

Lesson Title: **Strengths & Struggles**

Lesson Topic: Access and Inclusion

Curricular Integration: [Language Arts](#)

Minds On

Literature is a wonderful way to begin an inquiry, including one about accessibility. Consider introducing your students to this topic with one or more engaging stories. We encourage you to seek out stories that feature rich, multi-dimensional characters; this helps challenge the stereotypical misconception that people with disabilities are solely defined by that aspect of themselves. (See our Suggested Book List to get you started!)

Before reading:

- Introduce the text to your students, including the title, author, and main character.
- Set a purpose for reading: *“The main character in this story has some real strengths, or things she is very good at. And, there are also things she finds difficult, or struggles with. Listen carefully to see if you can identify the character’s strengths and struggles in this story.”*

While reading:

- Pause as necessary to review any new vocabulary or answer students’ questions.
- Consider pausing halfway through the story and asking students to engage in a Think-Pair-Share: *“Please turn to your partner and talk to them about what you’ve heard so far about the character’s strengths and struggles. What things are they really good at, and what things do they find difficult?”*

After reading:

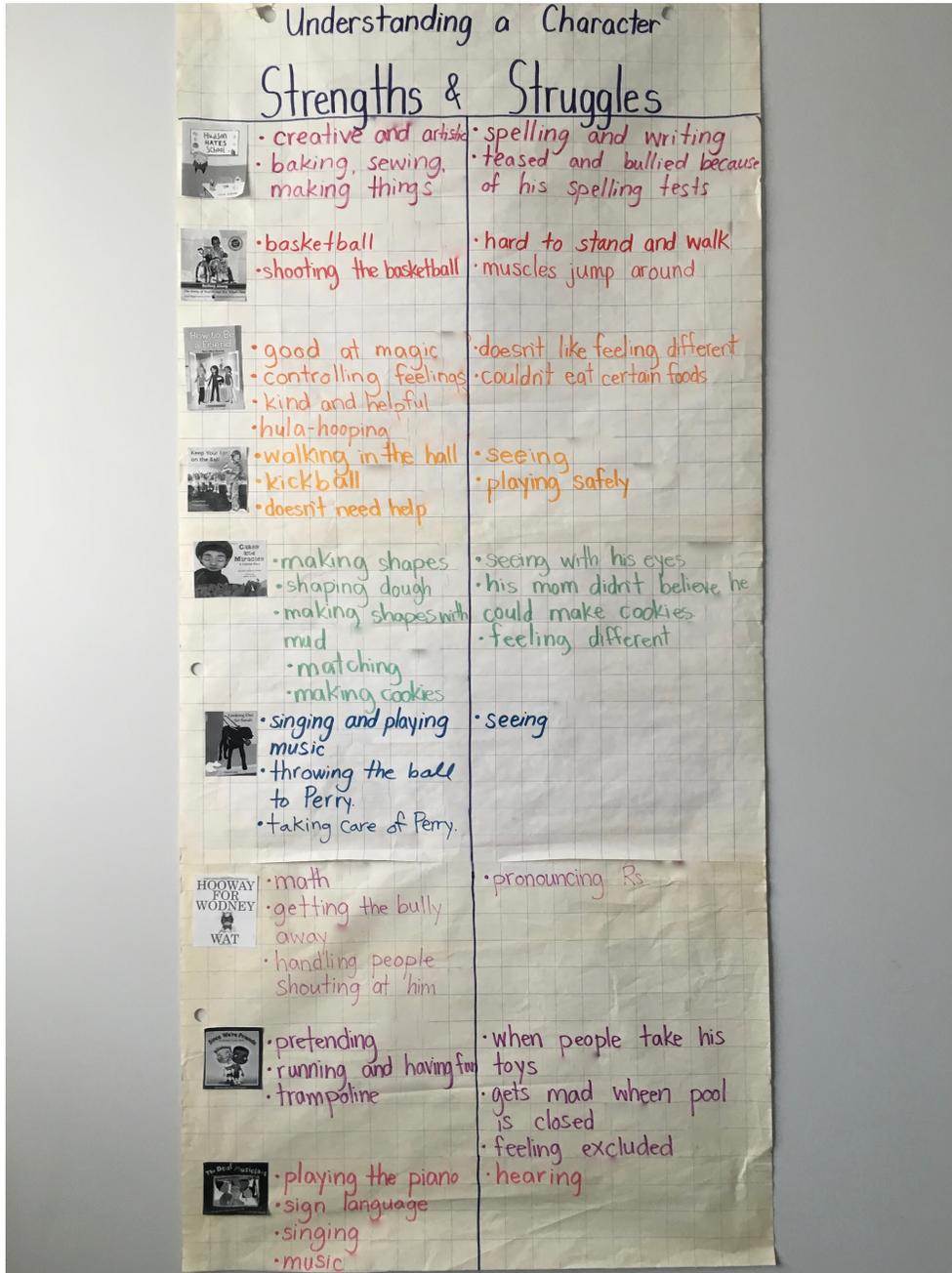
- Ask students to share their final thoughts about the character’s strengths and struggles. Consider recording their ideas on an anchor chart to refer back to later (see “Working On It” below).

Working On It

Reading only one story can be a wonderful way to inspire students’ engagement about an inquiry topic. However, you may decide that you want to turn this into a more long-term literature study. This could be particularly useful at the start of the school year, to set a tone of community in your classroom.

- Select a variety of texts appropriate to your students’ age level. Read these over a series of days or weeks following the suggested pattern described above in “Minds On It”.
- Create an anchor chart to record students’ ideas about the characters. As time goes on and you read more and more of these stories, notice with your students if there are any

patterns developing in your anchor chart. Do characters typically have more strengths, or more struggles? Which of these seem most important? (See the image below for an example of what this could look like.)



Reflection/Application

The start of the school year or the start of a new term is a wonderful time to have your students reflect on their own strengths and struggles, and to set goals. Consider using the attached template to record your students' reflections, or prompt them with questions such as, What are some of

your strengths? What types of things do you struggle with? Which of your struggles do you want to strengthen this year in Grade ___?

- If students have difficulty reflecting upon their own strengths or struggles, remind them of the many characters you have read about and the types of things they found easy/fun or difficult/challenging.

Name: _____

My Strengths & Struggles

<p>I am really good at _____</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>My favourite thing to do at school is _____</p> <hr/>
<p>I could help my classmates learn more about _____</p> <hr/>	<p>I learn best (check one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> by myself<input type="checkbox"/> with a buddy<input type="checkbox"/> in a group
<p>Something I struggle with is</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>My learning goal(s) for this year are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">☆ _____☆ _____☆ _____

Below we have listed a few suggestions to get you started, which are all available in store or online from shops such as [Another Story Book Shop](#). (Please consider supporting local, independent, accessible book stores if you can!)

If you find or know of any other books that your students enjoy, please let us know so that we can add it to our list! We have yet to develop our list of resources for students in Junior/Intermediate grades and would greatly appreciate your suggestions.

Primary

Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale, Barbara Diamond Goldin. Amazon Childrens Publishing. EAN 9780761457xxx.

[*The Deaf Musicians*](#), Pete Seeger. Penguin Young Readers Group. EAN 9780399243xxx.

[*Hooway for Wodney Wat*](#), Helen Lester. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. EAN 9780618216xxx.

[*How to Be a Friend*](#), Nancy Wilcox Richards. Scholastic Canada Ltd. EAN 9781443104xxx.

[*Hudson Hates School*](#), Ella Hudson. Frances Lincoln Children's Books. EAN 9781847803xxx.

[*Keep Your Ear on the Ball*](#), Genevieve Petrillo. Tilbury House. EAN 9780884483xxx.

[*Looking Out for Sarah*](#), Glenna Lang. Charlesbridge. EAN 9781570916xxx.

The Ramp Man, Logan Anderson. [publisher??] EAN 9780888813xxx.

Rolling Along, Jamee Riggio Heelan. Peach Tree. EAN 9781561452xxx.

[*Since We're Friends*](#), Celeste Shally. Awaken Specialty Publisher. EAN 9780979471xxx.

[*Zoom!*](#), Robert Munsch. Scholastic Canada. EAN 9780779114xxx.

Jeremiah Learns to Read, Jo Ellen Bogart. Scholastic Canada Ltd. EAN 9780590515xxx.

Secret Signs, Anita Riggio. Highlights. EAN 9781590780xxx.

The Junkyard Wonders, Patricia Polacco. Penguin Young Readers Group. EAN 9780399250xxx.