



The Kissing Hand

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Why This Book Matters

The Kissing Hand helps young children understand separation anxiety and the emotional support systems that help them feel safe when facing new experiences, such as starting school. The story highlights the power of love, reassurance, and connection between caregivers and children. It provides a meaningful foundation for discussing emotions, coping strategies, and how relationships help children build confidence in unfamiliar situations.

Comprehension Focus

- Author's message / central idea
- Character feelings and how they change
- Cause and effect (actions and emotional responses)
- Connecting illustrations to meaning
- Understanding how relationships provide emotional support

Before Reading

- Show the cover and ask: What do you think is happening in this story? What might a "kissing hand" mean?
- Discuss: Have you ever felt nervous about something new? What helped you feel better?
- Introduce key vocabulary as needed (e.g., comfort, nervousness, school, reassure, love, brave).
- Set purpose: "Today we will think about how families help children feel safe when they are apart."

During Reading

Pause strategically to promote active thinking:

- Why do you think Chester feels worried about going to school?
- How does Chester's mother help him feel better? What does her action mean?
- What changes in Chester's feelings after he receives the kissing hand?
- How do the illustrations help us understand Chester's emotions?
- What might this story be teaching us about love and distance?

Encourage students to use evidence from the text and illustrations when explaining their thinking.



After Reading

- What is the main message the author wants readers to understand?
- How did Chester change from the beginning to the end of the story?
- Why was the “kissing hand” important to Chester?
- How do families help children feel brave when they are scared or nervous?

Use turn-and-talk opportunities before whole-group discussion to strengthen oral language and comprehension.

Extension Activity

Students may:

- Create their own “comfort symbol” (drawing or writing) that helps them feel safe when away from home
- Write or dictate a sentence: “When I feel nervous, I can...”
- Make a class “bravery book” with strategies for feeling confident at school
- Role-play a goodbye scene showing a comforting routine between caregiver and child

Writing Activity

- Pretend you are Chester. Write about your first day at school after leaving your mother.
- Write a friendly letter to Chester giving him advice about starting school.
- Tell about a time when you were nervous but became brave.

Teacher Reflection

- Did students identify the central message about comfort and separation anxiety?
- Were students able to explain how Chester’s feelings changed and why?
- How effectively did students connect the story to their own experiences?
- Did discussion and turn-and-talks support deeper understanding of emotional coping strategies?

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