



Grades K to 3 | Social Studies and ELA

Activity Plan: What's in a Name?



**SOUTH ASIAN CANADIAN
LEGACY PROJECT**



**SOUTH ASIAN
STUDIES INSTITUTE**
University of the Fraser Valley



Activity Plan: What's in a Name?

Grades K to 3 | Social Studies and English Language Arts (ELA)

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www.saffronthreads.ca

Activity Plan: What's in a Name?

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Overview

Big question

How is my name a part of my identity?

Activity description

Students will explore how their name connects with their identity.

Grades and curricular area(s)

- Kindergarten to Grade 3
- Social Studies and English Language Arts (ELA)

Big ideas

	Social Studies	English Language Arts (ELA)
Kindergarten	Our communities are diverse and made of individuals who have a lot in common.	Through listening and speaking, we connect with others and share our world.
Grade 1	Healthy communities recognize and respect the diversity of individuals and care for the local environment.	
Grade 2	Canada is made up of many diverse regions and communities.	
Grade 3	People from diverse cultures and societies share some common experiences and aspects of life.	Curiosity and wonder lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and the world around us.

Curricular competencies

	Social Studies	English Language Arts (ELA)
Kindergarten	Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions.	Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community.
Grade 1		
Grade 2		
Grade 3		

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Materials/Resources

Supplies

- Student journal
- Chart paper
- Crayons/pencils
- Construction paper (for name art)

Books

Books about names, such as:

Title	Author	Notes
Always Anjali	Sheetal Sheth	Optional read-aloud video
My Name Is Bilal	Asma Mobin-Uddin	
The Name Jar	Yangsook Choi	Optional read-aloud video
Your Name Is a Song	Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow	

Additional Resources

- [Meanings of Names](#)
- [Fun Facts about South Asian Names Backgrounder](#)

Kick Off and Connect

Step 1

Read a book (or share the read-aloud video, if available) related to naming, such as one of those listed in Materials/Resources.

Step 2

Ask students what questions they have about the story and promote discussion by asking them questions like “How did the child in the story feel about their name?”

Step 3

Talk about the diversity of names and how different cultures have different common names that may not sound familiar to us.

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Explore and Engage

Step 1

Start by sharing about your name, including what it means, where it comes from, nicknames you have, and so on.

Step 2

Ask students to brainstorm what they wonder about their names and/or nicknames. For example:

- I wonder what my name means.
- Why was I given this name?

Step 3

Have students identify ways to answer their questions, including asking parents/caregivers, or getting an older student or adult to help with research.

Step 4

Have students write or draw the answers to their questions.

Step 5

Discuss pronunciations. Students can each share one fun fact about their name and share with the class how to properly pronounce their name.

Step 6

Ask students whether they have nicknames and discuss the origin of their nicknames. For example, is their nickname an anglicized version of their name?

Step 7

Discuss the multicultural nature of Canada.

Wrap-Up and Assess

Step 1

Read or listen to another book about names.

Step 2

Have students create a “My name is...” poster or book, using the information they found in their research, and drawing pictures. Students can then share their books/posters with their classmates.

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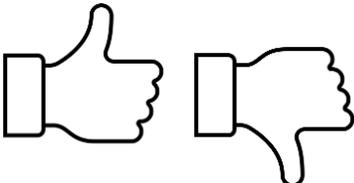
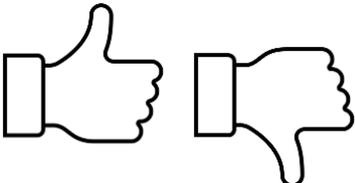
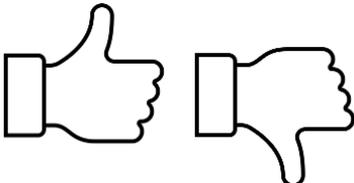
Step 3

Use rubrics to assess criteria from the lesson. Sample rubrics are provided below. Students can complete these rubrics and then discuss with you, or you can complete them together.

Sample rubric

Things I can improve	Criteria	Things I did well
	Generates questions about name and identity	
	Finds answers to questions through various approaches	
	Listens to story and classmates during discussions	

Sample rubric

I asked questions about my name and identity 	I found answers to my questions 	I listened to classmates during discussions 
		

Extend and Transform

- Have students write their preferred name on a card (Rainbow names) or create a “licence plate” like in the book *Always Anjali*.
- Discuss religious and cultural naming ceremonies. For example:
 - Many Sikhs and Hindus are named at a religious naming ceremony called Naam Karan. ([The Sikh Naming Ceremony: Naam Karan](#))
 - Some Indigenous Peoples have naming ceremonies.

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- First Nations naming ceremonies were forbidden historically, and residential school staff renamed First Nations children with Anglo-Saxon names: “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 17th call to action, which was issued in 2015, demanded that all institutions – government, academia and otherwise – facilitate residential school survivors and their families to reclaim the names that were stripped from them.” ([What Having a Naming Ceremony for My Kids Meant to Me](#))
- Have students find the meaning of their parents’/caregivers’/ancestors’ first names.
- Have students research the names of characters from their favourite books.
- Have students research the meaning and origin of their last name.