Every name has a story behind it. This lesson allows students to share the story of their name with their classmates. Not only is it fun, it's ideal for establishing a respectful classroom community.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to write two explanatory paragraphs about their name.

**Materials and Preparation**

- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

**Key Terms**

**Introduction (5 minutes)**

- Ask students: *When you think about your name, what emotions do you feel (if any)?* Why? Give students a minute of thinking time, then have some students share.
- Explain that today, students will be learning and sharing more about their names. They will first read a story about a girl whose name had a special meaning, but who experienced many different emotions about her name. Tell students that it is a story that they may be able to relate to in one way or another.

**Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (30 minutes)**

- Read *The Name Jar* aloud to students.
- If necessary, ask clarifying questions during the story to make sure students understand the plot of the story.
- When the story is complete, have students turn and talk to a neighbor to discuss the following questions: *How did Unhei's feelings about her name change throughout the story, and what made her feelings change? Why was Unhei's name so special to her and her family? Have you ever felt embarrassed about your name, like Unhei? Why are names so important to people?* After giving students several minutes to discuss these questions, have some students share out their answers with the class.

**Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)**

- Tell students that now they will be writing the stories of their names. This is more of an explanatory story—it will give information about each student's name, such as why their name was given and what emotions they have about their name.
- Tell students they are required to write a paragraph about both their first and last names. Give students the following guiding questions: *What does your name mean? What is the origin or your name? Why did your parents give you your name? Who or what does your name remind you of? How do you feel about your name? Have your feelings about your name changed, and if so, why? Why is your name so special to you?* Stress that these questions are only to help them think about what they want to write—they do not have to answer all of them.
- Let students know that they will have an opportunity to take this assignment home and add to it in case they want to ask their parents more about their name.
- Show students your own name story as a model. Students will love knowing your first name and learning more about you.

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Independent Working Time (25 minutes)

- Give students plenty of time to write their name stories.
- Circulate the room to make sure students are on the right track.
- Encourage students who finish early to add more detail to their writing.

Differentiation

- **Enrichment:** Have students who want more of a challenge write about their middle names as well.
- **Support:** Some struggling writers would benefit from a more structured assignment. These students could answer the following questions one-by-one in a list format: *What does your name mean? Who does it remind you of? How do you feel about your name and why?*

Related Books and/or Media

- **BOOK:** *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes

Assessment (5 minutes)

- Read the students' paragraphs to determine if they were able to follow the directions and write about their names.
- Ask yourself whether a student's writing is organized and stays focused on the topic at hand. The answers to these questions can help you determine where he may still need explicit instruction.

Review and Closing (5 minutes)

- Remind students that tonight they can add to their name stories if they wish to.
- Have students turn and talk to answer the following question: *How will hearing your classmates' name stories help you learn more about them?*