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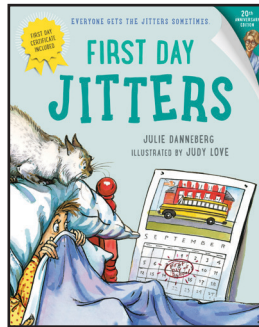
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The JITTERS Series

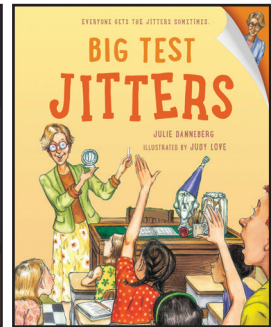
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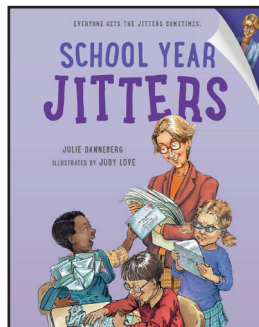
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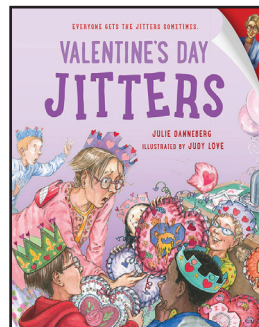
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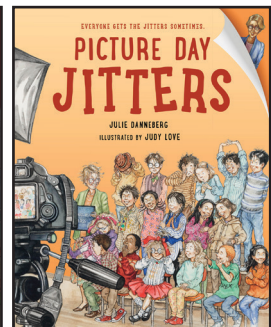
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About the Series

Everyone gets the jitters sometimes! Follow Mrs. Sarah Jane Hartwell and her wild, wacky, wonderful grade-schoolers through a year of scary situations—the first day of school, the big test, Valentine's Day, picture day, and more—as they learn to let go of stress and put their best feet forward.

About the Author

Julie Danneberg is the author of *John Muir Wrestles a Waterfall*, *Monet Paints a Day*, and *Family Reminders*, as well as the best-selling Jitters series. She is a retired teacher in Denver, Colorado.

About the Illustrator

Judy Love lives in North Carolina with her family. A graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, she has illustrated numerous children's books, including the best-selling Jitters series by Julie Danneberg.

FIRST DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

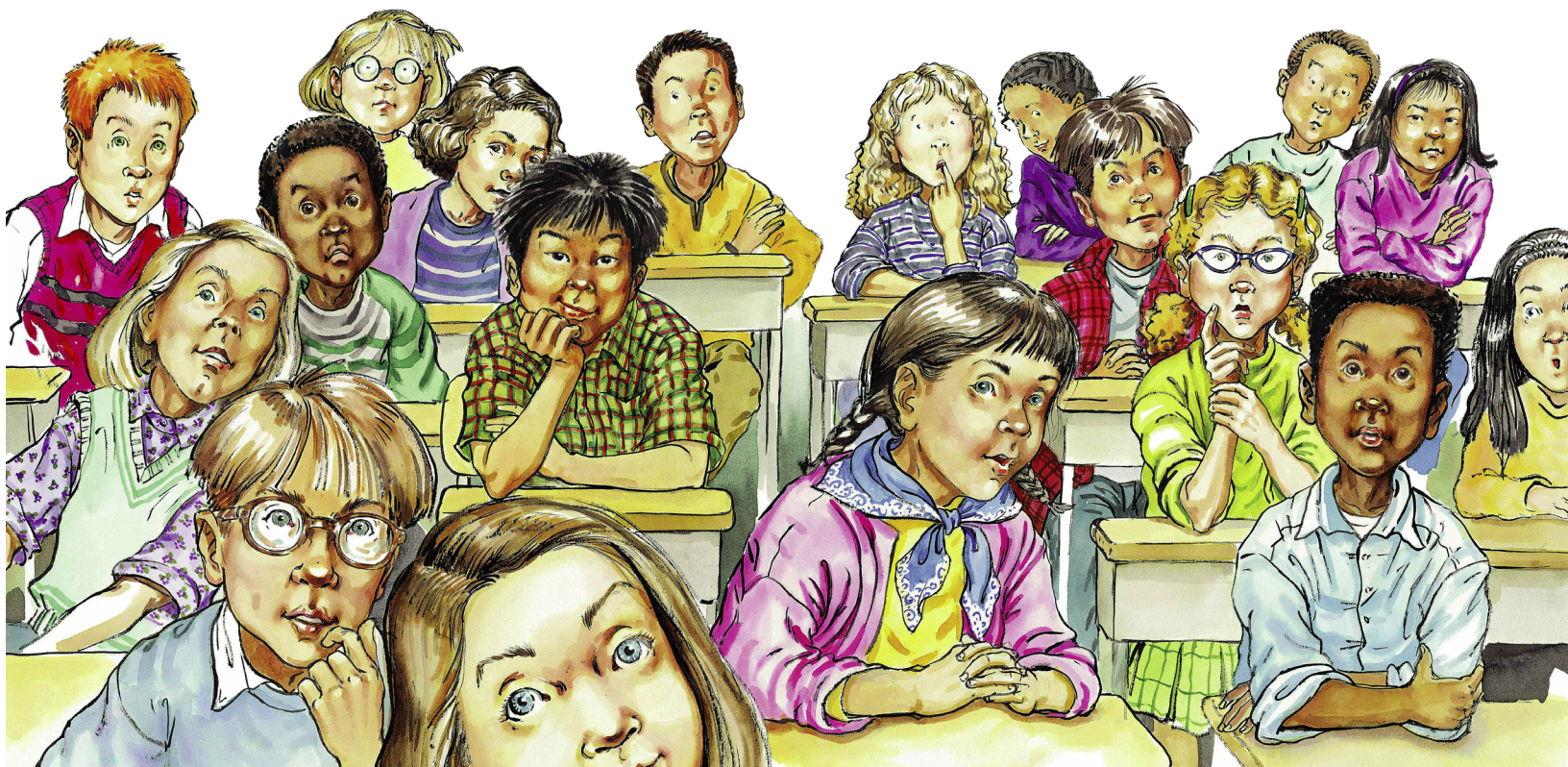
Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Discussion

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *First Day Jitters*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality. Can you judge a book by its cover?

1. How does Sarah feel about her new school? Why do you think she is nervous? Have you ever been in a situation like Sarah, where you were scared or nervous to do something?
2. Why is meeting someone new scary for some people? What do you think they are afraid of?
3. What would you say or do to help someone feel comfortable around new people?
4. How can you tell Sarah is nervous? Do similar things happen to your body when you get nervous? What are some other things that can happen when a person is anxious? Possible answers: biting fingernails, shaking, heart beating fast, heavy breathing, sweaty palms, etc...
5. What kind of children does Sarah imagine will be at her new school? How does she think they will behave? What kind of children does Mr. Hartwell imagine? Why do you think Sarah and Mr. Hartwell have such different views of Sarah's new classmates?
6. Were you surprised that this book is really about a teacher? Why is the ending a surprise?



FIRST DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Telling Your Own Story

Using *First Day Jitters* as a guide, explore the building blocks of narrative and use stories as a tool to talk about feelings and experiences. Mix and match the suggested activities below to craft the perfect storytelling lesson for your class!

- *First Day Jitters* is about a new teacher's first day at school. It may surprise students to know that teachers get nervous, too. Share *First Day Jitters* with your students, and then tell them a funny story about your first day of teaching (or any first day of school story). Incorporate visual aids or create a timeline of events as you go, demonstrating narrative and strategies of communication.
- Have students think about what made them nervous this morning, and then write a class-generated list of what your students report. As you write the list, you can help to alleviate some of your students' fears by answering or explaining some of the unknowns. If possible, after the activity is complete, take your students on a tour of the school to help get rid of as many unknowns as possible.
- Using a large piece of chart paper, make a list of surprises that students had from the year before. Next make a list of things that your students are looking forward to this school year. Have students draw one of the things they are looking forward to and if they can, write a sentence about it. Their completed pictures can go on a bulletin board titled "It's Going to be a Great Year!"
- Have students write their own *First Day Jitters* book. This activity is especially appropriate for kindergartners or first graders who have limited writing abilities. The teacher should have multiple pages copied for each student. On each page is a sentence with a blank that the student should fill in with their own word. Then they can draw a picture to match. When they have filled in their pages they can practice reading to a partner. At the end of the day, each student will have a personalized book to take home and read to their parents.
- Ask students to imagine the perfect first day at school. What would happen? What would they do? Then ask students to imagine their idea of the worst first day of school. Next have students write a paragraph or page reporting on their idea of the perfect day at school and the worst day at school. Ask each student to read aloud.
- Encourage students to expand their writing into a short story. They may cast themselves as the main character, or create a new character who must undergo either a perfect or horrible first day at school. For more advanced students, review writing elements such as plot, dialogue, description, and of course—the element of surprise!

FIRST DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Breaking the Ice

Play games and make art together as a tool to loosen up, get friendly, and start the school year right!

When I Was Nervous

Put students into pairs. Each student must tell their partner about a time when they were nervous or anxious. How did they feel? How did they act? What made them feel better? Once students are finished discussing, go around the room and ask each student to describe their partner's experience. Remember to preview this activity with students so they will be prepared for someone else to tell their story.

Optional Extension: Have students illustrate the time that they were nervous in an unknown situation. They can draw a picture of what they imagined, and then draw a picture of what really happened.

Who I Am

Trace every student in the class on roll paper using a black marker. On one side of the body have students write some of their favorite things. Examples include school subjects, music, color, TV shows, etc. On the other side of their body have students write their goals for the year. Examples include making friends, making good grades, joining a team, etc. Students can also color and decorate the outline of their body to reflect their goals and interests. Next hang the projects up in the hallway or your classroom and discuss each person's goals and favorite things. You'll be surprised how much everyone has in common!

Jitters Charades

On scraps of paper, write situations in which people usually get nervous and put the scraps into a hat. Examples could include flying on a plane, meeting someone new, giving a speech, or taking a test. Next divide the class into two teams and toss a coin to see which team goes first. The lucky team must pick two members to go in front of the class and pick a situation from a hat. Give the players a moment to prepare. Setting a time limit of one minute, the players must act out the situation. The team that guesses the situation correctly wins a point. After each skit ask the class to name some ways that a person in that situation could have worked through their nervousness. Write each suggestion on the board until you have a useful list on coping with the jitters.

Two Truths and a Lie

The game "Two Truths and a Lie" is a fun getting-to-know-you game. Players must come up with three statements about themselves—two that are true and one that isn't. Have students try to guess which statement is not true. Then have each student tell their own set of two truths and a lie.

LAST DAY BLUES

Activity Kit

Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *Last Day Blues*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality. Are books always what they seem to be?

1. How do students feel about the end of the school year? Are these feelings simple or complicated? How do they feel in students' bodies (for example: butterflies in the stomach or jittery, restless feet)?
2. Does the end of the year seem to go slow or fast? Why do students think that is?
3. Are students' feelings about the end of the school year different from their feelings about the start of summer vacation? Why or why not?
4. How do Mrs. Hartwell's students feel about the end of the school year? What are some things they'll miss? What are they excited to stop or start doing as part of summer vacation?
5. Why are Mrs. Hartwell's students worried about their teacher? What do they think she feels about the end of the school year? Turn to the last full page spread of illustration in the book and examine the art. What do students see? Is it consistent with the predictions Mrs. Hartwell's students made about her feelings?
6. *Last Day Blues* has a twist at the end: Mrs. Hartwell is actually excited about the end of the school year! Can students think of other stories they've heard with a twist at the end? These can be fairytales, TV shows, books, comics, narrative songs, or any other kind of story. What makes a good twist ending? How does Julie Danneberg set up the twist at the end of *Last Day Blues*?
7. What are some end-of-year traditions that your class or school observes? Can students think of other year-end traditions, like graduation ceremonies? Do some research as a class: What year-end traditions are observed at schools in other countries and cultures?



LAST DAY BLUES

Activity Kit

A Great Big Thank-You

Bring together art and writing with social-emotional skills in this fun year-end activity about expressing gratitude.

Materials

You will need:

- A large piece of roll paper (five to ten feet long)
- Markers, paint, stickers, and other art supplies
- A projector or whiteboard

Procedure

1. **Discuss emotional concepts.** What is gratitude? When do students say “thank you”? What are they thankful for? Are there more ways to express gratitude than simply saying “thank you”? Invite students to discuss these questions as a whole class, in small breakout groups, or by silently writing in their journals and sharing back to the class.
2. **Preview the project.** Today students are going to make a giant thank-you card to express their gratitude to one of their helpers at school. Show students the art materials and offer any safety reminders they may need.
3. **Choose a recipient.** Whom do students wish to thank? The card can be for a single person, such as the school librarian, or a group of people, such as the lunch workers, bus drivers, or classroom volunteers. Students may put forward candidates and vote, or choose by consensus if there seems to be a clear favorite.
4. **Draft your message.** Decide on the text of your card as a class. Use the whiteboard to organize students’ contributions and try out different iterations of the message. You may wish to show your students examples of particularly successful thank-you cards. Remind them that specificity can make a compliment more meaningful and encourage them to praise concrete actions as well as general attitudes. Don’t forget the salutation and closing!
5. **Write out the text.** The teacher or an adult volunteer should write out the text on the roll paper in clear, large letters, taking care to use most of the length but leave space for student illustrations.
6. **Decorate the card.** Invite students to choose art supplies and illustrate the margins of their card. If students wish, they may also turn the paper over and decorate the back, so long as their markers do not bleed through and obscure the message.
7. **Present the card.** Work together with your administration to find a good time to present your card. This may be as simple as inviting the counselor or principal down to the classroom, or involve a little schedule-juggling so that all the bus drivers can receive the card together. If students wish, they may volunteer to read the card aloud to the recipient(s) line by line.

BIG TEST JITTERS

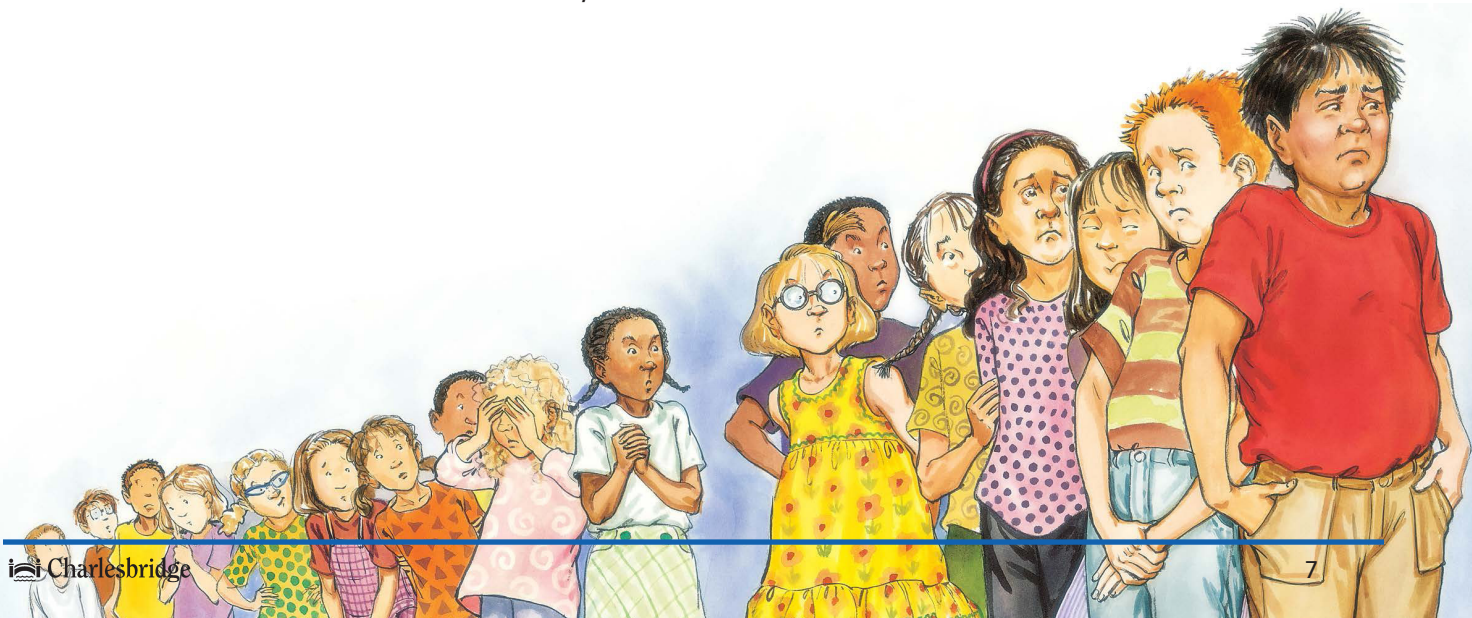
Activity Kit

Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *Big Test Jitters*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality.

1. Why does Mrs. Hartwell want her students to take the Big Test? Why is it important to show what you know?
2. What are some test-taking skills that Mrs. Hartwell's class practices? Have your students practiced these skills themselves? Why do they think it's important to practice skills like reading directions and filling in bubbles?
3. Why do Mrs. Hartwell's students keep going to the nurse after their test-taking skill lessons? Have your students also felt big emotions in their bodies like Andy, Emily, Maria, and Daniel?
4. At the beginning of the story, Mrs. Hartwell feels really, really good. Why? When Daniel goes to the nurse, Mrs. Hartwell's feelings have changed—why does she now feel bad?
5. Have students ever taken tests that aren't the sit-down kind you take in school? For example, a vision test at the eye doctor or a belt test to move up a level in martial arts. How are those tests different from school tests?
6. Take a look at the illustration of the testing party on pages 26–27. What do you see in this illustration? What kinds of tests are the students doing? Why are these tests less stressful than the Big Test the students have been practicing for?
7. Why do students think Mrs. Hartwell threw a party for her students the day before the actual Big Test? Have students ever done something similar to cope with a high-stress situation?
8. Teachers need to go to school for many years and take lots of tests before they can qualify as teachers and start working in a school. What do students think a teacher should learn? If they could write a test for all teachers to take, what would be on the test?



BIG TEST JITTERS

Activity Kit

You Write the Test

Name: _____

Date: _____

Mrs. Hartwell finally finished writing the big test—but someone messed up her questions! Can you guess the missing word or number from the answers?

1. $2 + \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = 4$

2. The _____ president of the United States was: George Washington.

3. $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} - 3 = 2$

4. What begins with a capitalized first word and ends in a _____? A sentence.

5. What are the three forms that _____ comes in? Solid, liquid, and gas.

6. How many _____ revolve around the sun? Eight.

7. $3 - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = 1$

SCHOOL YEAR JITTERS

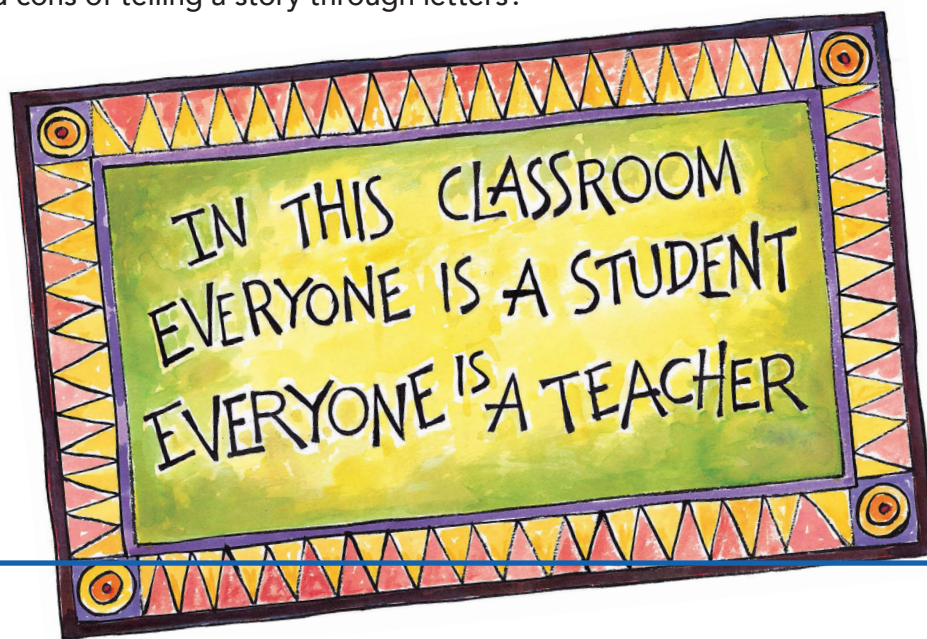
Activity Kit

Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *School Year Jitters*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality.

1. Have students ever written a letter? Who did they write it to? What did they say?
2. Have they been to a post office to help their grown-ups send mail? What was the post office like? What information did the postal workers need in order to send their mail to the right person?
3. Why does Mrs. Hartwell set up a classroom post office? Who writes to her, besides her students?
4. Who is Daisy? Why is it important not to lose her? Daisy going missing and being found throughout the book is an example of a *running gag*; can students think of other stories they've heard or seen that have running gags in them?
6. Why does Firefighter Phil ask Mrs. Hartwell not to use ". . . anything that burns, smokes, or even gets hot" anymore?
7. Why does Josh have trouble finding Superman's address? If students could write a letter to any fictional character or historical figure, who would they pick? What would they want to ask or tell that person?
8. Why is Mrs. Hartwell nervous about Mrs. Burton visiting her class? Have students seen the principal come to evaluate their teacher before? How do they think their teachers feel about being evaluated?
9. Why does Mrs. Burton call Mrs. Hartwell to her office at the end of the book?
10. *School Year Jitters* is an example of an *epistolary narrative*, a story told through letters and correspondence. Have students seen other examples of epistolary narratives before? What are the pros and cons of telling a story through letters?



SCHOOL YEAR JITTERS

Activity Kit

Make Your Own Postcard

Use the space below to write a message to someone! Don't forget a salutation and closing. When you're done, cut out the card and glue a drawing or photo to the back. Ask a grown-up for help mailing your card or deliver it by hand.

STAMP
HERE

TO

VALENTINE'S DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *Valentine's Day Jitters*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality.

1. What do people celebrate on Valentine's Day? How do they celebrate? What are some colors and symbols associated with Valentine's Day? Have students celebrated Valentine's Day before, or seen friends and family members celebrate?
2. Why do students think we have a holiday dedicated to love?
3. At the beginning of this book, Mrs. Hartwell is anxious about planning the class Valentine's Day party. What kind of work goes into a planning a party? Throughout the book, what questions does Mrs. Hartwell ask the class?
4. Because Mrs. Hartwell asks her students for help planning the Valentine's Day party, it's not a complete surprise. Do students think it's better for a party to surprise the guests, or is it better to know ahead of time what it will be like?
5. On pages two and three, we see some illustrations showing Mrs. Hartwell's previous party disasters. Why do you think the author doesn't include text describing these mistakes? Do you think it's funnier just to see the illustrations and imagine how they happened?
6. When you read through the book a second time, can students see the clues in the illustrations that the cake will collapse? These clues are called *foreshadowing*. Have students seen foreshadowing in other stories (TV shows, books, etc.)?
7. How do Mrs. Hartwell's students help out when she's sad that the cake is ruined? Can students think of times they've pitched in to help when one of their grown-ups is sad or feeling overwhelmed?
8. Look at the messages students have left on Mrs. Hartwell's giant valentine. Do you have a favorite message? What do these messages say about what Mrs. Hartwell is like? What do these messages say about her relationship with her class?



VALENTINE'S DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Party Planning

Name: _____

Date: _____

Let's plan a party! Use the grid below to help organize your ideas for a big bash.

Reason for Party

Time & Place

Who to Invite

Food & Drink

Games & Activities

Decorations

Other Ideas

PICTURE DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Discussion

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Before reading the book, show students the cover of *Picture Day Jitters*. Ask them what they think the story is about and if they can guess what will happen. List guesses on the whiteboard. After reading, compare the class's guess to reality.

1. Look at Mrs. Hartwell's class circle time on pages 2–3. What are her students wearing? What are their expressions like? Do they seem excited, nervous, annoyed, or indifferent about picture day?
2. What kinds of messes happen during the day? How does Mrs. Hartwell fix it? What are some strategies students can use if they get messy and need to clean up?
3. Do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to eat lunch in the classroom? What about no running or chalk at recess?
4. Why is nobody smiling or having fun by the afternoon? Andy says "I don't think this day is ever going to end." Have students experienced a day that seemed to crawl by? Why do they think the time seemed to pass so slowly?
5. Before picture time, the class has to do their chores and straighten the room. Do students have chores at school and/or at home? What are they responsible for? Are there tasks they aren't ready for yet but that older siblings, older students, or grownups can tackle?
6. How did the students get messy between their individual photos and the class picture? Why doesn't Mrs. Hartwell fix them up, the way she's been doing all day?
7. Why is Mrs. Hartwell happy with the way the class picture turned out in the end, even though the students were messy?



PICTURE DAY JITTERS

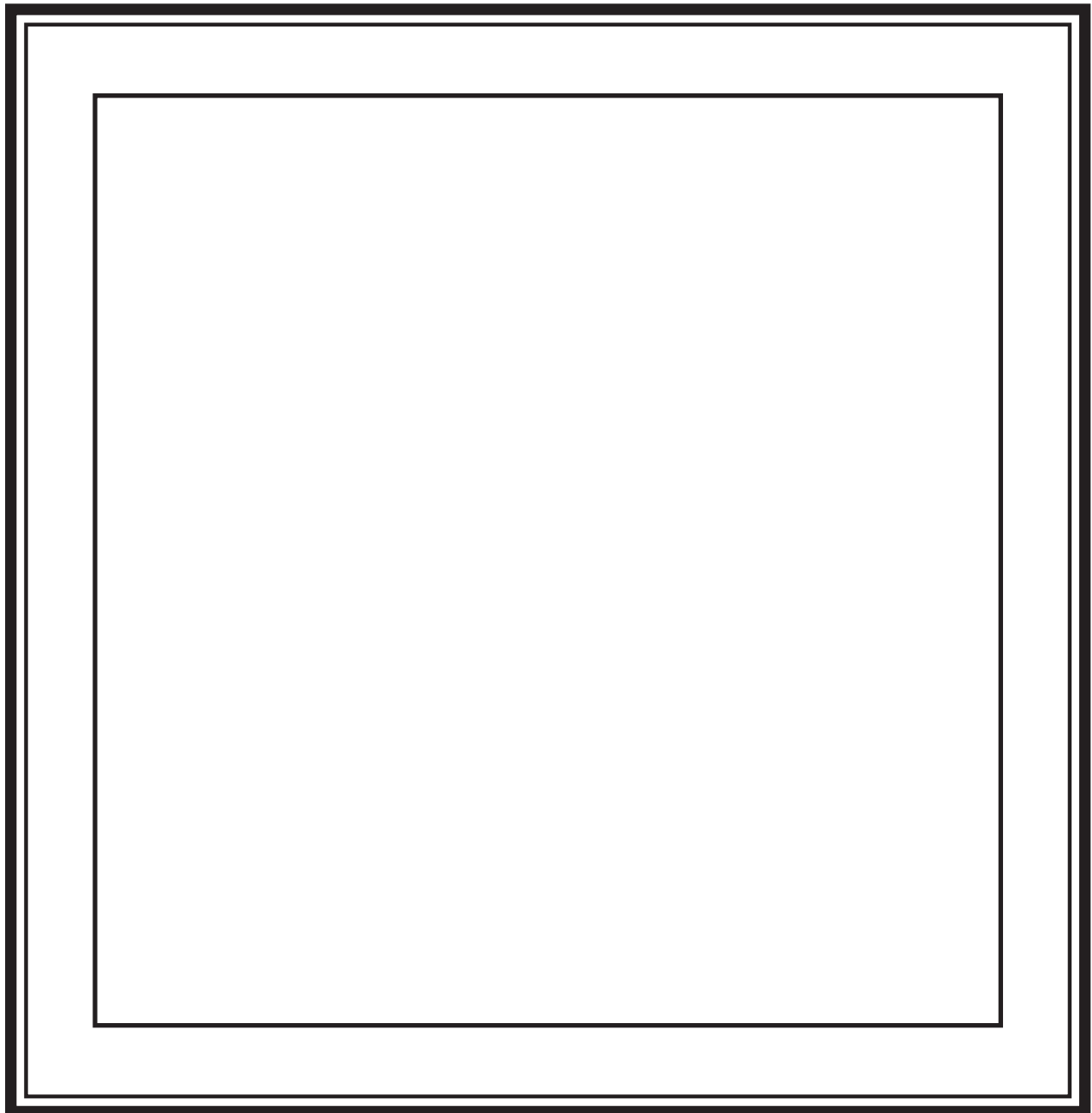
Activity Kit

Looking My Best

Name: _____

Date: _____

Use the picture frame below to draw yourself looking your best! Think about what you're wearing (a fancy outfit, a sports uniform, an astronaut's space suit), how your hair is styled, what you're carrying (your favorite book, a bunch of flowers, a lacrosse stick), and what you're doing (smiling for the camera, lining up the perfect soccer goal, or twirling like a ballerina).



PICTURE DAY JITTERS

Activity Kit

Picture Day Poster Project

Use this art project to help students commemorate their school year, starting with their own picture.

This is a classroom or a home activity for any age student.

The point of yearly school picture is to capture each student as they look at a particular moment in time. It's fun for them to look back at old school pictures and remember what they looked like, how they dressed and even how they've changed. But wouldn't it be great if they could capture more than just their looks? When they look back at those school pictures, will they remember their best friend, or their teacher, or what they did at recess? Here is a project students of all ages can do at home with their family, or at school with their class, to make that picture a little more complete.

Directions:

Attach a copy of your individual picture in the middle of a piece of paper. Surround it with photos you've taken or pictures you've drawn that show other important parts of your life. Make sure that you label with names or explanations. Here are some possible ideas:

- Best friend
- Best school subject
- Playground first choice activity
- Favorite school lunch
- Desk: clean or dirty?
- Book you are reading right now.
- What gives you the jitters at school?

When you are done, keep it in a safe place and do the same with next year's school picture, and the next year and the next!