Close Reading Read Aloud

**Text Title:** *Chrysanthemum*  
**Author:** Kevin Henkes  
**Publisher:** The Child’s World, Inc.  
**ISBN:** 1-56766-086-X

**Lesson Summary:**  
The goal of this lesson is to give students the opportunity to use reading and writing to respond to a text with a familiar topic and to enjoy learning about the beginning of school through the main character. With prompting and support, the students will ask and answer questions about key details and describe the characters, setting and main events in the story and support their answers with the text.

**Text Selection:** This text relates to how children can often hurt another child’s feelings by comments and how easy it can be to change the children’s perceptions.

**Reading Task:** Students will listen while the teacher reads the text. The teacher will then use prompting and support to guide the students through a set of text-based questions that encourage the students to re-examine specific words and illustrations. The students will ask and answer questions about key details and will describe the characters, setting and main events in the story by using key details.

**Vocabulary Task:** The students can discover the meanings of most words in the text by careful reading of the context in which they appear. The teacher will help the students identify words and phrases in the text that suggest feelings or appeal to the emotions. The teacher will also help students identify words that are similar in meaning to other words in the same context. All but one definition came from [www.wordsmith.net](http://www.wordsmith.net).

**Discussion Task:** Students will discuss the text in depth with the teacher and their classmates and will perform activities that will result in better understanding of the text. Students will discuss appropriate behavior, based on the text. A deep discussion will also occur to determine the character’s moods and feeling through the examination of vocabulary, stress on words, and illustrations.

**Writing Task:** Students will use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several linked events when they were hurt by a friend’s comment. They will tell about the event in the order in which it happened and will provide a reaction to the events.

**Foundational Skills:** The teacher will model reading words from left to right, top to bottom and page to page.
Standards Addressed/Outcomes:
CCLA.K.RL.1.1 – With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
CCLA.K.RL.1.2 – With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
CCLA.K.RL. 1.3 – With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
CCLA.K.RL. 2.4 – Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
CCLA.K.RL.3.7 – With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.
CCLA.K.RL.4.10 – Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
CCLA.K.SL.1.1 – Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
CCLA.K.SL.1.1.a – Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions.
CCLA.K.SL.1.2 – Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
CCLA.K.L.3.4 – Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.

Vocabulary Discussed in Text:
Absolutely—(1) precisely; exactly (2) totally; complete
All-important—extremely important; absolutely necessary; indispensable
Appreciate—(1) to be grateful for or to (2) to understand and accept the worth of; value
Assigned—to give a particular thing for someone to do
Beamed—light sent out from something—how does this apply to a person?
Beguiling— to enviously disapprove of the enjoyment or good fortune of (someone)
Blushed— to become red in the face because of embarrassment
Chanted—words spoken in rhythm over and over on a single pitch
Charms—any small object to be worn on a chain as a decoration
Comfortable— giving or feeling comfort
Considering—think about something in a serious way
Dainty—small, pretty, and delicate
Discontented— not satisfied or content; unhappy
Dreadful— very bad; awful; no good
Entire—whole; including all parts
Envelope—a folded paper covering or container usually used to mail letters.
Envious—showing or feeling envy or desire for what another has
Eventually—at a future time; in the end; finally
Extremely—very; to an extreme degree
Fascinating— capable of capturing one's interest and attention; enchanting; spellbinding
Humorous—funny
Giggled— to laugh in a silly or nervous way
Impression—a belief or a feeling that is created at the beginning of an experience
Indescribable—not capable of being described; beyond description
Informed— to give knowledge to; tell
Introduced—to present one person to another person for the first time, or to present a new thing
Jaundiced— having or looking as if one had jaundice (related to intolerant--not able or not willing to accept different opinions, beliefs, customs, or people)
Jealous— feeling angry or sad when you want what another person has
Jumper— a dress without sleeves worn over a shirt or blouse
Longingly— a strong and lasting desire
Miserably— very unhappy; wretched
Neither— not one or the other of two
Nightmare— a terrifying or distressing dream
Pish— used to express distaste, aversion, or impatience
Pleasant— enjoyable
Plucked— to grab with the fingers and pull off; pick
Possessions— something that is owned
Precious— of great worth or value
Priceless— having a worth greater than any price or amount of money
Scarcely— almost not; just barely
Scrawny— very thin; skinny
Speechless— unable to speak because of exhaustion, surprise, astonishment, or great emotion
Spiffy— smart in appearance and dress, stylish (from thefreedictionary.com)
Sprouted— to start to grow
Stared— to look straight at something with your eyes open wide and not moving
Trifle— something that has very little value or importance (related word-bit)
Upon— at the time or occasion of
Wilted— to lose freshness and become limp
Winsome— attractive or charming; winning
Lesson Sequence:

Outline of Lesson:
The teacher can and should divide this lesson into three to four days of instruction and reflection with a culminating writing activity.

Day 1: Reading the Text Together—the teacher will introduce the text and will read it through the first time without stopping so the students can enjoy the story. If possible, allow the students the opportunity to review the book independently following this reading. A tape or CD of the book could be made available to the students.

Days 2, 3, or 4: Mix and match (as appropriate) selected Vocabulary and Discussion Activities over the course of several days.

Vocabulary Activities— the teacher will re-read the text and will discuss selected vocabulary that the children may be unfamiliar with. Teacher will lead discussion of words with similar meanings. Definitions will be provided only after the students attempt to figure out the words using context clues and prompting by the teacher.

Discussion Activities— the teacher will ask the class selected questions and the students refer to the text in response to guiding questions. The teacher should look for opportunities to reduce the amount of guidance given to the class as the students begin to look for the answers independently. This story offers opportunities to discuss how illustrations can give information, how stress on words can bring new meaning and how simple words can affect another person. Children may also discuss how they feel about beginning school and making friends as they progress through the text.

Final Read: Teacher will read the text a final time. During this read the teachers should have one large construction paper heart nearby as the story is read. During the reading, students should make a silent signal (thumbs up or down; stop motion with hand; smile face or cry pantomime) to indicate when the teacher should stop reading. Students make one silent signal each time they notice something that was said that would hurt Chrysanthemum’s feelings. Students should make another signal to stop reading when something nice is said. Each time the students stop the teacher from reading the teacher, or designated student, should make a small tear in the edge of the heart when something hurtful is said and they should staple or tape one of the tears back together when something nice is said. This will demonstrate that kind words and actions can help heal bad feelings, but that the unkind words and actions leave a scar. The children should understand that their actions and words have consequences for others and that they should consider that before they act. Don’t hurt someone on the outside or the inside.
**Culminating Writing in Response to Reading:**

**Activities focus on CCSS Standard:** CCLA.K.W.1.3 – Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

**Option 1:** The teacher asks students to discuss with partners a time when they were upset about something someone said to them. Then, the teacher assists students in using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a time when their feelings were hurt. The students can also write about how the problem was resolved and what made them feel better.

**Option 2:** The teacher asks the students to talk with a partner about when they like to hear their name and when do they not like to hear their names. Responses could be recorded on a T-chart or children could write about it individually using approximated or invented spelling.

**Celebrating Success:**
To celebrate, a class chart may be posted or the individual stories may be published and displayed.
The Text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text under Discussion</th>
<th>Directions for Teachers/Guiding Questions For Students</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| The day she was born was the happiest day in her parent’s lives.  
“She’s perfect,” said her mother.  
“Absolutely,” said her father.  
And she was.  
She was absolutely perfect.  

“Her name must be everything she is,” said her mother.  
“Her name must be absolutely perfect,” said her father.  
And it was.  
Chrysanthemum. Her parents named her Chrysanthemum.  

Chrysanthemum grew and grew and grew.  
And when she was old enough to appreciate it, Chrysanthemum loved her name.  

She loved the way it sounded when her mother woke her up.  
She loved the way it sounded when her father called her for dinner.  
And she loved the way it sounded when she whispered it to herself in the bathroom mirror.  
Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum.  

Chrysanthemum loved the way her name looked when it was written with ink on an envelope.  
She loved the way it looked when it was written with icing on her birthday cake.  
And she loved the way it looked when she wrote it herself with her fat orange crayon.  
Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum.  

Chrysanthemum thought her name was absolutely perfect.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Absolutely—(1) precisely; exactly (2) totally; complete                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | What do her parents mean when they say her name should be everything she is?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | What is a Chrysanthemum?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Why do her parents think “Chrysanthemum” would be a perfect name?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | How does the book show she is growing?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Appreciate—(1) to be grateful for or to (2) to understand and accept the worth of; value                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Does the sound of your name change when different people say it? How?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Envelope—a folded paper covering or container usually used to mail letters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Chrysanthemum thinks her name is perfect.  
Why does the author say “And then she started school.”  
What does that mean?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | How does the author show that she was excited to go to school?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
And then she started school.
On the first day, Chrysanthemum wore her sunniest dress and her brightest smile. She ran all the way.
“Hooray!” said Chrysanthemum. “School!”

But when Mrs. Chud took roll call, everyone **giggled upon** hearing Chrysanthemum’s name. “It’s so long,” said Jo.
“*It scarcely* fits on your name tag,” said Rita, pointing.
“I’m named after my grandmother,” said Victoria.
“You’re named after a flower?” Chrysanthemum **wilted**. She did not think her name was absolutely perfect.
She thought it was absolutely **dreadful**.

The rest of the day was not much better. During naptime Victoria raised her hand and **informed** Mrs. Chud that Chrysanthemum’s name was spelled with *thirteen* letters. “That’s exactly half as many letters as there are in the *entire* alphabet?” Victoria explained.
“Thank you for sharing that with us, Victoria,” said Mrs. Chud. “Now put your head down.

“If I had a name like yours, I’d change it,” Victoria said as the students lined up to go home.
I wish I could, thought Chrysanthemum **miserably**.

“Welcome home!” said her mother.
“Welcome home!” said her father.
“School is no place for me,” said Chrysanthemum. “My name is too long. It scarcely fits on my name tag. And I’m named after a flower!”
“Oh, pish,” said her mother. “Your name is beautiful.”

| **Giggled** — to laugh in a silly or nervous way |
| **Upon** — at the time or occasion of |

Why does the author emphasize the word “long”?

| **Scarcely** — almost not; just barely |
| **Wilted** — to lose freshness and become limp |

Why would the author use the word “wilted” to describe Chrysanthemum?

If you look at the picture, how does Chrysanthemum feel?

| **Dreadful** — very bad; awful; no good |

What does the author mean when he says “The rest of the day was not much better?”

| **Informed** — to give knowledge to; tell |
| **Entire** — whole; including all parts |

Why does the author stress the word “thirteen”?

| **Miserably** — very unhappy; wretched |

Using the illustration, how does Chrysanthemum feel?

| **Pish** — used to express distaste, aversion, or impatience |
“And **precious** and **priceless** and **fascinating** and **winsome,**” said her father. “It’s everything you are,” said her mother. “Absolutely perfect,” said her father.

Chrysanthemum felt much better after her favorite dinner (macaroni and cheese with ketchup) and an evening filled with hugs and kisses and Parcheesi.

That night Chrysanthemum dreamed that her name was Jane. It was an **extremely pleasant** dream.

The next morning Chrysanthemum wore her most **comfortable jumper**. She walked to school as slowly as she could. She dragged her feet in the dirt. Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum.

“She even **looks** like a flower,” said Victoria, as Chrysanthemum entered the playground. “Let’s pick her,” said Rita, pointing. “Let’s smell her,” said Jo. Chrysanthemum wilted. She did not think her name was absolutely perfect. She thought it was absolutely dreadful.

The rest of the day was not much better. During naptime Victoria raised her hand and said, “A chrysanthemum is a flower. It lives in a garden with worms and other dirty things.” “Thank you for sharing that with us, Victoria,” said Mrs. Chud. “Now put your head down.”

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**Precious**—of great worth or value  
**Priceless**—having a worth greater than any price or amount of money  
**Fascinating**—capable of capturing one's interest and attention; enchanting; spellbinding  
**Winsome**—attractive or charming; winning

Why does the evening make her feel better?

**Extremely**—very; to an extreme degree  
**Pleasant**—enjoyable  
**Comfortable**—giving or feeling comfort  
**Jumper**—a dress without sleeves worn over a shirt or blouse

Why was Chrysanthemum walking slowly?  
What does it mean that she dragged her feet?

Why is the word “**looks**” stressed? Why would the children think Chrysanthemum looked like a flower?

Using the illustration, what is Chrysanthemum feeling? What did Victoria say that made her cover her ears?
“I just cannot believe your name,” Victoria said as the students lined up to go home. **Neither** can I, thought Chrysanthemum **miserably**.

“Welcome home!” said her mother. “Welcome home!” said her father. “School is no place for me,” said Chrysanthemum. “They said I even look like a flower. They pretended to pick me and smell me.” “Oh, pish,” said her mother. “They’re just jealous.” 

“Welcome home!” said her father. “Welcome home!” said her mother. “School is no place for me,” said Chrysanthemum. “They said I even look like a flower. They pretended to pick me and smell me.” “They’re just jealous.” said her mother. “They’re just jealous.” said her father. “Who wouldn’t be jealous of a name like yours?” said her mother. “After all, it’s absolutely perfect,” said her father.

Chrysanthemum felt a **trifle** better after her favorite dessert (chocolate cake with buttercream frosting) and another evening filled with hugs and kisses and Parcheesi.

That night Chrysanthemum dreamed that she really was a chrysanthemum. She **sprouted** leaves and petals. Victoria picked her and plucked the leaves and petals one by one until there was nothing left but a scrawny stem.

It was the worst **nightmare** of Chrysanthemum’s life.

Chrysanthemum wore her outfit with seven pockets the next morning. She loaded the pockets with her most prized **possessions** and her good luck **charms**. Chrysanthemum took the longest route possible to school. She stopped and **stared** at each and every flower. “Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum,” the flowers seemed to say.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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<td><strong>Neither</strong></td>
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Why was Chrysanthemum’s dream a nightmare?

What does the phrase “most prized” mean?

**Possessions**—something that is owned

**Charms**—any small object to be worn on a chain as a decoration

Why is she taking the longest route to school even though it is raining?

**Stared**—to look straight at something with your eyes open wide and not moving
That morning the students were introduced to Mrs. Twinkle, the music teacher. Her voice was like something out of a dream, as was everything else about her. The students were speechless. They thought Mrs. Twinkle was an indescribable wonder. They went out of their way to make a nice impression.

Mrs. Twinkle led the students in scales. Then she assigned roles for the class musical. Victoria was chosen as the dainty Fairy Queen. Rita was chosen as the spiffy Butterfly Princess. Jo was chosen as the all-important Pixie-messenger. And Chrysanthemum was chosen as a daisy.

“Chrysanthemum’s a daisy! Chrysanthemum’s a daisy!” Jo, Rita, and Victoria chanted, thinking it was wildly funny. Chrysanthemum wilted. She did not think her name was absolutely perfect. She thought it was absolutely dreadful.

Introduced—to present one person to another person for the first time, or to present a new thing
Speechless—unable to speak because of exhaustion, surprise, astonishment, or great emotion
Indescribable—not capable of being described; beyond description
Impression—a belief or a feeling that is created at the beginning of an experience

What does the author mean when he says “her voice was like something out of a dream”? What does “as was everything else” mean?

Why do the students want to make a good impression? What are they doing to make that impression?

Assigned—to give a particular thing for someone to do
Dainty—small, pretty, and delicate
Spiffy—smart in appearance and dress, stylish (from thefreedictionary.com)
All-important—extremely important; absolutely necessary; indispensable

How can you tell that the students were not being nice when they were saying, “Chrysanthemum’s a daisy!”? Chrysanthemum’s a daisy!”?

Chanted—words spoken in rhythm over and over on a single pitch
What would “wildly funny” mean?
“What’s so **humorous**?” asked Mrs. Twinkle. “Chrysanthemum!” was the answer. “Her name is so long,” said Jo. “It scarcely fits on her name tag,” said Rita, pointing. “I’m named after my grandmother,” said Victoria. “She’s named after a flower!”

“My name is long,” said Mrs. Twinkle. “It is?” said Jo. “My name would scarcely fit on a name tag,” said Mrs. Twinkle. “It **would**?” said Rita, pointing. “And—” said Mrs. Twinkle, “I’m named after a flower, too!”

“You are?” said Victoria. “Yes,” said Mrs. Twinkle. “My name is Delphinium. Delphinium Twinkle. And if my baby is a girl, I’m considering Chrysanthemum as a name. I think it’s absolutely perfect.”

Chrysanthemum could scarcely believe her ears.
She **blushed**.
She **beamed**.
She bloomed.
Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum.

Jo, Rita, and Victoria looked at Chrysanthemum **longingly**.
“Call me Marigold,” said Jo. “I’m Carnation,” said Rita, pointing. “My name is Lily of the Valley,” said Victoria.

Chrysanthemum did not **think** her name was absolutely perfect. She **knew** it!

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**Humorous**—**funny**

What does the music teacher tell the students? Why are they so surprised?

Why does the author stress the words “is”, “would”, “are”?

**Considering**—**think about something in a serious way**

What does “believing her ears” mean? Why was Chrysanthemum having trouble believing her ears?

What do the illustrations tell you about how she feels? Is this a change?

**Blushed**—**to become red in the face because of embarrassment**

**Beamed**—light sent out from something—**how does this apply to a person?**

How does she bloom?

**Longingly**—**a strong and lasting desire**

Why do the girls begin calling themselves by flower names?

Why does the author stress the words “think” and “knew”? 
EPILOGUE:
Overall, the class musical was a huge success. Chrysanthemum was absolutely perfect as a daisy.
Victoria made the only mistake: She completely forgot her lines as the dainty Fairy Queen. Chrysanthemum thought it was wildly funny, and she giggled throughout the entire Dance of the Flowers.
Eventually, Mrs. Twinkle gave birth to a healthy baby girl. And, of course, she named her Chrysanthemum.

Why do you think Chrysanthemum laughed at Victoria forgetting her lines?

Eventually—at a future time; in the end; finally

How does the author compare Chrysanthemum to an actual flower in this book? Why?

Is Victoria a good friend? Support your answers.