

# Spotlight on Students

## Summary

This activity shares ideas on how to spotlight each student in your classroom.

## Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Writing Standard 1](#)

## Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Writing Standard 8](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 4](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 6](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 a.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 b.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 c.](#)

## Materials

- A favorite reading book
- Personal pictures & artifacts
- Attribute Grouping Circles
- Attribute Items
- Large floor graph
- Chart Paper
- [Questions for Students](#) (pdf)
- Markers
- Journal paper
- [My Brothers and Sisters Classroom Graph](#) (pdf)
- [My Classroom Graph of Family Members](#) (pdf)

## Additional Resources

### Books

- *The Kissing Hand*  
, by Audrey Penn; ISBN 0-590-6335-7
- *I Already Know I love You*  
, by Billy Crystal; ISBN 0-06-081519-1
- *Love You Forever*  
, by Robert Munsch; ISBN 0-920668-37-2
- *The Way I Feel*  
, by Janan Cain; ISBN 0-439-32116-6
- *When Sophie Gets Angry--Really, Really Angry...*  
, by Molly Bang; ISBN 0-439-21319-3

## Background for Teachers

Begin by planning to teach this unit within the first week of school to help the students feel a connection with you (the teacher) and each other. These activities give the students an opportunity to share things about their life and their interests. This is a highlight for every child in the classroom. It is very important to make every child feel special and find success in school. Steps in this unit have been spread out and will cover several days due to the interest span of first graders.

Each student will have an opportunity to be the "Top Banana/King/ Queen" (use any title you want) for the day (week). However, before any student has a chance to be in the spotlight, share some details from your own life with the students. This gives the students an opportunity to get to know you and feel a connection with you in the classroom.

Additionally, in using graphs in this unit, the students will feel a connection with other students who have the same attributes. Graphing can be used extensively through questions such as students' likes, dislikes, interests, etc. When all the charts are written about each child, the students can contrast/compare themselves with other class members and analyze the data from graphs. This will help increase math skills.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

2. Develop social skills and ethical responsibility.
3. Demonstrate responsible emotional and cognitive behaviors.

## Instructional Procedures

### Invitation to Learn

Within the first few days of school, you (the teacher) will share pictures and artifacts (e.g. quilt, crocheting, art, beloved books, etc.) that tell something about your life. Give your students the opportunity to ask questions. You write down the answers on chart paper. This is a good time to explain the difference between questions and statements. Limit the questions to no more than six because students' short interest span affects the success of this activity.

### Instructional Procedures

On the student's assigned day (week) as "Top Banana", allow the student to share pictures, artifacts, and a short written history about his/her life. Students will then get to ask the "Top Banana" some questions about his/her family, likes and dislikes, etc. The teacher will write the answers on chart paper. This is a good time to do interactive writing even at the beginning of the year because some students can write some simple words. Afterwards, the students will read the chart together. Then the "Top Banana" will read it before she either takes the chart home or you display it in the classroom.

This portion of the activity should be done a day or more after the first "Top Banana" is introduced. Students will get a sticker and put it on a graphing chart over the correct number representing how many people are in her family. Next, discuss the graph and talk about how families are different and alike. The students should get their journals out to write and draw a picture about their own family.

Use 2 attribute-grouping circles and place them like a Venn diagram. Put "sisters" above one side, "brothers" above the other side, and "both" above the middle. Also have a third circle by itself and put "none" above it. Each student will put her attribute cards in the correct circle. Next, discuss who has more, less, or an equal number of siblings.

Students get their journals out and write about other students who have the same or a different number of siblings and how their families are alike or different. Just a caution: monitoring students' work will help prevent problems.

## Extensions

After the students do the second step of the activity draw a curve line, touching the top sticker in each row of the graph to show that families can be different sizes. Have a math discussion about the graph using the vocabulary more, less, and equal to.

Attribute circles can also be used to recognize students who are the oldest, youngest, middle, or only child in their family.

Teacher can take the "Top Banana" chart and copy down the written paragraph to put into a class book. There will eventually be a page in the book for each student in the class.

Create a center where students can match the correct sentences with the picture of the student.

Have students write in their math journals about the results of the graphs. This is a great opportunity for students to do addition/subtraction/greater than/less than sentences.

Read a book like the ones suggested in the Additional Resources section. Then the students will participate in interactive writing about feelings (happy, sad, angry, scared, loved, etc.) They may also write in their journals about feelings.

#### Family Connections

Parents may come to share a brief (give the parents a time limit) life history of their child when she is "Top Banana".

#### Assessment Plan

Use the 1st Grade Writing Assessment Form to analyze the writing process.

Use My Classroom Graph of Family Members to graph students' siblings. Students will color the graph in relation to where the cards are placed in the attribute circles or Venn diagram.

#### Bibliography

##### Research Basis

DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (2005). *On Common Ground*. Solution Tree, Bloomington, Indiana

Continuous improvement in teaching, student achievement, and the quality of relationships among all members of a professional learning community (PLC) is based on a continuous cycle of teaching and learning. Educators who realize they have something to learn from their students as well as something to teach them usually find success. One of the keys to successful "learning for all" is based on the willingness of the school staff to customize and differentiate its services to meet the specific needs of each student.

#### Authors

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