

FIRST GRADE TAKES A TEST

K-3

Written by Miriam Cohen
Illustrated by Ronald Himler

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Story Summary

This book gets to the heart of the school-testing issue. When the lady from the principal's office brings in a test for the first grade class, the children have trouble when they realize that none of the multiple-choice answers are exactly right. Fortunately, their teacher knows the things that are really important can't be graded. This book will help in the understanding that there are many things that matter in a classroom...not just being the smartest on a test.

Objectives

1. The children will explore their feelings about taking tests and develop an understanding of the positive and negative aspects of testing.
2. The children will develop an understanding of the test-taking process.
3. The children will develop an understanding of the difference between what tests measure and what they do not measure.
4. The children will develop verbal expressive skills as they discuss alternative ways of measuring knowledge.

Before viewing the video

Tell the children that they will meet the author of *First Grade Takes a Test* Miriam Cohen, when they view this video. Have any of you taken a test where you were asked to take a pencil and fill in a little box? Do you have brothers or sisters who have told you about these kinds of tests? Ask the children for their input regarding their feelings about taking a test. Tell them that in the video they are about to see they will meet several first grade students who have different kinds of feelings after they take a test. We will talk about the things that tests tell you about children and the things that we don't know about ourselves by taking a test.

Questions to ask after viewing the video

1. The teacher told the first graders how to complete the test. Why did George have a problem?
2. Why did Sammy have a problem answering the question?
3. Why did Jim spend so much time thinking about his question?
4. When the teacher said that time was up, Anna Maria was happy, but the others were not. Why is that?
5. How did the children feel about themselves after Anna Maria was placed in a special class?
6. What are some of the things you can do that the test does not tell?
7. The children did a lot of good thinking in the classroom that a test could not show. What were some of these things?
8. Why do you think Anna Maria wanted to return to the class?

Activities

1. Have a classroom discussion, "*What makes you a good student and classmate?*" Have the children develop a list of the qualities we look for in ourselves and others. How do we measure these qualities?
2. Utilize this book as a teaching tool to help the children understand the nature of a multiple-choice test. Have them look at the samples in the book and have them create some of their own.
3. Develop an activity based upon a recent lesson to explore different ways to measure learning besides traditional testing. Look at the examples in the book that involve cooperative learning and concrete activities.
4. Development an assessment of a particular lesson by breaking the class into groups with each group having a different measurement tool. For example, written test, verbal explanation, creative writing assignment, and artistic expression.