to read.

Go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyslexia to read and learn about dyslexia. What is this type of reading difficulty? Have you or anyone you know had difficulty learning to read? Have a discussion with an adult about what you learned.

Go to http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/learning_problem/dyslexia.html. This website has lots of information about dyslexia and learning to read. What did you learn from what you read? Have a discussion with someone about what you learned.
Thank you, Mr. Falker is autobiographical. It is a story close to Patricia Polacco’s heart that reflects her experiences as a child and her gratitude to teachers like Mr. Falker who can change the lives of children they teach.