

FIRST GRADE STINKS!

K-3

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Story Summary

Haley and her friend Ryan have been looking forward to the start of school. But first grade is not at all what Haley expected. There is no share time to start the day, no classroom decorations, and even the chocolate ice cream is gone by the time the first graders get to lunch. Haley's frustrations in trying to deal with the adjustment from kindergarten to first grade are expressed best when she shouts "first grade stinks!" Haley discovers that even though first grade is not what she expected, it can be a very special school year.

Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of transitions and changes that are a part of moving from grade to grade.
2. To explore the feelings that one has when leaving comfortable situations and beginning new experiences.
3. To develop verbal expressive skills.
4. To develop written expressive skills.

Before viewing the video

Tell the children that when they view this video they will have an opportunity to meet Mary Ann Rodman, the author of *First Grade Stinks!* Ask the children how they felt this year when they started a new grade in school. Did they want it to be familiar or new? What were some of the good surprises? What were some of the disappointments? In this video they will meet Haley and Ryan who are starting first grade. You will see how Haley, especially, learns how different first grade can be from

kindergarten. Think about some of your own feelings when you started a new grade as you watch and listen to this video.

Questions to ask after viewing the video

1. When Haley and Ryan start their first day of first grade, what are the differences they notice about their teacher and their new classroom?
2. Haley is unhappy when the activities for the day begin. Why is that?
3. Haley is upset about some of the things Ms. Gray is telling her. Why is that?
4. What is Haley's disappointment when she finally goes to lunch?
5. When Erika asks about naptime, Haley starts to like first grade a little better. Why is this?
6. Haley likes it when Ms. Gray starts to read a story, but this is different from kindergarten also. How is story time different?
7. When Haley yells "first grade stinks," Ms. Gray is not angry. How does she help Haley?
8. What makes Haley finally think that first grade is great?

Activities

1. Ask the children to develop two lists. What do I like better about this year in school? What do I like better about last year? Have the children discuss their lists with the class.
2. Have a class discussion about all of the new kinds of experiences the children have tried. These may include summer programs, new schools, or travel with family. What did you think it would be like before trying it? What was it actually like after trying it?
3. Develop a written language activity that focuses on a problem the children had with change and the solution they found to solve their problem. Some suggestions include changes in neighborhood, changes in friends, changes in chores around the house, changes in family composition.
4. Look ahead to the next school year. Have the children discuss their ideas about what they think the next school year will be like. What changes do you expect? If possible, have the children visit the grade they will be going to next year to see a sample activity.