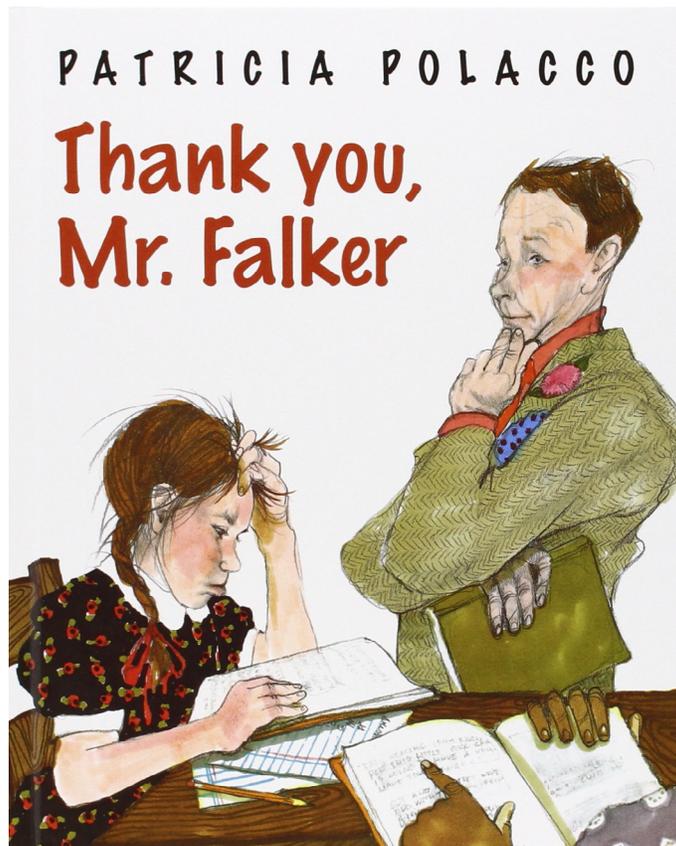




A TEACHER'S GUIDE

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3RD - 4TH



THANK YOU, MR. FALKER

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY PATRICIA POLACCO

Watch the video of actor
Jane Kaczmarek
reading this story at
storylineonline.net



ABOUT THIS STORY

SYNOPSIS

In this autobiographical story, Little Trisha, overjoyed at the thought of learning how to read struggles when she finds that all the letters and numbers get jumbled up. Her classmates make matters worse by calling her “dummy.” Finally, in fifth grade, she is lucky enough to have a teacher who recognizes Trisha’s incredible artistic ability, understands her problem, and takes the time to lead her to the magic of reading.

Although dyslexia is never mentioned in the book, this story will provide great reassurance to children who struggle to overcome learning disabilities.

THEMES IN THE STORY

Determination, Loss, Teacher Influence, Bullying, Overcoming Learning Disabilities

READING AND WRITING

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3RD - 4TH

ELA COMMON CORE STANDARD

Reading Literature: Students read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence. *Standards listed below are for 3rd and 4th grades, but can be adapted to 2nd grade standards.*

BEFORE VIEWING

Standards: CCSS.SL.3.1, CCSS.SL.3.2, CCSS.SL.4.1, CCSS.SL.4.2

Objective: Tap knowledge and build background to prepare for reading the story.

Procedure:

- Step 1:** Build background for students by discussing the following points with students:
Have you ever really wanted to learn to do something that was really difficult for you?
Why was it difficult? How did this make you feel? Did you learn how to do it?
Did anyone help you? How did you feel when you accomplished the learning?
- Step 2:** Tell students the name of the story and ask them what your questions might have to do with the story.
- Step 3:** Ask students to make a prediction about what the story might be about.

DURING VIEWING

Focus: Making Connections

Standards: CCSS.SL.3.1, CCSS.SL.3.2, CCSS.SL.4.1, CCSS.SL.4.2

Objective: Students will listen to story and make connections to their selves and personal experiences.

Procedure:

- Step 1:** Tell students that making connections to characters or events in a story helps readers to better understand the story.
- Step 2:** As students listen to the story, ask them to think about the following questions:
How are they alike or different from the main character, Trisha?
Do any of the events in the story remind them of something that may have happened to them?
- Step 3:** After the story is finished, have them share their connections with the class.

AFTER VIEWING

Standards: CCSS.RL.3.1, CCSS.RL.3.2, CCSS.RL.3.3, CCSS.RL.4.1, CCSS.RL.4.2, CCSS.RL.4.3

Objective: Describe how and why the main character's feelings change at different parts of the story.

Teacher Prep: Create the following on chart paper. Leave space between each statement to write students' answers. If desired, use the information to create a worksheet for students to use during the partner activity.

Trisha's feelings in the story:

When she knows she will be going to school and learn to read, Trisha feels ...

When the words are jumbled and it's not easy to read, Trisha feels ...

When other kids make fun of her for not being able to read, Trisha feels...

When Mr. Falkner begins to take an interest in her, Trisha feels ...

When Mr. Falkner words with her and helps her to understand reading, Trisha feels ...

Procedure:

- Step 1:** Use the popcorn strategy to have students summarize the story focusing on Trisha and her feelings.
- Step 2:** Explain that in the story Trisha doesn't always feel the same way. Her feelings change with many of the events. Good readers can use this information to better comprehend the story.
- Step 3:** Display the chart and discuss.
- Step 4:** Partner students and have them make a list of words to describe Trisha's feelings at each part of the story displayed.
- Step 5:** Bring the class back together and compile partner lists on class chart.
- Step 6:** Discuss how this helps us learn about the character and how their actions help to move the story along.

Extension Activity: Have students choose one of the emotion words and write about a time they felt the same way.

READING RESPONSE

Standards: CCSS.RL.3.1, CCSS.RL.4.1

Objective: Students will answer the prompt using at least two details from text to support the response.

Reading Prompt: How would you describe Mr. Falker? Use character trait words and details from the story to support your response.

WRITING - NARRATIVE

Standards: CCSS.W.3.3, CCSS.W.4.3

Objective: Students will write a letter using all five parts of a friendly letter, grade appropriate grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.

Materials: Writing tools
Chart or poster showing the 5 parts of a friendly letter.

Procedure:

- Step 1:** Tell students to think of a special person that helped them in some way, similar to how Mr. Falker helped Patricia Polacco. This special someone can be an adult or older student who helped them academically, with a sport, a craft, etc.
- Step 2:** Let students share this experience with a partner.
- Step 3:** Explain to students that they are going to write a thank you letter to their special someone.
- Step 4:** Teach/Review the five parts of a friendly letter (date, greeting, body, closing, signature).
- Step 5:** Model a thank you letter, if necessary, for your class.
- Step 6:** Use the writing process to complete the assignment.
- Step 7:** Teach students address an envelope and mail.

Extension Activity: Have students write a narrative about the time this person helped them and how it made them feel. Compile the narratives in a class book: *Thank You, Special People*

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL STUDIES - HALLWAY OF FAME

Students identify the qualities of a hero. Students think about people who have worked to make a difference in their family, school, or community.

MATERIALS —

Write and Draw paper (paper that has a space for a picture and lines for writing)
Chart paper
Photo of student's hero (optional)
Glue
Scissors
Construction paper
Crayons, markers, etc

PROCEDURE —

- Step 1:** Ask students to create their own definition of hero. Share ideas and write on chart paper.
- Step 2:** Have students make a list of qualities of a hero, list student responses on chart paper.
- Step 3:** Remind students that in the story Mr. Falker was Patricia's hero because he taught her to read. Heroes are found in our school and community as well.
- Step 4:** Help students recognize heroes among familiar people in their lives. Ask them to think about friends, family members, teachers, coaches, etc. who they believe have shown hero qualities.
- Step 5:** Complete Activity: Hallway of Fame
- Distribute a piece of *Write and Draw* paper to students.
 - Students paste their photo or draw a picture in the picture spot and write one or two sentences explaining why that person is their hero.
 - Have them "frame" their picture using strips of construction paper. Before gluing the strips, write the name of the hero in large letters on one of the frame strips – this will be the bottom of the frame. Glue strips to create a frame.
- Step 6:** Display in hallway – HALLWAY OF FAME

EXTENSION ACTIVITY —

Have a Hallway of Fame induction ceremony. Invite heroes and have students present a short explanation of why they were chosen for the Hallway of Fame.

SCIENCE - WHY DOES HONEY CRYSTALLIZE?

Students learn why honey is sometimes a liquid and sometimes a solid. What factors contribute to the crystallization of honey?

MATERIALS —

Five small identical food jars with lids
Masking tape or labels
Cotton ball
Popsicle stick
Honey
Measuring spoons
Canola oil
Water
Timer
Toothpick
Digital thermometer
Freezer

Teacher Prep: Chart to track findings

	2 min	4 min	6 min	8 min	10 min	12 min	14 min	Temperature
Jar 1								
Jar 2								
Jar 3								
Jar 4								
Jar 5								

PROCEDURE —

- Step 1:** Label each container 1 through 5.
- Step 2:** Add water to labeled containers:
Container 1 – 1 teaspoon
Container 2 – 2 teaspoons
Container 3 – 3 teaspoons
Container 4 – 4 teaspoons
Container 5 – no water
- Step 3:** Add 1 tablespoon of honey to each of the containers (Oil measuring spoon using a cotton ball dipped in canola oil. Use a popsicle stick to scrape honey off spoon, if necessary).
- Step 4:** Gently mix the honey and water together in each jar using a popsicle stick.
- Step 5:** Discuss a hypothesis with students: When the containers are placed in the freezer, which container will crystallize the fastest? Why?
- Step 6:** Distribute charts and instruct students to record their hypothesis on the the chart (Partner, groups, or whole class).
- Step 7:** Put the jars into the freezer.
- Step 8:** Set the timer for two minutes and examine the honey. Repeat every two minutes. Use the chart to record your findings. Place an “X” under the time when you first see crystals forming. Record the temperature when each jar of honey started to crystallize by placing the thermometer into the honey (honey will look cloudy).
- Step 9:** Discuss class hypothesis and actual results.
- Step 10:** Make a connection: How can we use these results in everyday life?

Note: Honey without water will crystallize first. For additional information on experiment,  **Google It!**: Why does honey crystallize?

ABOUT US

ABOUT STORYLINE ONLINE

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation's children's literacy website *Storyline Online*® streams imaginatively produced videos featuring celebrated actors to help inspire a love of reading. Storyline Online receives millions of views every month in hundreds of countries. Visit Storyline Online® at storylineonline.net.

ABOUT THE SAG-AFTRA FOUNDATION

The SAG-AFTRA Foundation provides vital assistance and educational programming to the professionals of SAG-AFTRA while serving the public at large through its signature children's literacy program. Founded in 1985, the Foundation is a national non-profit organization that relies solely on support from grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual contributions to fund our programs. Visit sagaftra.foundation.

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