

Low-Level Learners



This packet includes...	Pre-reading activities to accompany <i>My Name Is Fatima</i> , a low-level reader adapted from “Welcome Parents”
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WANY Professional Development Day

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Lessons for *My Name Is Fatima* and other WANY Low-Level Readers

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Materials:

- Alphabet chart (a reference chart for the classroom with both capital and small letters)
- Correction language (a reference chart – attached - for the classroom.)
- Index cards with vocabulary words
- Index cards with character names
- Copies of *My Name Is Fatima* (or other WANY low-level reader)
- Copies of charts (Chart #1 and Chart #2) for students to fill out as needed
- Copies of montage of pictures from *My Name Is Fatima* (attached)
- Butcher paper
- Markers

Goals:

- Introduce alphabetizing (new strategy)
- Practice alphabetical order strategy to prepare for reading a new text
- Introduce scanning with a new text (new strategy)
- Introduce the main characters of the text
- Use guessing as a pre-reading strategy
- Provide enough pre-reading scaffolding so that reading will be more manageable

Pre-Reading Activities

1. Hand out 8 to 10 vocabulary words from the story that you have chosen and written on index cards. (NB: Each student should get a card, so you might need to make doubles of each word. I do not recommend doing more than 10 different words. Keep the list to 10 at this level.) I chose the following vocabulary words from *My Name Is Fatima*: children, daughter, friend, happy, letter, nervous, parents, proud, questions, worried. You can choose any 8 – 10 vocabulary words, but make sure they are fairly common and most of them are known already.
2. After you hand out the cards, ask students to read the word and shout it out to you as you make the list of words on the board. Write them in a list (and count so you know you have 10). Try as much as possible to make them NOT in alphabetical order.
3. Take a little time before moving on to go through the list for pronunciation of each of the words. While the word “daughter” is known by almost all low level students, the pronunciation is not always accurate. This is a good place to stop and get them to focus on the pronunciation of these words that they know for the most part.

4. Point to the alphabet chart that you have in your room. Keep in mind this is not the first time you are introducing the alphabet. This activity is designed to provide students with a way to use this “tool” as something other than to “name” letters and pronounce them. Make sure as you point to the chart that students remember the word “alphabet” and use that word. Take a few minutes with pronunciation and spelling if necessary. Then note how the alphabet on the chart has an order. Ask what the order is called (if you think they can get it). If you don’t think they can get it (or you have not talked about it), then give them the word “alphabetical” and make sure they get both the word and the pronunciation (with syllables) on their lips.
5. Go back to the vocabulary word list that was generated from the index cards. Ask if the list is in alphabetical order. When students say no, ask them which word is first in alphabetical order. When they have the first one, ask about the second one. After the second one, ask the students to work with a partner (next to them) to write the list in alphabetical order. Give them no more than 5 minutes, even if there are some groups that are not finished in that time.
6. Check the list together by having one group write their alphabetical list on the board. Using correction language (“Is this/it correct?”) check the alphabetical list with the group.
7. Tell the students they are going to read a story. Write the word “title” on the board and have the students say it. Tell them the title is the name of the book. Then show them a copy of *My Name Is Fatima* and ask them what the title is. Make sure at least a few students can see the title as you show them. Write the title *My Name Is Fatima* on the board.
8. Ask the students what the title of the story is again, just to reinforce. Then go back to the list of words. Tell them all of the words from the list are in the story. Ask the students what they think the story might be about? Just let them guess, and note what they say.
9. Write the word “characters” on the board. Tell them that characters are the people in the story. Tell the students before they begin to read, they need to know the characters. Ask for 8 volunteers (because there are 8 main characters in this story: Carmen, Fatima, Ismael, Juan, Ming, Pierre, Parent Coordinator, Sayeed). Read the character names out loud from the index cards you have prepared. Then ask the 8 volunteers to come to the front and take one index card with a character name. Ask these 8 students to put the character names in alphabetical order, making a line of the characters in alphabetical order. To make sure that they are in correct alphabetical order, the volunteers should check with the rest of the group that they are correct using correction language (“Is this correct?”).
10. While the students are figuring out the alphabetical order, write the following chart on the board:

Chart #1

Name of Character (in alphabetical order)	Male or Female	Adult or Child	

11. Look at the chart together, making sure all the columns are understood by the students. If necessary draw a woman / man figure to explain “male” / “female.” Tell the students the last column is for later.
12. Write the word “guess” on the board and see if there is any understanding of the word. Since the students have to “guess” basically about the characters before they read, it’s necessary to use this word. The explanation of this word can be very simply done as follows: Ask the students “How old am I?” Students will giggle, but you should just write a big question mark on the board and encourage the students to “guess” (going back to the word you wrote). You don’t have to tell, the fun is just in the guessing. You could do this with other students, or birthdays. It might take a few examples, but it’s an extremely useful word for students to know for predicting.
13. Go back to the chart, and tell the students they will be doing some “guessing” about characters before they read the story. (You might ask again what the title of the story is and who the characters are – review at level one is the key to it all!) Then ask the first 8 volunteers to remain standing, and get 8 new volunteers – one for each character - to come up one by one to fill out the chart. You might have a second set of index cards with names for the second set of volunteers, so they remember who they are writing about. Encourage the 8 new students to guess about the characters. Make sure when they come up to the board to write, they keep the characters in alphabetical order on the chart.
14. Go back to the title of the book: *My Name Is Fatima* and look at the chart. Did we guess that Fatima is a male / female? Is she an adult or a child? You might ask why they guessed a certain way (i.e. Fatima in my country is a woman’s name...).
15. Write the word “scan” on the board. Ask if anyone knows the word, and if not, explain it. You can do it by saying reading fast for special words. Tell the students they are going to “scan” the story. They are going to look quickly at the text for the names of the characters. Tell them they will look for the names, and when they see a name, they will circle the name. Go over what it means to “circle” something. If you have the word “scan” on the board, ask someone to come and circle it with chalk. Do this a few times so students really know what to do. Review all the names of the characters. (If you can, erase the names to see if they can remember and say them. Write them back in before they do the scanning exercise.)

16. Show the book again to the class before you hand it out. Show students that there are 26 pages, and many pictures. Ask them if they are going to read the book right now. They should answer “No.” Ask them what they are going to do. They should say “scan and circle the names of the characters.” Make sure this is clear before handing out the book.
17. Hand out the book *My Name Is Fatima*. Ask the students to open the book and look at pages 1 and 2. When you see everyone on pages 1 and 2, ask the students to shout out what character names they see quickly. Ask them to shout out the 4 character names they will circle. Ask them to circle those names, and walk around making sure that everyone makes a circle around the names only. Ask a student who has demonstrated good understanding to say what s/he is going to do. Then ask one more student to say it. Finally, tell the students they have only 3 minutes (or whatever you think is appropriate limited time) to do the scanning task of the whole book. Make sure they understand they will circle the name every time it is in the book. Giving them a limited time will put the pressure on to do real scanning. Some still will not finish, but that’s OK.
18. When the time is up, ask the students to close their books. Make sure all books are closed before moving on. Go back to the chart with the character names. Ask if everything is correct about male / female and adult / child. Do they want to change anything on the chart? (They will be noticing different things even while scanning, so this may change their guesses about characters. If not, that’s also OK.)
19. Go back to the empty column on the chart, the column with no heading. Take a few minutes to fill in the last column. Tell students the last column is about what you now know / noticed – if anything – about the characters? (Students of course will notice the pictures, so maybe they caught something. This is a good way for them to begin to relate to the characters and understand the story. Remember these are all scaffolding activities so that when they read the story it will be easier and clearer.)
20. Now go back to the vocabulary words in alphabetical order from the beginning of the class. Remind the students that these words are in the story. Tell the students they will scan for these words and circle them, just as they did for the characters. Ask the students what they are going to do, and then give them a short time again to scan the whole book for these words.
21. While they are doing that, put the following chart on the board:

Chart #2

#	Word	Page Number(s)	Write ONE Sentence from the book with this word and put the page number
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

22. When students are finished with the scanning and circling activity, ask them to close their books. Wait until all the books are closed before moving on. Ask students to look at the chart you created on the board (or on butcher paper if that's easier). Go through each column so students understand what goes in each column. Ask for a word, and write it in the "Word" column. Then ask what page number the word is on (of course they need to open the book again for this and there will be multiple number pages). Finally, ask for a volunteer to come up and write the sentence s/he likes with that word and write the page number after that. Make sure the student copies the sentence exactly. Make the student ask "Is this correct?" so that students are checking the spelling, punctuation, etc., of the sentence.
23. Ask the students to shut their books again so that you have their attention. Give them each a copy of Chart #2 (just cut and paste the above into a word document and enlarge it). Ask them: "What are you going to do?" They will tell you, and if they don't know, you will explain again. Make sure it is clear what they are going to do before they open their books again. If students finish early, get those students to start a list of sentences for the whole group on the board or on butcher paper. These can be used for reference. Having students write sentences directly from the text – copy them word for word at the lowest levels – can be challenging. So, this is also a good time to check accuracy with the whole group, as above.
24. With books closed, put the sentences and other charts on the board, give a pair of students a handout with pictures from the story (see attached). I chose pictures that illustrate some of the vocabulary words from above like "happy", "nervous", "proud", "parents," etc., in order to make them use the vocabulary. The picture montage helps define the characters.
25. Ask the students to look again at the chart of characters, the idea about the story (if you wrote anything), and the words with the sentences. Tell them to use all of this information to talk about what is happening in the pictures. Look at one picture together with the whole group and talk about it. Then, ask them what they are going to do. They should say talk about the characters, who they are and what they are doing. Ask them if they are going to

write. They should say no. Make sure that all pencils and notebooks are put away. This is a speaking exercise. Move around the room to answer any questions. They should be able to figure out a lot, but you could clarify characters and possibly vocabulary.

26. After they have talked about the pictures with at least one partner (possibly two), ask the students what is still not clear. Ask the students what they think the story is about now.
27. You could at this point decide to read the story out loud to the students before having them read silently.
28. After you read the story out loud – if you decide to do that - tell the students they will now read the story silently. Give them a limited time. This will help them move through the story. They should have a pen or pencil ready to circle any new words for them. If there is a new word on the page, tell the student to circle it. You can discuss any new vocabulary after they read.

Post-Reading Activities:

Many activities could follow (before then watching the DVD version!)

- a. Role play of the story by groups.
- b. True or False questions made up by students for other groups.
- c. Journal entry writing about an experience at a parent-teacher conferences at their own children's school. Or if they don't have children, a meeting that made them nervous.

Correction Language

Is this/it correct?

Add _____.

Take out _____.

Change _____ to _____.

Write _____ after _____.

Put _____ before _____.

Spell it for me please.

