

Chrysanthemum

by Kevin Henkes

Descriptive text and alluring illustrations fill Chrysanthemum's first few see-saw days of school.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *The little mouse in this story is named Chrysanthemum. She is named after a flower. Has anyone ever seen a chrysanthemum?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder how come that flower is so much bigger than the other flowers?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Chrysanthemum*

- perfect: without errors, flaws, or faults
- absolutely: used to give strong emphasis to what is being said
- appreciate: value something highly
- ink: a colored liquid used for writing
- icing: frosting for cakes
- sunniest: full of sunshine or sunlight
- brightest: cheerful and lively
- roll call: a check on attendance, especially in a school
- scarcely: hardly at all
- wilted: to lose confidence, composure or enthusiasm
- dreadful: extremely unpleasant
- informed: having enough information to understand something
- entire: as a whole, from beginning to end
- miserably: experiencing a serious lack of happiness
- pish: used to express annoyance
- precious: highly valued
- priceless: impossible to put value on
- fascinating: inspiring a great interest or attraction
- winsome: charming
- evening: the part of day between afternoon and night
- Parcheesi: a board game
- extremely: to a very high degree
- pleasant: bringing feelings of pleasure, enjoyment, or satisfaction

Rare Words in *Chrysanthemum*

- comfortable: making somebody feel relaxed
- jumper: sleeveless dress designed for wearing over a blouse or sweater
- pretended: to act as if something were true
- jealous: feeling bitter and unhappy because of another's advantages, possessions, or luck
- envious: wanting to have somebody else's success, good fortune, qualities, or possessions
- begrudging: showing unwillingness to give somebody something
- discontented: feeling mildly unhappy and dissatisfied
- jaundiced: to alter somebody's attitude for the worse
- trifle: a little bit
- sprouted: to begin to grow from a seed
- petals: the colored part of a flower
- plucked: to pull something off or out of something else
- scrawny: very thin
- stem: the main stalk of a plant
- nightmare: a frightening or upsetting dream
- route: a sequence of roads or paths taken in traveling from one place to another
- introduced: to make yourself or another person known to somebody else
- speechless: temporarily unable to speak because of surprise
- indescribable: impossible to describe
- wonder: amazed admiration or awe
- impression: a lasting effect, opinion, or mental image of somebody
- scales: a series of musical notes arranged in ascending or descending order of pitch
- assigned: to give somebody a job to do
- musicale: a social occasion in which music is the featured entertainment
- dainty: delicate and pretty
- spiffy: stylish or modern and attractive
- messenger: somebody who carries messages between people
- daisy: a tall flowering plant with large white petals around a yellow center
- chanted: a phrase spoken repeatedly and rhythmically by a crowd or group
- humorous: intended to be amusing and make people laugh
- blushed: to turn red in the face because of emotion
- beamed: a broad smile of happiness or satisfaction
- bloomed: to appear healthy and vigorous
- longingly: a persistent and strong desire

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- How do you think Chrysanthemum felt when the teacher called her name and everyone giggled?
- What were some of the reasons the other students made fun of Chrysanthemum's name?
- What made Chrysanthemum feel better?
- Have any of you ever eaten macaroni and cheese with ketchup?
- What was Chrysanthemum's favorite dessert? Has anyone ever had this?
- Why did Chrysanthemum have a nightmare? What was she in her nightmare?
- Have any of you ever had nightmares before?
- Why did all the students like Mrs. Twinkle? What was Mrs. Twinkle's first name?
- How do you think Chrysanthemum felt at the end of the story when the other students wished they were named after a flower?



Do

The Name Game

Using 1" squared tagboard, make a graph of the names of each student in the class. Which name has the most letters? The least? Which name has the most vowels? Which names end in a vowel? Do any names have double letters?