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My Name Is Not Isabella

A Common Core State Standards-aligned Guide

Grades K–2

Pre-Reading Questions & Activities

Throughout this book, Isabella pretends she is different famous people from history. Ask students: “Have you ever pretended you were someone else? Why did you choose that person?”

Do a picture book walk-through. Before you read the book to the class, have them closely examine the illustrations on each page. Discuss what is happening. Have students identify illustration details and explain what the details tell them about the story’s characters, settings, and events.

Have students examine the cover of the book. Read the title. Discuss what they think the story will be about.

Vocabulary

In this book, students will encounter the following professions and historical figures. Using the biographical sketches provided by the book, acquaint the class with the following:

Astronaut	Sally Ride
Sharpshooter	Annie Oakley
Activist	Rosa Parks
Scientist	Marie Curie
Doctor	Elizabeth Blackwell

Discussion Questions & Activities

Readers Theater

Now that students have read the book, performing it as a group is an effective way to improve comprehension. *My Name Is Not Isabella* is a perfect text for this activity because Isabella herself plays many different roles throughout the book. Identify the characters in the book and the personas Isabella assumes.

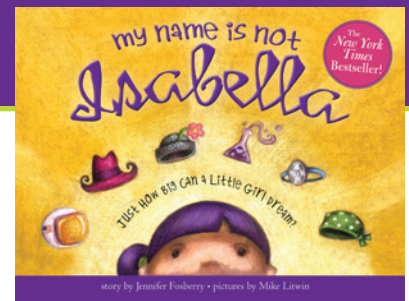
NOTE:

1. If class size requires, use a different mother and Isabella for each scene. Alternatively, the instructor may play the mother in order to manage and prompt performers.
2. Transform the line “I am not Isabella...” to “She is not Isabella...” and have this line read by a chorus composed of class members not involved in the current scene. Encourage the chorus to provide appropriate sound effects whenever possible.
3. After each scene, have one student read a sentence describing the profession depicted in the scene (e.g., “An astronaut is a person who works in space”).
4. Then, have another student share a single fact about the individual whom Isabella is pretending to be (e.g., “Sally Ride was the first woman from the U.S. to travel to space”).

RL1.6, RL2.6, RLK.10, RL1.10, RFK.4, RF1.4, RF2.4

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Discussion Questions & Activities Cont....

The Elements of a Book

Each book is a carefully planned work of art. Normally, the focus is on the story and the pictures, but readers can learn a lot more about a book by looking at the other elements too. Every element is carefully crafted to send a message, from the cover image to the book description, and from the bibliography to the biographical information about the author and illustrator.

Review the front and back covers of the book and identify the different elements.

Discuss elements like:

The title

The cover image (Is this a strong image? How would you change it?)

The author's and illustrator's biographies (Have you ever read other books by these people?)

The book description found on the jacket flap (Does this description sound like the story?)

The reviews on the back cover (Why do you think these are included?)

Awards and honors won by the book (Does this make you want to read the book more?)

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL2.1

Author and Illustrator

Who is the author? What does an author do?

Who is the illustrator? What does the illustrator do?

Can you tell the story just using words? Can you tell the story just using illustrations?

RLK.6, RLK.7, RL1.7, RL2.7

About the Author

Get students to think critically about the author biography element using the following exercise:

Pretend that you are the author of a book. What is the title of your book? Write your own biography to include on the jacket flap. Be sure to include your name, where you are from, and something about yourself. Draw a picture of yourself for your author photo. Work with your teacher to dictate or write your own biography. Display the students' finished pictures and biographies.

WK.2, W1.2, W2.2, LK.2, L2.2, L2.3

Information Please

Help students explore the biographical data in the back of the book:

This book has a section at the back that some other books do not. It's called "Women Who Changed the World."

Why do you think this section was included?

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL2.1, SLK.1, SL1.1, SL2.1

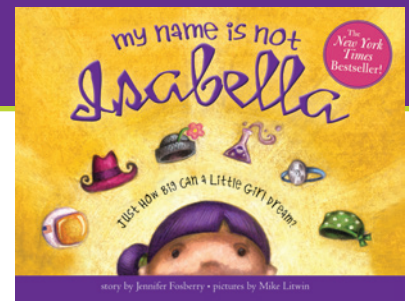
Superlative You

Sweetest, kindest, smartest, bravest, fastest, toughest, greatest...Isabella uses these words to describe the people she pretends to be. Have students choose one of these words to illustrate. Ask them to draw a picture of a time they embodied this superlative. What are the opposites of these words?

LK.1, L1.1, L2.1, LK.5, L1.5, L2.5



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Discussion Questions & Activities Cont....

Powerful Language

Discuss how words can make the action they describe more powerful:

Telling astronaut Isabella to “blast out of bed” or activist Isabella to “march out there and take your seat on the bus” makes the story more compelling. Try substituting “regular” words in place of the strong ones to show how different the story would be without these carefully chosen words.

RL1.4, SLK.1, SL1.1, SL2.1, SLK.2, SL1.2, SL2.2, LK.1, L1.1, L2.1

These words aren’t just “strong,” they are also vivid. They are descriptive of the person Isabella is pretending to be. What if these figures were switched around? How would Annie Oakley get out of bed? How would Sally Ride get on the bus? Or, are there other figures you could describe using the same words? Who else might “march” to the bus?

LK.5, L1.5, L2.5

Rhetorical Techniques

My Name Is Not Isabella uses the very common and powerful rhetorical device of repetition to help make its message memorable and fun. Discuss the different techniques used in this book with students:

What other stories do you know that use repetition?

Different phrases are repeated throughout the story. How many can you find?

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL2.1, RL2.4

Telling the Story, Telling the Time

My Name Is Not Isabella takes place across an entire day in the life of a little girl. How does the book illustrate that time is passing? As a class, identify and discuss what cues and clues are in the text and illustrations. Identify specific elements of the text and illustrations that show what time of day it is in each scene.

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL2.1, RL2.2, RLK.3, RLK.7, RL2.7, L1.1

What’s the Big Idea?

Working in pairs, have students summarize this story to each other. What is the big thing this story is about?

Have students share their conclusions with the class.

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL2.1, RLK.2, RL1.2, RL2.2, RL2.5, RLK.7, RL1.7, RL2.7, SLK.1, SL2.2

Who Are YOU?

Have students imagine that school has just let out for the day. The teacher says, “Time to go home, (Child’s Name)! Have a nice weekend!” Have each student make up an answer in the style of the book. “My name is NOT (Child’s Name)! I am...”

SLK.5, SL1.5, SL2.5, SLK.6, SL1.6, SL2.6, WK.3, W1.3, W2.3



Have each child illustrate and write or dictate a page with the help of the teacher or another adult. Bind these together into a class book. Use this book as the basis for an oral presentation or performance, having students read their own or other children’s pages aloud.