



Special Olympics

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education and engagement tools  
for teachers and students



## Activity 1: 3-5 Lessons A World of Difference

### Activity Overview:

Students investigate the concepts of uniqueness and diversity and discover that all groups represent overlapping areas of similarities and differences that may be visible or invisible. After reading and discussing an acrostic poem, students explore characteristics that make them unique and then use adjectives and descriptive phrases to create poems based on their own names. Next, students examine list poems and work collaboratively to create their own poem that conveys and celebrates the diversity within their group. This lesson can be incorporated into a language arts unit on reading and writing poetry and the use of descriptive language.

## Activity 1: A World of Difference



Recognize that all groups represent overlapping areas of similarities and differences, some visible and some invisible.

### Cross-Curricular Connections:

This lesson extends to health units on self-concept and respect for others and social studies units on diversity, friendship, and community. Collaborative writing experiences help students learn more about one another, and promote skills and attitudes needed to build an inclusive and cooperative classroom community.

### Academic Skills Addressed:

- Receiving and exploring the ideas and opinions of others — e.g., recognizing similarities and differences;
- Conveying meaning through text content — e.g., identifying nouns and adjectives and adding descriptive words and phrases to writing;
- Developing creative and reflective texts using the writing process;
- Creating interpretive responses to literature;
- Recognizing relationships between and among texts;
- Discovering patterns among ideas using a collaborative process; and
- Using strategies to contribute to collaborative projects — e.g., working collaboratively with others to sequence ideas for a list poem.

### Desired Outcomes:

*Students will:*

- Recognize that all groups represent overlapping areas of similarities and differences, some visible and some invisible.
- Recognize that getting to know someone is the only way to discover commonalities.
- Identify characteristics that make people unique and provide diversity within a group.
- Use descriptive language to express the concepts of uniqueness and diversity in poetic form.

### Time Required:

Two 60-minute class periods, with additional time for reflection.

## Activity 1: A World of Difference



“A rewarding life is filled with challenge, so do not pity me. Give me a chance!”

Thomas Gatu, Special Olympics Athlete

### Materials Needed:

- Reproducible 1.1, *Team Up* game categories
- Copies of Reproducible 1.2, *The “ME” Poem*
- Reproducible 1.3, *I AM* List Poem
- Book: *I Am America* by Charles R. Smith Jr.
- Writing materials for students
- Butcher block paper and markers (for Reflection activity)
- KWL chart (for Extension activity)

### Background:

- Identify an area within the classroom or school that allows students room to move around and form groups for the *Team Up* game.
- Select categories for the *Team Up* game from the Reproducible 1.1 or generate your own categories.
- Familiarize yourself with the activity’s poems and their rhythms by reading them aloud several times. Note words and passages for discussion.

### Important Terms:

- acrostic poem, adjective, descriptions, diversity, friendship, invisible, list poem, unique, visible





We see one another every day, but how much do we really know about one another?

Activity 1: A World of Difference

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Begin by posing the following question to students: *We see one another every day, but how much do we really know about one another?* Engage students in a discussion about how much we can tell about others simply by looking at them and how much we can't tell. *What kinds of similarities and differences are visible? What kinds of similarities and differences are invisible?* **(Educate, Motivate)**
2. Introduce *Team Up*, a game about similarities and differences that requires students to move around, identifying others who share a specific personal characteristic. Remind students that some categories of differences are visible and some are not. To identify invisible characteristics, they must interact with one another. Instruct students to move as quickly as possible and not to worry if they don't find a group for a category before the next one is called. **(Educate)**
3. Call out categories, one at a time: *Team up with others who have the same color eyes as you. Team up with others who like the same topping on their pizza.* Keep the game moving along at a good pace. Pause the action at various points to have groups shout out the preference or characteristic that they share (e.g., *We all like pizza with pineapple! We all like pepperoni!*). **(Motivate)**
4. Afterward, help students process the experience: *Were you always teamed up with the same students? Some groups were small and some groups were large – in which size did you like being? Once you learned more about other students, were you surprised by any of your similarities? What happens when you think only about those similarities and differences you can see?* Ask students to define the words *unique* (as it applies to an individual) and *diversity* (as it applies to a group) and write these definitions on the board. **(Educate)**
5. Distribute copies of Reproducible 1.2., *The "ME" Poem*, introducing it as a poem that celebrates the unique characteristics of the eight-year-old poet. Prompt students to examine and identify the format of the poem. (It is an *acrostic*: a poem that uses the letters of a topic word to begin each line of the poem, with every line describing the topic.) **(Educate)**
6. Ask students to follow along as you read the poem aloud, circling adjectives (review the definition of an adjective, if needed), and underlining descriptive phrases on the reproducible as you read them. After the reading, students identify the descriptions they marked. *There are 14 letters in the name, but how many descriptions did the poem include? Are there any unfamiliar words that need to be defined?* **(Educate)**



## PART ONE



Special Olympics is humanity's greatest classroom, where lessons of ability, acceptance and inclusion are taught on the fields of competition by our greatest teachers - the athletes.

### Activity 1: A World of Difference

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

7. Then, ask students to help you read the poem aloud in unison. Instruct them to re-examine the words and phrases they've circled and underlined: *Is the poet describing visible or invisible characteristics? Do you feel like you know a lot about the poet?* Explain that one of Mattie's visible characteristics was that he used a specialized wheelchair because he had physical disabilities. Ask students if they are surprised to learn this. **(Educate, Motivate)**
8. Next, have students create an acrostic poem, based on their own names. List criteria for the poem, according to your students' capabilities: *e.g. Your poem must include at least 8 adjectives, 4 descriptive phrases, 3 visible characteristics, and 6 invisible characteristics.* Instruct students to begin by brainstorming and generating a list of adjectives and characteristics that describe them. Encourage students to think about the categories explored in the *Team Up* game. They can also use categories from *The "ME" Poem* (e.g. things they are afraid of, things they collect) and borrow phrases from the poem such as *teacher of...and lover of...* **(Motivate)**
9. Students write the letters of their names down the side of the page. Using their lists, they plug in descriptions, add words that begin with the letters of their names, and organize ideas in a logical order to complete their acrostics. *Optional:* Have students edit and make final revisions on their poems as a homework assignment. **(Motivate)**



PART TWO



I am spirit.  
 I am voice.  
 I am memory,  
 not recalled.  
 I am chance.  
 I am cause.  
 I am effort,  
 blocked and  
 walled.

Excerpt from I AM by  
 Mattie J.T. Stepanek

Activity 1: A World of Difference

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Begin by reviewing class-created definitions for the words *unique* and *diversity*. Explain that you will be presenting a *list poem*. Can students predict what that is? Explain that some list poems rhyme, but many do not. **(Educate)**
2. Before beginning the read-aloud, tell students that each line of the poem starts the same way, with the phrase “I am...”. Read the Mattie Stepanek poem *I AM* (from Reproducible 1.3) or read the book, *I Am America*, aloud as a poem, without showing the pictures. Afterward, ask: *Is this a rhyming list poem? Is the poem about celebrating the characteristics of one individual or the diversity of a group?* **(Educate)**
3. Read the poem again, this time much more slowly, asking students to quickly write down adjectives, nouns, and descriptive phrases that apply to them. On the board, make three columns labeled *adjectives*, *nouns*, and *phrases*. Have students identify their words and the column under which you should write them: *adjectives* (e.g., *soft-spoken*, *Jewish*, *Italian*, *black*, *well-fed*, *smart*, *proud*); *nouns* (e.g., *bandana wraps*, *baseball caps*, *shadow*, *glory*, *hero*); or *phrases* (e.g., *dust of humble roots*, *dimples framing my chin*). Discuss the meaning of any unfamiliar words or phrases. *Which characteristics are visible and which are not?* **(Educate)**
4. Next, as a group, ask students to brainstorm new words that describe or pertain to their class. Write these under each of the columns, encouraging students to add new adjectives to listed nouns. Prompt students to consider both visible and invisible characteristics. **(Educate, Motivate)**
5. Break students into smaller cooperative groups to create their own *I Am* poems. Each group selects descriptors from the group-generated lists, writing each one on a sentence strip. Next, students arrange the strips in a logical sequence, looking for meaning and relationships between the lines. Encourage students to try several arrangements, reading their list poem aloud each time to hear the language combined in different ways. Groups then create a strong closing line for their poems. **(Motivate)**
6. Invite the groups to come together to share their poems. Groups may choose to read their poems in unison or assign parts to individual readers. Students may also share their individual acrostic poems with the group at this time. Throughout the readings, reinforce the unique qualities of individual students and the diversity represented within the class. **(Motivate, Activate)**

## Activity 1: A World of Difference



“Every person, regardless of whatever different abilities they may have, can contribute, can be a source of joy, can beam with pride and love.”

Eunice Kennedy Shriver

### Reflection:

Draw a head, heart, and hands on large butcher block paper. Based on what they have learned about each other from the preceding activities, ask students to brainstorm the ways that their class thinks (head) and feels (heart), and the unique things they do (hands). List descriptors for each of the three categories. Encourage students to refer to the *Head, Heart, and Hands* chart to use their classmates as resources for future collaborative activities.<sup>1</sup>

### Suggested Assessment:

- Teacher observation of student responses during group discussions
- Acrostic poem
- List poem

### Cross-Curricular Extensions:

#### Social Studies / Language Arts

- Students work in cooperative groups to research the life and civic contributions of Mattie Stepanek, a young poet and public speaker who had many unique abilities, along with several physical disabilities (<http://www.mattieonline.com/about.htm>). Students write a report on their findings and present it to the class.

#### Drama / Language Arts

- Students practice and perform their poetry for a wider audience, such as parents or another class. For their *I Am* diversity poems, students can read the repeated refrain *I am...* in unison, with individual students reading the following words in each line. For individual acrostic poems, students may add props, clothing or movements that reflect their individuality.



PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades

<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from *Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection*. Denver: RMC Research, 2003.



## Activity 1:

# A World of Difference



Keeps on  
reading and  
writing  
and reading  
and writing. . .  
This is Me!

Excerpt from The  
"ME" Poem by Mattie  
J.T.Stepanek

### Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- For inclusive classrooms in which some students lack social, communication, or motor skills necessary to participate in the *Team Up* game, pass around *Team Up* lists instead. Generate 8-10 lists with category descriptions (some visible and some not) such as: *Eats cereal for breakfast; Likes cats more than dogs; Has a younger brother or sister; Would rather play soccer than watch TV; Is wearing sneakers today.* Students sign their names on each list that describes them. These lists can then be posted as a visual representation to prompt a discussion about how commonalities overlap within the class.
- Some students may need a buddy or teacher guidance during the *Team Up* game if the pace is too fast. Prepare students ahead of time, as appropriate.
- When distributing *The "ME" Poem*, consider providing students with a larger copy or a copy with pictures. Follow the reading with a finger on the words instead of circling and underlining.
- Students with intellectual disabilities can use their first names only to create their acrostics in Part One, Step 9. Provide enough room behind each letter for pictures and drawings as needed. Pair students to generate a list of descriptions that both can use and include the use of an online picture dictionary, ABC word bank, magazines, and catalogs. You may also wish to ask parents in advance for ideas and pictures.
- Include pictures with the *I AM* poem if needed.
- In Part Two, Step 3, prepare a list or pictures in advance. Students then check with a marker to indicate which words or pictures apply to them and to their class as a whole.
- When students are presenting their poems in Step 6, allow recorded versions or drawings as alternatives.
- If choosing the KWL chart from the Extensions (below), limit the chart to one or two concrete questions to answer.

### General Extensions and Modifications:

- Ask students to pair up with a classmate whom they do not know well to conduct peer interviews. Students complete the "What do I know?" and "What do I want to know?" sections of a KWL chart to generate a list of interview questions. After the interview, students complete the "What did I learn?" section of the chart and write a short story about their classmate. Compile these stories into a class yearbook.
- Divide students into Literature Circles to read and discuss *Our Friend Mikayla* (edited by Kimberly Resh). This book was written and illustrated by a third grade class about their classmate Mikayla, who has multiple disabilities. It depicts Mikayla's love for cotton candy and Clay Aiken, and how her classmates included her as a pitcher in kickball.



## Activity 1: A World of Difference



“If people would believe in us like Special Olympics and see what we can do, they would be amazed. My ambition in life is to turn ‘no’ into ‘yes’. If someone says I can’t do something, I want to prove I can.”

Suzanne O'Moore,  
Special Olympics  
Australian Athlete

- Share the story of Terry Fox ([www.terryfox.org](http://www.terryfox.org)), a model of activism and engagement. Ask students to create an acrostic poem to describe the characteristics of this special athlete.

### Additional Resources:

- Picture books that highlight adjectives: *Many Luscious Lollipops: A Book about Adjectives* by Ruth Heller; *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What Is an Adjective?* by Brian Cleary
- Acrostic poetry picture books: *Animal Acrostics* by David Hummon; *Winter: An Alphabet Acrostic* by Steven Schnur; *Spring: An Alphabet Acrostic* by Steven Schnur; *Summer: An Alphabet Acrostic* by Steven Schnur; and *Autumn: An Alphabet Acrostic* by Steven Schnur
- Wacky web tales (where students practice using specific parts of speech to create Mad Libs): <http://www.eduplace.com/tales/index.html>



## Team Up Game Descriptions

Team up with others who...

|                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ...play the same sport.               | ...ate the same thing for breakfast. |
| ...have the same color eyes.          | ...are about the same height.        |
| ...like the same toppings on pizza.   | ...like the same kind of soft drink. |
| ...have the same favorite TV program. | ...order the same meal at McDonalds. |
| ...have the same kind of pet.         | ...like the same kind of music.      |
| ...ride the same bus.                 | ...have the same color backpack.     |

## The "ME" Poem

Magic of Heartsongs

Afraid of a memory and the dark,

Truthful and sincere,

Teacher of peace,

Inspiring, intelligent, lover of ice cream,

Enthusiastic and ebullient.

Sunset watcher, shell and rock collector,

Tiger in Martial Arts,

Excited about celebrating life,

Playful, prayerful, patient,

Always ready with a hug and a smile,

Never at a loss for words,

Energetic (like the Energizer Bunny)

Keeps on reading and writing

and reading and writing...

This is ME!

## I AM list poem

## I AM

I am black.  
I am white.  
I am all skins in between.  
I am young.  
I am old.  
I am each age that has been.  
I am scrawny.  
I am well-fed.  
I am starving for attention.  
I am famous.  
I am cryptic.  
I am hardly worth the mention.  
I am shirt.  
I am height.  
I am any frame or stature.  
I am smart.  
I am challenged.  
I am striving for a future.

I am able.  
I am weak.  
I am some strength, I am none.  
I am being.  
I am thought.  
I am all things said and done.  
I am born.  
I am dying.  
I am dust of humble roots.  
I am grace.  
I am pain.  
I am labor of willed fruits.  
I am slave.  
I am free.  
I am bonded to my life.  
I am rich.  
I am poor.  
I am wealth amid strife.

I am shadow.  
I am glory.  
I am hiding from my shame.  
I am hero.  
I am loser.  
I am yearning for a name.  
I am empty.  
I am proud.  
I am seeking my tomorrow.  
I am growing.  
I am fading.  
I am hope amid the sorrow.  
I am certain.  
I am doubtful.  
I am desperate for solutions.  
I am leader.  
I am student.  
I am fate and evolutions.

I am spirit.  
I am voice.  
I am memory, not recalled.  
I am chance.  
I am cause.  
I am effort, blocked and walled.  
I am hymn.  
I am heard.  
I am reasoned without rhymes.  
I am past.  
I am nearing.  
I am present in all times.  
I am many.  
I am no one.  
I am seasoned by each being.  
I am me.  
I am you.  
I am all-souls now decreeing  
...I AM.





**Special Olympics**

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## Activity 2: 3-5 Lessons

### What Is a Winner?

#### Activity Overview:

Students explore the benefits that sports training and competition offer, and watch a video to build an understanding of the mission of Special Olympics and the courage of the athletes who compete. Students become active learners as they generate questions and delve deeper into the topic, researching various aspects of Special Olympics and organizing information on a KWL chart. Next, students work with their peers to discuss the message of the Special Olympics Athlete Oath, read profiles of the athletes themselves, and explore the qualities that make a winner. This lesson can be incorporated into a language arts unit to develop reading comprehension, critical thinking, and research skills.

## Activity 2:

# What Is a Winner?



“I was once very shy and not willing to talk with others. Special Olympics changed my life and my love of sports and helped me achieve all this unimaginable success.”

Xu Chuang, Special Olympics China Athlete and International Global Messenger

### Cross-Curricular Connections:

This lesson can also be incorporated into the health and physical education curricula to investigate the social, emotional, and physical benefits of sports participation and behaviors associated with good sportsmanship.

### Academic Skills Addressed:

- Using technologies to inquire into topics;
- Identifying information needs, formulating questions, organizing and using information;
- Discovering relationships among ideas using a collaborative process — e.g., work collaboratively to interpret relationships among ideas, experiences, and opinions;
- Using communication and collaboration skills — e.g., engage in collaborative projects developing shared responsibility and considering multiple viewpoints; and
- Using appropriate comprehension strategies and habits to develop texts — e.g., synthesize knowledge and experiences to communicate ideas.

### Desired Outcomes:

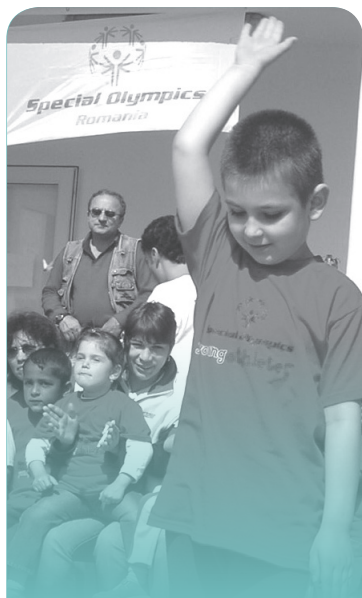
*Students will:*

- Define Special Olympics and demonstrate understanding of its mission. (e.g., an organization that promotes a community of welcome and provides year-round sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities).
- Recognize that people with disabilities are like people without disabilities in many ways and that everyone has something of value to offer.
- Define *respect* (to value and treat others with courtesy and kindness) and recognize teasing and name-calling (e.g., using the R-word) as hurtful, disrespectful practices.
- Recognize that individuals with intellectual disabilities, like people without disabilities, are deserving of respect.
- Identify ways that sports and athletic participation benefit people with and without intellectual disabilities.
- Define character traits that exemplify a winner.

### Time Required:

Two 60-minute class periods, with additional time for reflection.

## Activity 2: What Is a Winner?



“Go for the gold, we keep telling our athletes. But it is the volunteers of Special Olympics who walk away with the gold, richer for the experience.”

L. Tusak, Special Olympics coach and volunteer

### Materials Needed:

- Computers with Internet access
- Reproducible 2.1, *Profile of Special Olympics Athlete Cole Cleworth*
- Post-it® notes
- Pens/pencils
- Student journals
- Reference books: *Special Olympics* by Fern G. Brown; *Special Olympics* by Mike Kennedy
- Copies of Reproducible 2.2., *L.I.F.E. Reflection chart* (for Reflection activity)

### Background:

- Before beginning this lesson, familiarize yourself with the video clips, reference books, and online resources, including Special Olympics' website: <http://www.specialolympics.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/specialolympichq>
- Preview the 60-second PSA video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybmo58bTRj0>

### Important Terms:

- bravery, courage, disrespect, intellectual disability, oath, Olympics, respect, “R-word,” Special Olympics, winner





PART ONE



Do you think that the benefits of participating in sports are different for people with intellectual disabilities?

Activity 2: What is a Winner?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Begin the lesson by asking for a show of hands: *How many of you play sports, like to participate in physical activities, or play any kind of games with your friends? How does participating in physical activities or games help you?* Tell students you'd like to share a story about a 10-year-old boy who likes sports. He has had to work especially hard to learn new skills because he has *intellectual disabilities*. Ask students if they know what this term means. **(Educate)**
2. Read aloud Reproducible 2.1, that shares the profile for Special Olympics athlete Cole Cleworth. Stop reading at the point where it states that Cole spends time in Special Olympics. *How many of you enjoy watching the World Olympics games on TV? Have you ever heard of Special Olympics?* Define Special Olympics as an organization that values each person's abilities and unique traits, and holds games in countries all over the world. It was established to give people with intellectual disabilities a place to participate in sports competition. After finishing the profile, discuss: *Do you think that the benefits of participating in sports are different for people with intellectual disabilities? Why or why not?* **(Educate, Motivate)**
3. Play the first section of the *Nick News* video clip (TC 0:00-4:30) and engage students in a discussion: *Why was Special Olympics formed? How are Special Olympics athletes different from you? How are they similar to you? What is the meaning of this video's title, 'A World of Difference'?* **(Educate)**
4. Write a KWL chart on the board to organize the information that students have just learned from the Special Olympics profile and the video. Brainstorm specific facts and information that students now know about Special Olympics, including ways in which athletes with intellectual disabilities have benefitted from participation in Special Olympics. Record students' responses on the chart under Know. **(Educate)**





## PART ONE



How many athletes around the world participate in Special Olympics?

### Activity 2: What is a Winner?

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

5. Move to the *Want* column of the chart, asking students what questions the profile and video raised and what they would like to learn about the Special Olympics organization, games, athletes, coaches, or volunteers. As students brainstorm, write their questions on the chart (e.g., *How many athletes around the world participate in Special Olympics? What sports are included? Why did Eunice Kennedy Shriver start the organization? Where/When will the next world games happen? How have Special Olympics athletes helped others?*). Ask students to identify available resources (e.g., reference books, online encyclopedias, search engines, Special Olympics website). *Note:* For students with limited practice in Internet research, select one question and model the process of identifying appropriate keywords for an online search. **(Educate)**
6. Separate the class into cooperative groups and have them select several questions to research. The group's designated recorder should write each answer on a Post-it® (sticky) note to be posted under *Learned*. Give the students a set amount of time in the classroom or computer lab to complete the assignment. **(Educate)**
7. Students post their answers on the *Learned* section of the KWL chart. Invite the designated leader of each group to report the group's findings to the class. **(Educate)**





Let me win. But  
if I cannot win,  
let me be brave  
in the attempt.

Special Olympics  
Athlete Oath

Activity 2: What is a Winner?

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Show students the second segment from the *Nick News* video (TC 4:30-8:15), in which Special Olympics athletes are interviewed about being teased (including the use of the R-word) and how it affects them. Engage students in a discussion about the impact of words. *Why are these comments and names so hurtful?* **(Educate, Motivate)**
2. Ask students to define the word *respect*. Write examples or actions that demonstrate respect on the board. Then, ask students to think of a time they saw someone being teased or being called a disrespectful, hurtful name. *Did you say or do anything in response? Why is it often hard to speak up? What is the best way to respond?* Brainstorm ideas and suggest that the class adopt a *No Room in our Classroom for Disrespect* policy. That is, when students hear the R-word or other disrespectful comments, they are empowered to show leadership and say: *There's no room in our classroom for that!* **(Motivate)**
3. Next, ask students if they have ever taken an oath. *What is an oath? Can you think of others who are required to take an oath?* (e.g., presidents, public officials, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, witnesses in a courtroom) *Why do people take oaths?* **(Educate)**
4. Read aloud as you write on the board the Special Olympics Athlete Oath: *Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.* Explain that Special Olympics participants take this oath before competing in the games, and that gladiators spoke these same words in ancient Rome as they entered the arena, prepared for battle. What do students think this oath means? Ask them to think about sports or competitive activities in which they've participated: *What is it like to want to win? How does it feel to lose? How is a sporting competition like a battle? Why must Special Olympics athletes be brave? What special challenges might they face while competing?* **(Educate, Motivate)**
5. Next, show students the 60-second PSA video, *Special Athlete*, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybmo58bTRj0>  
After watching it, briefly discuss: *What made this competition special? What would you have done if you were a runner in the race? What is the lesson that the athletes in this PSA teach viewers? How does this lesson apply to other areas of your life?* Separate students into cooperative groups to continue their discussion of the PSA. **(Motivate)**

## PART TWO



How has your thinking changed about what makes a winner?

### Activity 2: What is a Winner?

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

6. Following their discussions, ask students to read the remaining three Special Olympics athlete profiles. Instruct groups to write the definitions of unfamiliar words. Ask them to discuss: *What challenges did these athletes face? How did they achieve their goals? What can you learn from these athletes about facing challenges in your own life?* Circulate as students are working to help guide their discussions. **(Educate, Motivate)**
7. Next, the group's designated recorder should write a summary of students' responses to the following questions:
  1. *What does it mean for a Special Olympics athlete to be brave?*
  2. *What does it mean to be a winner?*At the end of the timed session, ask each group's leader to read the group's written summary. **(Motivate)**
8. Following the groups' summaries and any related discussions, ask students to use their journals to respond in writing to this question: *How has your thinking changed about what makes a winner?* **(Motivate)**





“Playing sports with Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to express myself like many other athletes”

Anthony Green, Special Olympics Athlete

## Activity 2: What is a Winner?

### Reflection:

Give each student a copy of Reproducible 2.2, *L.I.F.E. Reflection* chart. This worksheet addresses four areas of reflection: *Learning*, *Ideas*, *Feelings*, and *Excitement*. Encourage students to write as many answers as possible to the following questions: *What did you learn? What new ideas do you have? How did you feel when you heard about athletes' experiences in Special Olympics? What were you excited about?* This works best when students are first given time to think about answers themselves, and then work with others to share and brainstorm additional ideas.<sup>2</sup>

### Suggested Assessment:

- Teacher observation of student participation in small groups
- Written answers on Post-it® notes
- Written summaries from small group discussions
- Reflection journal entries
- *L.I.F.E. Reflection* chart

### Cross-Curricular Extensions:

#### Art

- Students reflect on the summaries from their small group discussions, highlighting key words and phrases to create a succinct definition or description of a winner. They then work in cooperative pairs to create an illustrated poster with the title *A Winner Is...*, using this description. Students can display their posters in public areas of the school to encourage others to *Be a Winner*.

### Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- This activity becomes very personal if there is a student in the classroom who is eligible for or has experience with Special Olympics. Consider whether the questions in Part One need to be adjusted to reflect this or whether those students will be comfortable being in the spotlight.
- If computer access is unavailable or difficult for some students, consider whether there are Special Olympics athletes in the school who could help answer the questions.
- In Part Two, Step 2, consider dramatizing the concept of respect or working with a physical education teacher to make the term more concrete for students.
- In Step 3, simplify the concept of an oath: It is a promise.
- In Step 6, read the athlete profiles aloud or record them in advance to accommodate students who cannot read at that level.
- For the Reflection, use peer buddies or a scribe, and allow drawings and pictures.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted with permission from *Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection*. Denver: RMC Research, 2003.



## Activity 2:

# What is a Winner?



### General Extensions and Modifications:

- Students work in small groups to create a Special Olympics Fan Oath. Students brainstorm ideas for a promise they can make to support and encourage Special Olympics athletes and then vote on the one they like best to post on the Special Olympics Fan Community website.
- Advanced students can form Literature Circles to read and discuss the poem *If*, by Rudyard Kipling, then compare and contrast the Special Olympics Athlete Oath with the third stanza of the poem:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

- Students select an aspect of Special Olympics for further independent research and write a report on their findings. For example, students may want to learn more about their favorite sport, the countries that have hosted the games, or the founder of Special Olympics, Eunice Kennedy Shriver.



And so hold on  
when there is  
nothing in you  
Except the Will  
which says to  
them: 'Hold  
on!'

Excerpt from *If* by  
Rudyard Kipling



## Activity 2:

# What is a Winner?



“From now on, all young people both who compete as athletes and those who serve with them, can be a part of the Special Olympics family through SO Get Into It.”

Timothy Shriver,  
Special Olympics  
Chairman and CEO

### Additional Resources:

- Information on using KWL charts: <http://www.readingquest.org/strat/kwl.html>
- Student-friendly search sites: <http://www.askkids.com>; <http://kids.yahoo.com>
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver website: <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>
- Be a Fan PSA video (30 sec):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=26663070286>
- 3 Word video (2:45):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=135014990286>
- Inclusion in Panama video (2:29):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=126509085286>
- Running in Africa video (2:37):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=126508045286>
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver Tribute video (3:51):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=220804995286>
- “R word” speech by Soeren (9:52):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=149050755286>
- Family Inspiration video (2:34):  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=129922390286>
- See the Athlete 1st video (31 sec): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv4fzNYxstc>
- Joe Jonas Run for Special Olympics video (2:04):  
[http://community.specialolympics.org/\\_Joe-Jonas-iWin-Fun-Run-for-Special-Olympics/video/893530/82244.html](http://community.specialolympics.org/_Joe-Jonas-iWin-Fun-Run-for-Special-Olympics/video/893530/82244.html)
- End the R-word with Joe Jonas video (13 sec):  
<http://youtube.com/endtherword>
- Special Olympics Athlete Profiles — Andy Miyares (2:34):  
[http://www.specialolympics.org/video\\_miyares.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/video_miyares.aspx)

# Special Olympics Athlete Cole Cleworth

## MEET SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE: COLE CLEWORTH

Cole Cleworth is 10 years old and lives in a small city in Wisconsin. He likes drawing, singing, bowling, cross-country skiing and track and field. He is also active in his church. In many ways Cole is like any other child his age. But Cole has Down syndrome. Not that that stops him, his family or his school from doing just about anything. It just makes things a little harder.

Having Down syndrome is just something that makes him a little different, the way you have brown eyes and I have blue ones. Down syndrome makes him more flexible in his joints than most kids and also gives his eyes a different shape. It also makes him learn more slowly. But he can do everything you do, just a little more slowly. He likes all the same things other kids do and he's a great friend. And by the way, you can't catch Down syndrome, but once you have it, you'll always have it.

*Teacher note: Allow children to ask question here.*

Cole spends a lot of his time in Special Olympics. He has won medals in all his sports. He was especially excited when he received his first gold medal. He won it for cross-country skiing.

Cole is smaller than most athletes his age, but this does not stop him from trying. He tries any sport he is asked to try and gives it his all. When running in his first race at competition, he ran down the track with a huge smile on his face and waved to the crowd. That caused the crowd to cheer more and he smiled even bigger. When he gets on cross-country skis, he moves very quickly. At times he falls, but he jumps right back up and keeps going.

Cole always wants to try new things. He isn't afraid. All in all, Cole is just like many children his age—except for having Down syndrome. But if you know Cole, there is nothing “down” about him. He can light up the day with his smile and he brings joy to those who know him.



Cole Cleworth  
Special Olympics  
Wisconsin

**L.I.F.E. REFLECTION**

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>(L)</b><br/><b>LEARNING</b><br/>What did you learn?</p> | <p><b>(I)</b><br/><b>IDEAS</b><br/>What new ideas do you have now?</p> | <p><b>(F)</b><br/><b>FEELINGS</b><br/>How did you feel about what you learned?</p> | <p><b>(E)</b><br/><b>EXCITEMENT</b><br/>What did you learn that you are excited about?</p> |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|



Special Olympics

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## Activity 3: 3-5 Lessons Inclusion Rules!

### Activity Overview:

This lesson introduces the topic of inclusion by way of a Dr. Seuss allegory, *The Sneetches*. Students connect the story with their life experiences and discuss the consequences of making assumptions about others based on external differences. Students explore vocabulary associated with inclusion/exclusion and analyze meanings based on the words' prefixes. Then, paired students use these words to create a persuasive speech urging the Sneetches to practice inclusion. Hearing a graduation speech by Troy Daniels further reinforces the power of an effectively written speech and the importance of accepting and including people with intellectual disabilities. Next, students put inclusion into action by preparing a Reader's Theater performance for a group with whom they do not typically interact. Following the performance, students join their audience for recess activities that promote cooperation and inclusion. This lesson can be incorporated into a language arts unit to develop reading comprehension and critical thinking. It also provides a persuasive writing component and an opportunity for students to develop fluency, confidence, and expressiveness in reading.



## Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!



Inclusion is when every member of a community is respected and welcomed.

### **Cross-Curricular Connections:**

This lesson extends to health units on self-concept and respect for others and social studies units on diversity, inclusion, and community. Participation in cooperative activities with groups outside their classroom helps students learn more about acceptance and promotes skills and attitudes needed to build an inclusive school community.

### **Academic Skills Addressed:**

- Using communication and collaboration skills, developing shared responsibility and considering multiple viewpoints;
- Receiving and exploring the ideas and opinions of others;
- Developing persuasive texts that communicate clear meaning;
- Creating interpretive responses to literature — e.g., Reader’s Theater;
- Recognizing relationships between and among texts;
- Using strategies for analyzing and understanding words and expanding vocabulary;
- Developing reading fluency and comprehension; and
- Exhibiting skill in dramatization and oral presentations.

### **Desired Outcomes:**

*Students will:*

- Define *inclusion* (e.g., every member of a community is respected and welcomed).
- Identify consequences of prejudice or exclusion.
- Identify attitudes and actions that promote inclusion.
- Participate in inclusive, cooperative activities.

### **Time Required:**

Three 60-minute class periods, with additional time for reflection. Note: Allow additional Reader’s Theater practice time as needed.

## Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!



“I’ve learned so much from Adam and I’m sure he’s learned some from me. If you take the time to make them your friend, they’re the same as everyone else.”

Tommy Oreste, Special Olympics Youth Summit participant

### Materials Needed:

- Book: *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss
- Reproducible 3.1., *Inclusion Is Not a Place; It Is a Feeling*
- Copies of Reproducible 3.2., Reader’s Theater script (for each cast member and teacher)
- Highlighters (various colors)
- Stools, music stands for Reader’s Theater (optional)
- Art materials for making Reader’s Theater props (optional)
- Student journals (for Reflection activity)

### Background:

- Prepare for read-aloud sessions by familiarizing yourself with *The Sneetches* and the Troy Daniels speech (Reproducible 3.1) so that you can read them fluently and with expression. Flag pages or passages where you wish to pause for comments or discussion.
- Make arrangements prior to the lesson for your class to perform Reader’s Theater (RT) and share recess time with a class of younger or special education students. With multiple RT groups, make arrangements for students to perform for multiple audiences.

### Important Terms:

- abilities, disabilities, disrespect, exclude, exclusion, external, include, inclusion, internal, intolerant, invisible, prejudice, respect, speech, tolerant, visible



PART ONE



You can't judge  
a book by its  
cover.

Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Begin the lesson by writing the first four lines of *The Sneetches* on the board:

*Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches*

*Had bellies with stars.*

*The Plain-Belly Sneetches*

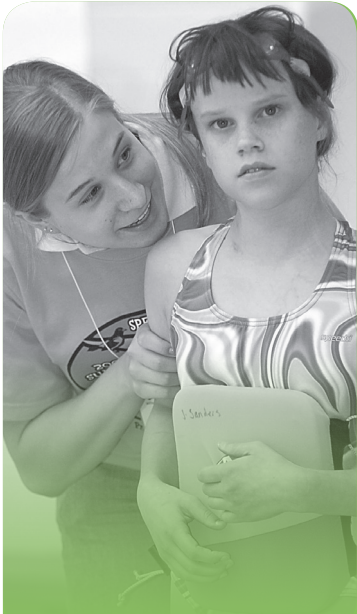
*Had none upon thars.*

How do students react? Many students will likely be familiar with this story and the distinctive style of Dr. Seuss. On the basis of these lines, what predictions can students make? (e.g., *The story rhymes. It's a babyish book. It will be a silly story. It uses made-up words.*) Explain that the author's purpose is to convey a serious message through a silly story. Show the book's cover: *You can't judge a book by its cover – this story has an important theme for people of all ages. (Educate, Motivate)*

2. Read aloud from *The Sneetches*, pausing at various points throughout the book for students to make predictions. Afterward, engage students in a whole-group discussion. *What was the basis for one group of Sneetches thinking they were better than the others? Were their differences visible or invisible...external or internal? What kind of differences might the green stars represent? How did the Star-Belly Sneetches exclude the Plain-Belly Sneetches? (Educate)*
3. Write the words *inclusion* and *exclusion*, side by side, on the board. What can students tell you about the meanings of these opposite words? *What are examples of exclusion from the story? What are examples of exclusion at school?* Then, ask students to think of an example of inclusion. Remind students of their research on Special Olympics in Activity 2: *How can you apply this story to people with intellectual disabilities? How does Special Olympics promote inclusion? What are some ways that people with disabilities are excluded? Is exclusion usually based on visible differences, like the Sneetches' stars? (Educate, Motivate)*
4. Add more words related to the topic of inclusion on the board: *internal/external, include/exclude, tolerant/intolerant, visible/invisible, abilities/disabilities, and respect/disrespect*. Have students compare the word pairs and examine their structure. What observations can they make? Prompt students to identify the prefixes in the words and write them on the board: *in-, ex-, dis-*. Remind students that understanding common prefixes helps them identify the meaning of new words. **(Educate)**



## PART ONE



Inclusion  
is diversity,  
unique,  
acceptance, and  
friendship.

### Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

5. Discuss the meaning of the words, one word pair at a time. Help students identify what the prefix *ex-* suggests in these words (i.e., *out*, *outside*, or *away from*). Brainstorm other words that begin with *ex* and suggest an outward movement (e.g., *exit*, *exclaim*, *expel*, *extend*). Repeat this for the prefix *in-* (i.e., *in*, *toward* or *into*, as in *inhale/exhale* or *include/exclude*; also *not*, as in *incapable* and *insincere*). Repeat this for the prefix *dis-* (i.e., *not* or *the opposite of*, as in *disagree*, *disobey*, *dishonest*, *dislike*). Ask students to brainstorm other words related to inclusion (e.g., *diversity*, *unique*, *acceptance*, *friendship*, *prejudice*, *equality/inequality*). Add them to the vocabulary list and discuss their meanings. **(Educate)**
6. Next, have students work in pairs to discuss how these words could be applied to the story of *The Sneetches*. If they are unsure of a word's definition, they should look it up. Instruct students to write a speech to deliver to the snooty Star-Belly Sneetches, convincing them to change the way they regard and behave toward the Plain-Belly Sneetches. These "*Sneetches Speeches*" should include at least five vocabulary words. Once pairs have written their speeches, they practice reading it aloud with enthusiasm and conviction. Remind student authors that their purpose is to persuade those Star-Belly Sneetches! **(Motivate, Activate)**





PART TWO



“Inclusion Is  
Not a Place; It  
Is a Feeling.”

Troy Daniels, Special  
Olympics Athlete

Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!

Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Keep the vocabulary list from the previous session on the board to refer to as you continue the class discussion about inclusion. Begin by asking student pairs to present their persuasive *Sneetches Speeches* to the class. After the speeches, invite feedback from students and discuss ideas that the speeches raised. **(Motivate)**
2. Next, tell students about a speech about inclusion that brought an audience to its feet when it was presented by a boy named Troy Daniels, a Special Olympics athlete. He wrote the speech for his graduation ceremony in Vermont, but people from as far away as Australia were inspired by it. That country’s Special Olympics Program even adopted a line from his speech and printed it on pins so that Troy’s message could be shared around the world. **(Educate)**
3. Read aloud Reproducible 3.1, the speech *Inclusion Is Not a Place; It Is a Feeling*. Afterward, engage students in a discussion about acceptance and inclusion: *Why does Troy refer to inclusion as a ‘feeling’? What does Troy mean when he says ‘for people with disabilities, friends are not always real’? What is a real friend? Why is the word ‘retard’ so hurtful to Troy? How does using this word show disrespect? Why do people tease other people? Troy calls his friends ‘teachers for all of you’; what does he mean by that? How could you be a teacher or a leader if you hear teasing or the R-word being used?* **(Motivate)**
4. Introduce the idea that sharing the story of *The Sneetches* and its message about inclusion is one way for the class to be teachers or leaders. If students are unfamiliar with Reader’s Theater, explain that it is a standing or sitting performance. There are no sets or costumes; students do not memorize their lines, they read them from a script. Explain that since reading is the only “action,” it’s important that they practice until they can read their parts confidently, with expression. **(Educate, Motivate)**
5. Create groups of 7-11 students each and assign students their roles. The parts include two narrators, McBean, and two groups of Sneetches (3-4 of each). Provide copies of the script (Reproducible 3.2) to all students and have them highlight their lines on the script. Students should practice reading their parts aloud as a group. Instruct them to underline rhyming words at the end of their lines – stressing them will help students keep the rhythm of the text. Students should note other stressed words or passages to be delivered in a special way. **(Educate)**

## PART TWO



“Disabilities are yet another manifestation of global diversity. Let us always be committed to the fundamental principles of dignity and equality for all human beings.”

Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations

### Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

6. Encourage groups to collaborate in decision-making. Do they want to include stars as props? If so, how they will create them? After practicing the script, they may choose to add facial expressions (e.g., sad faces when the Plain-Belly Sneetches are excluded) or incorporate simple movements into their reading (e.g., the Sneetches change places or exchange stars with one another as the narrator reads about them going in and out of the machine). Students should note these additions on their scripts. Allow plenty of time for students to practice and become fluent in their script reading. The phrasing, rhythm, and rhyme of Dr. Seuss' text should be maintained by the readers. **(Educate, Motivate)**



## PART THREE



Share recess time in the gym or on the playground. Have students participate in simple inclusive games.

### Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

1. Prepare readers for their Reader's Theater performance by reminding them to speak loudly and clearly so their audience hears and understands the words. Students can perform *The Sneetches* in front of a K-2 or special education class. **(Activate)**
2. Following the Reader's Theater presentation, classes share recess time in the gym or on the playground. Students participate in simple inclusive games, such as Cooperative Volleyball (two groups of students pass a playground ball back and forth using a large blanket), Inclusive Races (groups of players race to a finish line with members standing side-by-side, keeping the sides of their feet joined together with players' feet on either side), or Frozen Bean Bag (students dance to music with bean bags on their heads. If a player's beanbag falls off, he/she freezes until another student retrieves the dropped beanbag and places it back on his/her head. If the helper's beanbag falls, the helper also becomes frozen until someone rescues both players.) **(Activate)**



## Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!



What are three actions I could take today that would help someone feel more included at school?

### Reflection:

After students return to their classroom, discuss reactions to performing for the other class and participating in an inclusive group working together for a common goal: *What was the best part of the experience and why? What were the challenges (if any)? How did you offer encouragement and help to others? Did others offer you help? What did you learn from this experience?* Instruct students to write in their journals: *What are three actions I could take today that would help someone feel more included at school?*

### Suggested Assessment:

- Observation of student fluency, voice, and expression during Reader's Theater
- Observation of student cooperation during inclusive activities
- Inclusion speech
- Journal reflection

### Cross-Curricular Extensions:

#### Art / Language Arts

- For inspiration, students watch the *Three-Word* videos on the Special Olympics' online Fan Community. Students develop slogans and create posters that promote inclusion within their school.
- In the spirit of Troy Daniels' 'Come sit by me' buttons, students develop simple slogans promoting inclusion. Remind students that these slogans need to be short enough to write on a pin-back button. Students then design and create buttons that they can wear to share the message of inclusion with others.

### Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- When discussing inclusion and exclusion in Part One, Step 3, use pictures and faces with certain expressions and feelings to help demonstrate the concepts.
- In Step 6, students may record their speeches or opt to read the conclusion of the book as their speech.
- In Part Two, consider adding movement and music to help with memorization of the speeches.
- Have the physical education teacher introduce cooperative games the week before this activity during physical education class. This will help make the transition to playing during recess easier, and students will already know the rules.



## Activity 3: Inclusion Rules!



### General Extensions and Modifications:

- Using the Reader's Theater script, students create an alternative resolution to the story of *The Sneetches*, beginning with the line: *What should they do now?*
- Students work in pairs to role-play a reporter conducting an interview with Sylvester McMonkey McBean. Instruct students to develop thought-provoking questions for the interview. They must consider McBean's character traits in deciding how he would answer the questions. Students practice their interview and then share it with the class.
- For Reader's Theater, assign struggling readers the roles of one of the Sneetches so they will have the support of other readers as they participate in the choral reading of their lines.
- Ask a parent to videotape the Reader's Theater performance so your class can share it with a wider audience. Interview several of the readers on camera to get their thoughts about the message of the story and the importance of inclusion.

### Additional Resources:

- Animated TV special of *The Sneetches* (*Dr. Seuss on the Loose*, 1973): <http://www.squidoo.com/thesneetches>
- Aaron Shepard's Reader's Theater Page: <http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/index.html>
- Reproducible 3.3., Troy Daniels Profile



That day, the  
Sneetches  
learned that  
it's much more  
fun to include  
EVERYONE!

adapted from *The  
Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss

## Inclusion Is Not a Place; It Is a Feeling



"My name is Troy Daniels, but my friends call me TD. I have Down syndrome. Because my heart is bad, I use a wheelchair. I do not speak very well and sometimes I use Libby [a speech device].

"I am a person with disabilities and when I say 'my friends' I mean friends, real friends just like everyone else, I have friends. Most of you think all people have friends, but for people with disabilities friends are not always real. I want you to know why I have friends.

"Not too long ago, people with disabilities could not go to school with other kids. They had to go to 'special schools.' They could not have real friends. They call people like me 'retard.' That breaks my heart.

"When I came to school, there is law that says all kids go to school in the place they live. I started school right here in Northfield with all the senior class. We were little kids together. The law says that I can come to school, but no law can make me have friends.

"But then some kids started to think that I was okay, first it was just one or two kids who were nice to me. They found out that I cared about them and I loved my school. I told them I want to have real friends. Others started to hang out with me, and they found out we could be friends. We started to learn together that in some ways we were different but in some ways we were the same. They called me friend and made sure that I was in everything at school. I cared about them and they cared about me.

"I want all people to know and to see that these students I call my friends are the real teachers of life. They are showing you how it should be. They are the teachers for all of you to follow their lead.

"Yes, I am a person with a disability. The law says that I am included, but it is my friends who say... 'TD, come sit by me.'"

## Reader's Theater Script (adapted from The Sneetches)

Narrator 1: On the beaches of Sneetchville, there once lived two different kinds of Sneetches.

S-B Sneetches: We are the Star-Belly Sneetches,  
We are the Star-Belly Sneetches.  
The best Sneetches by far  
Are the ones with a star!  
We are the Star-Belly Sneetches.

P-B Sneetches: We are the Plain-Belly Sneetches,  
We are the Plain-Belly Sneetches.  
We're not treated the same  
'Cuz our bellies are plain.  
We are the Plain-Belly Sneetches.

Narrator 2: True, the Sneetches looked different. But do you want to know a secret? On the inside, the Plain-Belly Sneetches were really just the same as the Star-Belly Sneetches.

Narrator 1: That's because ALL Sneetches like to play ball and toast marshmallows on the beach.

Narrator 2: Ah, but did those snooty old Star-Belly Sneetches ever include the Plain-Bellies when they played ball and toasted marshmallows?

S-B Sneetches: NO WAY! Plain-Bellies can't play  
Leave us alone and get out of our way!  
The best Sneetches by far  
Are the ones with a star.

Narrator 1: Well, the Plain-Belly Sneetches weren't very happy about being left out. Year after year, they watched the Star-Bellies having all the fun on the beaches of Sneetchville.

## Reader's Theater script

Narrator 2: But ONE day, a stranger came to visit the Plain-Belly Sneetches. He promised that he and his magical machine could make them all stars – Star-Belly Sneetches, that is!

McBean: My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
Just wait till you check out my awesome machine!

Narrator 1: So the Star-Bellies paid Sylvester McMonkey McBean and paraded into his klonking, bonking star-making machine.

Narrator 2: And when they popped out the other end of the machine...EUREKA!  
They had stars on their bellies! They raced down the beach to show the Star-Belly Sneetches.

Sneetches 2: We look just like you. We're EXACTLY the same!  
Now ALL of us Sneetches can join in a game!

Narrator 1: The Star-Bellies couldn't believe their eyes! There wasn't a Plain-Belly left in all of Sneetchville! What should they do now?

S-B Sneetches: It used to be STARS that made us the best  
Now these stars on our bellies are just like the rest!

Narrator 2: That's when Sylvester McMonkey McBean had a clever idea. If his machine could put stars ON, it could take them OFF too. He invited the Star-Belly Sneetches into his machine to take off their stars.

McBean: My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
Just wait till you check out my awesome machine!

Narrator 1: So the Star-Bellies paid Sylvester McMonkey McBean and paraded into his klonking, bonking star-off machine.



**Reader's Theater script**

- Narrator 2: And when they popped out the other end of the machine...EUREKA! They had NO more stars on their bellies – their bellies were plain, plain, plain! They raced down the beach with their snoots high in the air.
- S-B Sneetches: The best Sneetches by far  
Are the ones with NO star!
- Narrator 1: When the other Sneetches saw them, they couldn't believe their eyes! This was crazy! So then, the Sneetches WITH stars decided to go right back in the machine to take their stars OFF again.
- Narrator 2: And then, the Sneetches with NO stars went back in the machine to put their stars ON again.
- Narrators 1&2: In and out; out and in. On and off! Off and on!
- All Sneetches: OH MY STARS!!
- Narrator 1: The Sneetches began to laugh. They laughed and laughed until all their star-bellies and plain-bellies were sore.
- Narrator 2: They laughed because they couldn't tell which Sneetch was which and what Sneetch was who.
- Narrator 1: And they laughed because stars and bellies really DON'T have anything to do with being friends.
- Narrator 2: That day, the Sneetches learned that it's much more fun to include EVERYONE!
- All in unison: Always remember that Sneetches are Sneetches  
And together we ALL are the best on the beaches.

## Troy Daniels Profile

## Troy Daniels



Troy Daniels delivered a knockout speech during his 2002 high school graduation ceremonies at Northfield Middle High School in Northfield, Vermont, which so touched the hearts of the listeners that their response raised the roof and brought them to their feet.

Inspiration like that cannot be contained, and news of Daniels' speech traveled as far away as Australia where the country's Special Olympics Program adopted a line from the speech, "come sit by me," as buzzwords for its Program. It has become such a popular catchphrase for acceptance and inclusion that the Program went so far as to have a pin made, bearing those words. Special Olympics

Australia athletes who attended the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland, brought a batch of the pins to give to their peers from around the world. "Come sit by me" seems to resonate with everyone who hears it. Perhaps that's because the phrase says it all.

Since graduating from high school, Daniels still maintains his ties. He is the school's team manager for the soccer, hockey, and baseball teams. Somehow he fits that into his schedule between two jobs: working at a neighborhood convenience store and a senior care center, serving food to the residents. Recently, Daniels has had to learn to cook and clean since moving from his parents' home into his own apartment. And sports are still part of his life. He plays soccer for Special Olympics Vermont and is thinking about taking up bowling.



**Special Olympics**

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## Activity 4: 3-5 Lessons

### Taking Action

#### Activity Overview:

This lesson builds on the previous lessons. Whether you have completed one or all three of them, this lesson sets a process in motion for implementing a group-based service-learning experience that actively engages students in meaningful, relevant service activities. Following a classroom visit from a Special Olympics athlete, coach, representative, or volunteer, students identify a need in their school or community. The teacher guides students as they design a group service project that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusion, or encourages Special Olympics athletes or peers with special needs in their school or community. Students use a variety of speaking, writing, drama, and art skills to plan and implement this ongoing service-learning experience. Students reflect on the outcomes/impacts of the experience on themselves and their community and celebrate their success. This lesson can be incorporated into a language arts unit to develop purposeful speaking and authentic reading and writing skills.

## Activity 4: Taking Action



Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

### Background on Service-Learning (NYLC Standards)

The National K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice guide educators in their integration of service-learning experiences, including those for K-12 students. This lesson provides a number of suggestions for service-learning experiences that extend from any of the previous lessons and capitalize on the classroom visit from a participant in the Special Olympics movement. The Standards are at the core of the service-learning experiences outlined in this lesson. They include:

1. Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.
2. Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.
3. Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.
4. Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.
5. Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.
6. Service-learning experiences are collaborative, mutually beneficial and address community needs.
7. Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.
8. Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

For more information on service-learning and how to implement service-learning experiences in your classroom, review the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide* available for download at:

<https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators>



## Activity 4: Taking Action



Recognize the role that Special Olympics plays within your own community.

### Cross-Curricular Connections:

This lesson extends to health units on self-concept and social studies units on diversity, inclusion, and community. In this lesson students explore civic responsibility, begin to understand their roles as citizens, and develop skills and attitudes needed to build an inclusive and cooperative community.

### Academic Skills Addressed (specific service-learning experiences will address more):

- Posing reasoned questions drawn from previous learning and from personal experiences;
- Engaging in an inquiry process;
- Developing ideas using creative thinking, problem posing, and problem solving strategies;
- Discovering patterns and relationships among ideas in a collaborative process;
- Receiving and exploring the ideas of others; and
- Conveying meaning through text content and design.

### Desired Outcomes:

*Students will:*

- Recognize the role that Special Olympics plays within their own community.
- Identify actions that support and encourage Special Olympics athletes and peers with special needs.
- Use speaking, writing, drama, and art skills in meaningful ways to meet a need related to diversity and inclusion in their school or community.

### Time Required:

Two 30-45 minute class periods to introduce the service-learning process, linked with a classroom visit from a Special Olympics guest. Time requirements for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the service-learning experience will vary.



## Activity 4: Taking Action

PHOTO BY: Ryan Eades



Familiarize yourself with resources and service-learning possibilities.

### Materials Needed:

- Computer with Internet access
- Video clip: *Nick News Special Edition: A World of Difference*  
<http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/video/WorldofDifference-NickNews.flv>

### Background:

- Well in advance of the lesson, go to:  
[http://www.specialolympics.org/program\\_locator.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/program_locator.aspx) for contact information regarding a Special Olympics program near you. Make arrangements for a Special Olympics athlete, coach, representative or volunteer to visit your classroom. If it's not possible to have a guest speaker, explore the content on the following website to find appropriate video material to share with your class: <http://www.youtube.com/endtherword>
- Familiarize yourself with resources and service-learning possibilities at:  
<http://www.specialolympics.org>

### Important Terms:

- citizenship, service-learning





## PART ONE



### Activity 4: Taking Action

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

#### Prior to Guest Speaker's Visit

1. In advance of a classroom visit from a Special Olympics athlete, coach, representative, or volunteer, show students the second half of the video clip, *Nick News Special Edition: A World of Difference* (approx. 12 min.) to hear individual Special Olympics athletes give a “message to kids in America” and to learn how individuals in the Global Youth Summit help support Special Olympics athletes. *What kind of difference do Global Youth Summit participants make? Discuss the athletes’ dreams for the future. How are these athletes the same as you? How is Special Olympics helping to change others’ ideas about people with disabilities?* **(Educate, Motivate)**
2. Next, announce the upcoming visit from a Special Olympics guest. Tell students that the purpose of the visit is for students to learn firsthand what’s happening in their own community and investigate how they can respond to their community’s current needs. **(Motivate)**
3. Instruct students to work in pairs to brainstorm a list of questions for the guest speaker. Prompt them to include questions about the roles of fans and volunteers. They should also ask for specific ways students like themselves can reach out to peers with special needs and promote inclusion. Make sure that the students’ lists include questions that will provide current information about area Special Olympics events and needs. **(Motivate)**
4. Each student should be prepared for the visit with his/her own list of written questions on topics of interest. Students should also be required to take notes on the speaker’s responses. **(Motivate)**



...learn how individuals in the Global Youth Summit help support Special Olympics athletes...



Harness the enthusiasm from the guest speaker's visit to launch an ongoing service-learning experience.

### Activity 4: Taking Action

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

#### Following Guest Speaker's Visit

1. Harness the enthusiasm from the guest speaker's visit to launch an ongoing service-learning experience. Engage students in a discussion about what they learned from the speaker. *What are the current needs? How can we work together with Special Olympics athletes or other students? How can we use our leadership skills to promote inclusion and acceptance for everyone in our community?* (Additional information about service-learning can be found in the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.) **(Motivate)**
2. Brainstorm ideas and list them on the board. *Can some ideas be combined? Which ideas will require more research?* Guide students through the selection process. Review and assess each idea to determine which ideas generate the greatest interest from the group. (For more information, refer to pages 18-21 of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.) **(Motivate)**

Examples of service-learning experiences may include:

- Students with and without intellectual disabilities work in pairs to photograph the same Special Olympics event from both an athlete's and a spectator's point of view. Several pairs can then combine their photographs for a PowerPoint or multimedia presentation to be shared with an inclusive audience.
- Students with and without intellectual disabilities join together to plan an inclusive event, such as an after-hours video party at school. Students can work in pairs to create posters promoting the event, prepare refreshments, set up chairs and equipment, etc.
- TV coverage of local Special Olympics events can generate a lot of attention. Students can play a role in convincing local television outlets to cover the events. Have students create a campaign (e.g., write letters, create petitions) to convince local media to cover the Special Olympics events.
- Become a one-on-one PE Buddy for students with special needs in their school (assist each week in PE classes).
- Choose Special Olympics athletes who compete in a sport the student likes and create fan mail on a regular basis to send to them. Letters and notes might include photos of students giving a thumbs-up or expressing encouragement. In return, ask SO athletes to send photos of themselves in competition.



## PART TWO



Team up with a special education classroom to design joint fundraising events throughout the school year and donate all profits to Special Olympics.

### Activity 4: Taking Action

## Activity Steps and Suggestions:

- Write and perform a cheer or a song for Special Olympics athletes. Videotape and send it to local Special Olympics athletes, post it on the Special Olympics Fan Community website and/or perform it live at a local competition. Invite the Special Olympics athletes to send or post a videotaped response. This can be an ongoing video-pal exchange.
- Team up with a special education classroom to design joint fundraising events throughout the school year and donate all profits to Special Olympics.
- Attend a local Special Olympics practice. Interview a Special Olympics athlete, take photographs of him/her practicing, and create a photo essay to display publicly in the athlete's school. **(Activate)**



## Activity 4: Taking Action



### Additional Notes:

Guide students through the planning phase. Assign age-appropriate tasks and monitor students as they work in small groups to brainstorm ideas, generate questions, research options and list resources and materials needed. Students should also play an active role in promoting the project (e.g., posters, emails, fliers, newsletters). Support student responsibility for the project by continuing to involve individual students and small groups in generating ideas during the implementation and evaluation processes. (Additional information about service-learning can be found in the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.)

- Reflection is key in connecting the learning experience with personal development and awareness. Students should make regular entries in their reflection journals throughout the service experience, exploring changes in their knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes: *What did you learn? What is the most satisfying aspect of working together? What surprised you? Have we accomplished our goals? How did the experience make you feel? How could this project be made better? What is the hardest part of this project for you? How have we helped others? Are there other ways that we can continue to help? What have you learned from your partners in the project?* (For more information, refer to pages 42-44 of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.)
- Tailor the demonstration of learning and an appropriate celebration to the individual project. (For more information, refer to pages 45-47 of the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*.)

### Suggested Assessment:

- Ongoing teacher observation of student participation and responses in discussions during planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation phases
- Individual interviews with students and project partners
- Student reflection journals
- Student work samples

Reflection is key in connecting the learning experience with personal development and awareness.



## Activity 4: Taking Action

PHOTO BY: Richard Corman



“Sports play a critical role in the health and development of all children, including those with disabilities.”

Hon. Ann Veneman,  
Executive Director,  
UNICEF

### Inclusive Classroom Modifications:

- There may be students in your classroom and school who can be good resources and help answer questions. These students could also contribute during the guest speaker visit.
- In Part Two, Step 1, make sure to ask: *What do the students in our school want/need?*

### General Extensions and Modifications:

- With the permission of their parents, individual students apply to participate in e-Buddies (<http://www.ebuddies.org>), an e-mail pen pal program offered by Best Buddies International. The program pairs typical students with peers with intellectual disabilities, matching them by age, gender, geography, and shared interests. Pairs exchange emails once a week for at least one year. Note: Students must be at least ten years old to participate.

### Additional Resources:

- Special Olympics Fan Community: <http://www.specialolympics.org/community>
- Additional service project ideas: <http://www.kidscare.org>
- Review the *Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide*. This is a supplemental guide that can be downloaded at: <https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators>
- Information about service-learning published by the National Youth Leadership Council: <http://www.nylc.org>
- *It's Our World, Too!: Young People Who Are Making a Difference: How They Do It - How You Can, Too!* by Phillip M. Hoose
- *The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference* by Barbara A. Lewis

