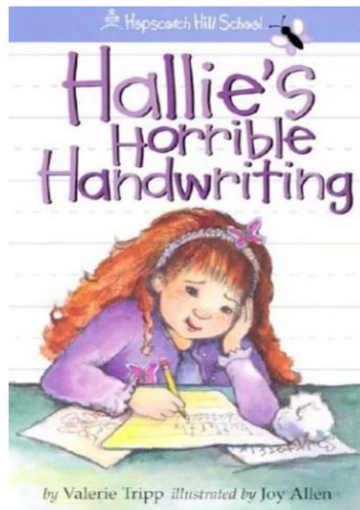


Hallie's Horrible Handwriting Lesson & Activity Plans



Tripp, V. (2004). *Hopscotch Hill School: Hallie's Horrible Handwriting* (J. Allen, Illus.). New York: Scholastic.

Book Summary

Hallie's Horrible Handwriting is about a girl, Hallie, who is clever and artistic. She also has terrible handwriting and a difficult time figuring out how to get the words she wants to write onto the paper. However, her clever teacher helps Hallie find ways to encourage Hallie to practice, and Hallie's classmates show her kindness and compassion. Hallie's teacher also makes it clear that all students' handwriting is different, and that is OK. Hallie represents the fact that some students struggle with different things in school, and it is important to remember everyone learns differently. This book shows students that facing a challenge with perseverance is the best way to act when a tough challenge is holding them back. This book also shows how the support of a classmate can make a really big difference.

Objective of Lessons:

The lessons and activities are created to support student understanding as the class reads *Hallie's Horrible Handwriting* together, with the goal of

teaching students about learner differences and how to identify their own strengths *and* challenges.

Vocabulary to review with class:

Strengths: The ability to be strong with high physical or intellectual power and have the capacity to try your hardest for an extended time period.

Challenges: A weaker quality or feature of an individual that prevents their ability to be effective or successful when they face a specific task or situation.

Lesson Plan Overview:

Lesson One: Before reading the book, Partner Activity

Name Your Partner's Strengths!

Lesson Two: After Chapter 1, Individual Writing Simulation

Switch-Up!

Lesson Three: After Chapter 2, Individual Foldable Activity

Realizing your strengths!

Lesson Four: After Chapter 3 Individual and Group Activity

Support Your Classmates!

Lesson Five: After reading the book, Individual Booklet Creation

My Strengths!

Lesson One Overview: Partner Activity, *Name Your Partner's Strengths!*

Prior to Reading Hallie's Horrible Handwriting, I will introduce the book to the class by reading the above summary and directly addressing the fact that all students learn in different ways and sometimes need extra support and understanding from their classmates. I will also review the vocabulary words, "strength" and "challenge."

For the first part of this activity, I will ask the volunteers to demonstrate with movement what a strength and a weakness might look like. The students will act out physical gestures (ex. strong muscles vs. weak and crouched on the ground) to represent these vocabulary words. I will also ask the class to show how they look when they succeed and how it looks when they struggle. Students who are willing, will share their knowledge about what they consider a struggle (ex. reading textbooks, math homework, writing essays).

For the next part of this lesson, I will ask students to find a partner and write down or draw five strengths they know about the other person. They can write down things they know about their peer if it is not physical attributes (ex: "She has pretty hair."). They need to write down one word, one sentence, or a quick sketch for each strength. Accurate examples include:

- "Charlie always shares his markers."
- "Taylor always holds the door open for me."
- "Soccer" (or draws a soccer ball).
- "Kylie treats everyone with respect."
- "Kate gives me good advice about my writing projects."

When each partner has completed writing or drawing five strengths about their fellow classmate, they tell their partner what they came up with and then students exchange the list or pictures with each other. Students should hang onto the paper listing their strengths.

Lesson Two Overview: After Chapter 1, Individual Writing Simulation, *Switch Up!*

After reading Chapter 1, "Things with Wings," students will participate in a writing exercise to help them understand Hallie's experience writing her name. Ask students to think about why Hallie was frustrated when she had to write her name. Have they ever felt like that about something?

Next, ask them to take out a piece of paper and to write a paragraph including details about butterflies. However, students must complete this exercise using their non-dominant hand! If they normally write with their right hand, they should use their left and if they are normally left-handed, they should use their right hand. The paragraph should include three to five sentences. The students will have five minutes to complete their paragraph about butterflies. Some prompts for students, if needed, include:

- “What colors can butterflies be?”
- “What type of animal are butterflies?”
- “How do butterflies move?”
- “What is the life cycle of a butterfly?”
- “Do you like butterflies?”

When students are finished, ask them to descriptively write about how this exercise made them feel on a new piece of paper by considering these questions:

- Did you give your best effort?
- Does your finished paragraph look like you did your best?
- Do you feel like your paragraph shows your intelligence and tells your audience the details you wanted to express?
- Will you want to put this paper up on the wall for display?

Review the key words students wrote to describe their emotions about writing with a different hand by asking for student volunteers to share them and write the words on the board. After all volunteers are finished, review the words and add any that might be missing such as: *tired, frustrated, upset, different, disappointed*.

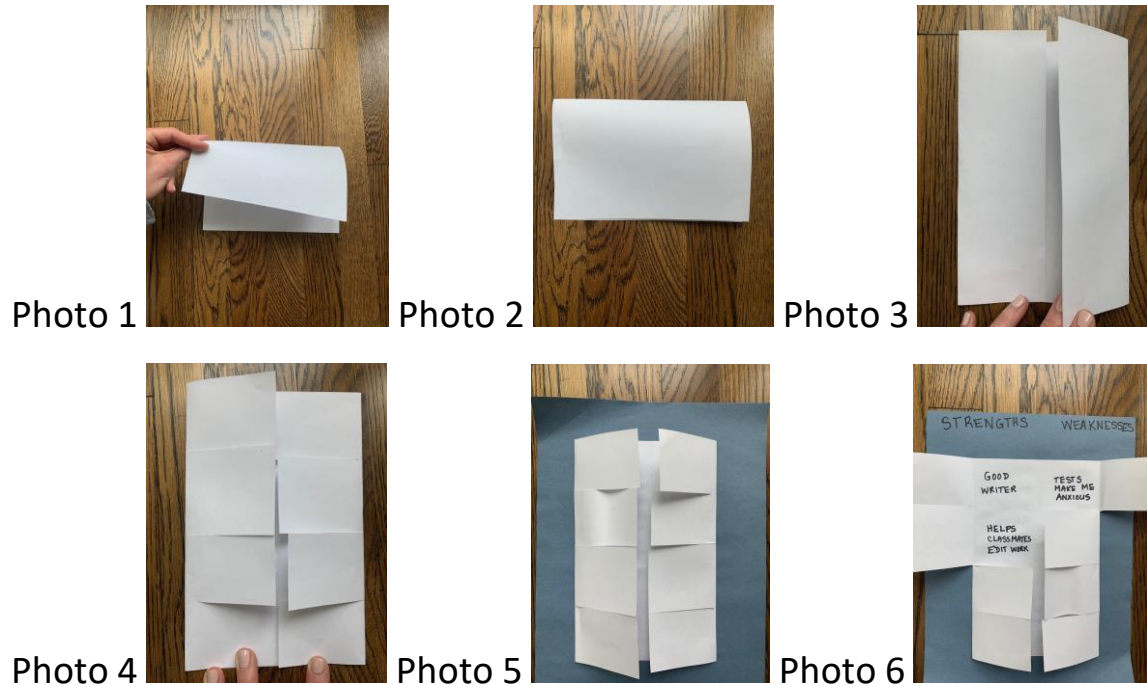
Students should hang on to their papers.

Lesson Three Overview: After Chapter 2, Individual Foldable Activity, *Realizing your strengths!*

After reading “A Pupa Project,” discuss with the class that everyone has something in school that challenges them. Tell students an example of an ability you are not completely comfortable with, perhaps your knowledge of the new attendance software that the teachers must use. Ask the students to think about why Hallie was upset and started crying. What is she good at that might make her feel better to remember? Give examples such as:

- Hallie is good at raising her hand and waiting to be called on.
- Hallie can be quiet so she can find the bunny.
- Hallie can draw beautiful pictures.

Next, hand out a colorful piece of construction paper and a plain piece of white paper to each student. Have the students fold the top of the piece of white paper gently down in half, and pinch slightly in the middle (Photos 1 and 2). Next turn the paper one quarter turn and fold each side in so the two sides meet in the middle where the crease was gently pinched at the mid-point, forming a shutter fold (Photo 3). There will be two, equal sections of paper that fold into a center. Have students make three cuts on each side of the two sections to make four, equal sections on each side (Photo 4). Glue the white paper to the colorful paper as shown below (Photo 5). On the colored paper, above the white paper that is folded, have them write the heading, “Strengths” and on the left side of the paper and write the heading, “Challenges” on the right side. Give the class ten minutes to list four strengths under the flaps on the left and four challenges under the flaps on the right (Photo 6). After they finish, discuss that often, after practice and with time and support, items in the “Challenges: Things I Can Easily Do” column can move over to the “Strengths: Things I am Learning to Do” column. Have students hang onto their foldable.



Lesson Four Overview: After Chapter 3, Individual and Group Dramatic Activity, *Support Your Classmates!*

After finishing “Flutter By, Butterflies!” the final chapter of *Hallie’s Horrible Handwriting*, ask students to recollect what the message was from the story, and share their thoughts with the class. Ask students where they thought the butterfly pen and supportive notes came from. The teacher? Other students?

Then, provide this brief post summary for students once they are finished with brainstorming the message of the book:

“This book shows that what can seem like an easy task for one student might be very difficult for another. It is important to remember we are all different, and we all learn in different ways! This is normal, and it is a great idea to support one another because if we were having a hard time ourselves, knowing we have classmates to support us would help us continue to try our best. Remembering how many things you are good at will help you figure out your strengths, and act like reinforcements when you meet up with obstacles

in school. It is also important to remember that practicing things we find challenging is a good way to make them get easier.”

Next, for the first part of the activity portion of this lesson, put students into groups of five. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and write down five or more supportive statements or actions they could use with a student who is struggling with learning. Allow five minutes, then ask students to share what they wrote with their group and ask students to add some of their classmates' ideas to their individual lists. Some examples to share with the class include:

- “Don’t give up!”
- “I think you are doing a great job!”
- “I can really see you are trying your best!”
- “Look at how much better you are doing than at the beginning of the year!”
- Action: Give your classmate a thumb’s up!
- Action: Dance a jig when they complete their challenging assignment!

For the second part of the activity, each group will use drama to role play by choosing one student from the group who will act out having a weakness, and the other four group members will verbally practice using the encouraging statements they have on their list to help their classmate continue as they face their challenge. Each group member should cycle through playing the part of the student with a challenge and hear the affirming words of their peers.

Have students hang onto their papers.

Lesson Five Post-Reading: After reading the book, make a positive self-talk list and individually create a booklet, *My Strengths!*

Have students gather their other papers from Lessons One, Two, Three and Four. Ask students to review their list of strengths from their partner, the paragraph they wrote with their non-dominant hand, their list of strengths:

things they can easily do and challenges: things they are learning to do, and their list of supportive actions or statements. Ask students to consider the top 10-20 statements that would help them face a challenging task and create a personal positive self-talk list. Have them title the page, "What I Can Say to Myself in a Challenge." Examples include:

- "I haven't figured it out yet, but I will keep trying."
- "I am enough."
- "If I want to, I can."
- "I have the power to keep going and see this through."
- "It doesn't matter if I make a mistake, what matters is that I try."
- "I won't give up."
- "I am important."
- "I can do anything."
- "Every time I do this, I improve."

Allow ten minutes for students to complete. Next, have students design a cover for their book titled, "My Strengths!" This is a fun activity. Allow 15 minutes. After the 15 minutes is up, have students add the cover to the front, and staple all the pages together to create a booklet.

Materials List: Construction paper, copy paper, scissors, glue stick, markers, pencil, stapler.