

Yoko

(HYPERION, 1998)

Messages and Themes

- ◆ People enjoy eating different kinds of food.
- ◆ An unfamiliar food may be a tasty treat.

Additional Rosemary Wells books that include the character Yoko are:

**Yoko and Friends School Days:
Doris's Dinosaur**
(Hyperion, 2001)

**Yoko and Friends School Days:
The Germ Busters**
(Hyperion, 2002)

**Yoko and Friends School Days:
The Halloween Parade**
(Hyperion, 2001)

**Yoko and Friends School Days:
Mama, Don't Go!**
(Hyperion, 2001)

**Yoko and Friends School Days:
The School Play**
(Hyperion, 2001)

Yoko's Paper Cranes
(Hyperion, 2001)

Yoko is excited about her day at Hilltop School until lunchtime, when the other children begin teasing her about the foods inside her willow-covered cooler.

Before Reading

Talk with students about the title and cover of the book. Have them predict what this book is about. Have they heard the name Yoko before? What is the character holding in her hand? What do they suppose is inside the cooler?

After Reading

Invite students to examine the illustrations and notice the ways in which Yoko shows her feelings (happiness, sadness, disappointment) in the story. Encourage children to make connections between the events in the story and the way Yoko's feelings change over time. Use the following prompts to go further:

- ☉ What would you do if your classmates teased you about your favorite foods? How would you feel?
- ☉ When Mrs. Jenkins held International Food Day in the classroom, she thought she'd solved Yoko's problem, but she hadn't quite. Have you ever tried to solve a problem, only to discover it hasn't been solved at all? Describe what happened.
- ☉ Describe a time you tasted an unfamiliar food. What surprised you about this food?

Chez Kids (Social Studies, Language Arts)

Transform the dramatic play area of your classroom into a restaurant that reinforces reading and writing skills.

1. Have students gather and arrange props (cookware, hats, pretend food) to create a restaurant in the classroom. If children feel that key tools and equipment of a real-life restaurant are absent, invite them to improvise with classroom materials and supplies. For example, if young waiters wish they had menus, provide them with large sheets of oak tag. To make menus, children can draw pictures or cut out pictures from magazines of foods they want to include, then organize them on the oak tag by categories before gluing them in place. If they wish, children can label the foods, add mouthwatering descriptions, and list prices.
2. Stir up students' appetites for exploring the new center by taking a class field trip to a local restaurant. Or take a tour of the school's cafeteria. When you return to the classroom, encourage children to discuss the experience—what they were surprised to learn and their favorite parts of the adventure. Then provide students with opportunities for playing and learning in their classroom's dining establishment.
3. Use the restaurant as a source of ongoing active learning experiences. Children can write and read orders, follow directions to cook up the specials, write (and read) the daily specials on a small whiteboard, and read recipe books.

Multicultural Recipes (Language Arts, Social Studies)

As a class, make a collaborative cookbook to help children share some of the favorite recipes their families enjoy.

1. Give each student a large index card to take home. Ask children to work with family members to record the name of the dish, information about serving size, ingredients, and step-by-step directions on how to make it. Work with children who are unable to bring in a family recipe to create a card for a favorite dish.
2. Place all the recipe cards in a recipe box. (A square storage container works well.) Label the box with a title, such as "Our Favorite Recipes."
3. To build reading skills, place the box in a center and invite students to sort the recipes in a variety of ways. For example, you may have children place the recipes in alphabetical order or sort recipes by the type of food (dessert, meat dish, bread, and so on). To build science and math skills, you may have students select a recipe and then help you prepare the favorite food as a snack. To wrap up this activity, make photocopies of the class cookbook to share with families.



Favorite Foods Interviews (Language Arts)

Help children develop interviewing skills as they discover how many food favorites they have in common.

1. Give each student a copy of the interview form (page 32).
2. Explain that children will interview each other to find out what foods they enjoy. Tell students to dig for details as they interview their partners and fill in the answers on the interview form. For example, a child responding to an interview question about a favorite dessert may volunteer “ice cream” as an answer. The interviewer’s role is to find out specifics—for example, by asking “What flavor of ice cream is your favorite?” or “What is your favorite way to enjoy ice cream?”
3. Once the interviewing process is complete, discuss the activity with the group. Encourage students to talk about what it was like to interview a classmate, probe for details, and discuss favorite foods.

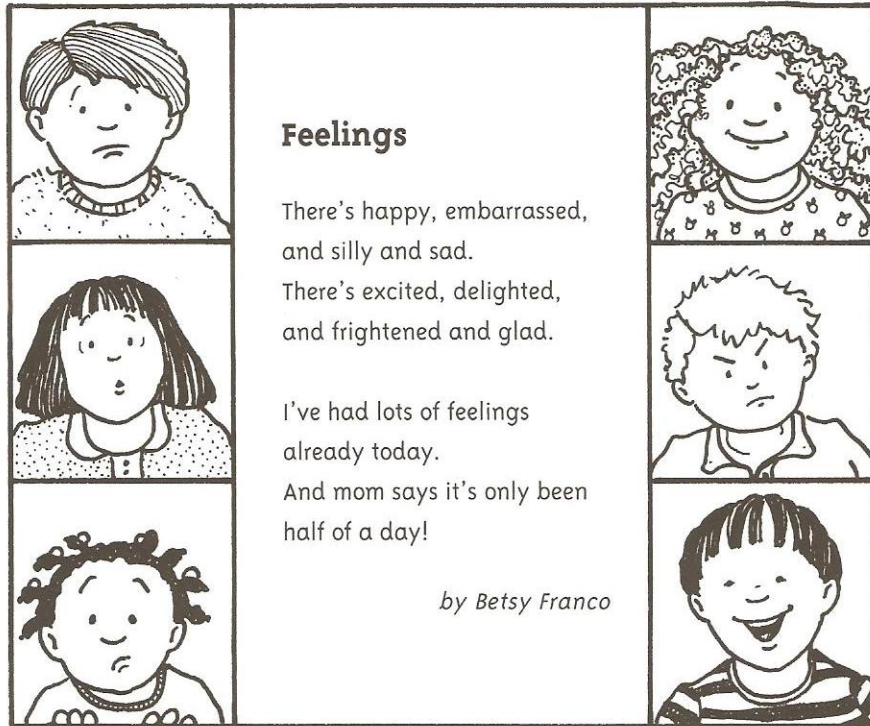
Minding Mealtime Manners (Language Arts, Social Studies)

Timothy, who was still hungry, tasted one of Yoko’s crab-cones . . . and liked it. But what if he hadn’t liked it? What if Timothy had made a sour face and complained loudly to Yoko that he thought all sushi tasted terrible? As a group, discuss what it means to have manners during a meal—what good manners look and sound like. Accept all appropriate student responses, and record them on a sheet of chart paper. Then use the chart as inspiration for some role-playing.

1. Set up a table and chairs at the front of the classroom. Provide mealtime props, such as lunch trays, lunch boxes, cups, and napkins.
2. Choose a scenario to share with students—for example, a student’s lunch box contains a meat dish with a strong aroma or a strange-looking fruit, or a classmate has a chocolaty dessert with bright, edible decorations. Invite several children to take a seat at the table and then act out what they would do to be polite in that mealtime situation. Discuss ways in which the role-players used good manners, and then repeat with a new scenario and set of students. As you explore these scenarios as a class, encourage students to be sensitive to cultural differences.

Specific-Feelings Words (Language Arts)

Invite children to look at how Rosemary Wells illustrated Timothy throughout the book. We as readers can see that Timothy's facial expressions and body language show a wide variety of feelings—from looking overjoyed on the first day of school to looking miserable at the end of the second day. Explore words for feelings further with a poem that reminds students of the many ways they can feel!



1. In this poem about feelings, the poet uses words like *embarrassed*, *silly*, and *delighted* to name feelings. Share the poem with students, and invite them to brainstorm other words that describe specific feelings.
2. Make a list of children's word suggestions, and display the list in a writing center.
3. Encourage young poets to use the list as a reference and inspiration for their writing.

Book Links

Abuela

by Arthur Dorros
(Dutton, 1991)

A girl, a grandmother, and an imagination take flight in a memorable story that explores ethnic heritage.

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs

by Judi Barrett
(Atheneum, 1978)

What reader could resist an adventure to the town of Chewandswallow, where it rains soup and snows mashed potatoes?

Name _____ Date _____

Food Favorites

Interview a classmate about his or her favorite foods. Write each answer below.

I interviewed _____.

© What is your favorite food for breakfast?

© What is your favorite food for lunch?

© What is your favorite food for dinner?

© What is your favorite dessert?

© What is your favorite fruit?

© What is your favorite vegetable?

© What food do you think everyone should try?
