

Classroom fun with Flat Stanley!



Pre-Reading Activity

Engage the students in a discussion of supernatural qualities that some favorite characters have (some characters can fly, some can use magic, etc.). Talk about special characteristics that a storybook character might have. After making a list of several, show the class the front cover of any Flat Stanley book. Ask students what special characteristic the prominent character possesses. Introduce the idea of being flat. Discuss what might be able to happen if someone were very flat. Have students predict the possibilities based on book covers.

Character Traits

The reader is able to ascertain that Mrs. Lambchop is kind, thoughtful, and considerate of others. Encourage students to find examples in *Flat Stanley* and *Stanley, Flat Again!* that show the type of person Mrs. Lambchop is. Ask students to list some of Stanley's traits (e.g., kind, helpful) and some traits belonging to Emma Weeks (rude, selfish). Then have students create character webs for one or all of the characters in the Flat Stanley books.

Story Suggestions

Of course, it would not really be possible for Stanley to be squashed flat and still function like a normal child. Discuss how authors can use imagination to make an impossible event sound logical. Ask students what kind of things they'd be able to do and what places they'd be able to go if they were flat. Make a class list of these activities and places and post it on the bulletin board. These can then be used for story suggestions. Go one step further and ask students what the ramifications would be if their shape and/or size were changed in different ways, such as if they were giant-sized or if they were only one inch tall.

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

In *Stanley, Flat Again!* Stanley not only gets his picture in the newspaper, but after rescuing Emma, he makes headlines on the front page! Have students use a different scene from any Flat Stanley book and turn it into a newspaper article, including a clever headline, picture, and story. This activity can also be used in conjunction with story suggestions; students can create newspaper articles about becoming a different size or shape.

It's All in the Wind

In *Flat Stanley*, Arthur flies Stanley like a kite. As a class, brainstorm different designs for kites. Point out qualities that kites must have (e.g., aerodynamic design, proper balance of strength and weight). Discuss difficulties in making a very small kite (difficult to control; hard to find lightweight material) or a very large kite (too heavy to fly; hard to find strong materials). Then have students create the smallest or the biggest kite they can. Go outside and test them. Did the kites fly? How would you improve them?

In *Stanley, Flat Again!*, Stanley becomes the spinnaker on Mr. Jones's sailboat. Have each student create a miniature sailboat. Bring in an inflatable swimming pool for this purpose, or conduct races in sinks in your science lab.

The Flat Stanley Project

The Flat Stanley Project is an ongoing Internet-based program in which likenesses of Flat Stanley are mailed all over the world. It is an ideal cross-curricular activity—it builds students' writing abilities as it incorporates social studies, geography, language arts, and more. It is highly motivational and is appropriate for a wide range of ages and abilities. The Flat Stanley Project has been used successfully in kindergarten through high school classrooms. Visit www.flatstanleyproject.com for more information!

