



This is a fun activity for any month. Just look for a seasonal connection when choosing the class "gift" that will go inside the box. Children will look forward to this activity from one month to the next. Watch their writing skills grow as they write about what they think is inside the box each time.



## Teacher Share

### LANGUAGE ARTS

## Valentine Treasure Box

**A** box filled with a mysterious Valentine treat inspires students' imaginations and builds writing and problem-solving skills.

- ☉ Wrap a box and lid with Valentine paper. (The size of the box should be just big enough to hold what's going inside.)
- ☉ Place a Valentine treat, or a coupon with clues that lead to the treat, inside the box. For example, if you're sharing heart-shaped cookies, you might provide directions students can follow to find the cookies. Pin the box to a bulletin board.
- ☉ Before Valentine's Day, invite children to write about what they think is inside the box and why. Encourage them to think about the size of the box as they make their guesses.
- ☉ Collect all guesses before February 14th. Reveal the contents on Valentine's Day and enjoy the surprise!

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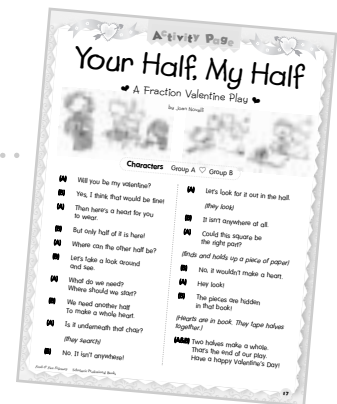


In "Your Half, My Half" children find the missing halves of their hearts in books. For a special touch, hide the missing halves in books with Valentine's Day themes. Children will enjoy reading the books after performing the play.

### LANGUAGE ARTS, MATH

## "Your Half, My Half" Mini-Play

Students form two groups to perform a mini-play with a surprise ending! Divide the class into two groups: A and B. Have children in group A cut out and decorate hearts, one for every two students. Have them write a Valentine message on the hearts, then cut them in half to make puzzles. Have children in both groups practice their lines, then get ready to perform the play. Give children in group A one half of each heart. Place the other half of each heart in a book. When children in group B get to the part where they look for the missing half of each heart, let them search (with children in group A giving clues), then put the hearts they find together to read the messages. Children in group B can keep the hearts or present them to members of the audience. Switch the groups around (A is B, B is A) for a repeat performance so that everyone gets to make and receive a special valentine. Use the play to explore fractions: *How many halves in a whole?*



## LANGUAGE ARTS

## "Be Mine" Valentine Puzzles

Looking for little words in big words is a strategy that helps young children read and write new words. Use a familiar Valentine message—*be mine*—as a springboard for strengthening this strategy. Share a conversation candy heart that says *be mine*. Read it with children and write the word *be* on the chalkboard. Spell it together, then ask children to listen for that sound in this word: *belong*. Ask them how they might spell the first part of that word (*be*). Write the word *belong* on the chalkboard so that children can see that the letters are the same. Now say three words—for example, *butter*, *behave*, and *bandage*—and ask children to identify the one that they think starts with the letters *be*. Follow up by giving children blank paper hearts. Have them write words that start with *be* on their hearts (such as *believe*, *before*, *begin*, *between*, *belong*, *beneath*, *beside*, *because*, and *beautiful*). Show students how to cut their hearts in half to make puzzles to share with one another.



You can easily adapt this activity to make a festive Valentine word wall. Cut out a large heart shape and write the words "Be mine" on it. Display this on a wall. Cut out smaller hearts in pinks and reds. Have children write words that start with the letters *be* on the hearts and add them to the display.



## Teacher Share

## LANGUAGE ARTS, ART

### Message in a Puzzle

**T**hese easy-to-make valentines are fun to put together and read. Write each child's name on separate slips of paper. Place the names in a bag. Let each child draw a name from the bag. Provide heart-shaped templates (big enough to write a message on). Have children trace and cut out a heart, then write a friendly message to their valentines. After decorating the hearts, have children cut them into puzzle pieces and place them in an envelope labeled with their valentine's name. Let children exchange these puzzles on Valentine's Day. What a great surprise when they put their puzzles together!

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Valentine puzzles make nice, quick gifts for your students' special area teachers. Cut out giant puzzles for more fun, and have each child write a message on it.



## Tip

To turn friendship rings into mini-books, remove staples, then place the strips one on top of another and staple along the left side to bind.



# Teacher Share

LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

## Friendship Rings

**T**hese friendship rings grow each day as children write positive messages to each of their classmates. The rings are easily transformed into friendship books that children will cherish. (See tip, left.)

- ③ Cut uniform strips of colored paper (about 12 by 3 inches). Give one to each child. Have children write their names on the strips and glue a small photo (or photocopy of a photo) next to their names.
- ③ Show students how to staple the two ends together to form a ring (with the name and photo on the outside). String a clothesline across a wall and have children pin up their rings.
- ③ Give each child a class list and a set of blank strips (one for each classmate). Beginning with the name that follows theirs on the class list, have children write a friendly message to each classmate, mentioning something positive about that child. Encourage them to be specific—for example, “I like the funny stories you tell about your dog.” Have children sign their names, then locate the child’s ring on the line, thread the strip through, and staple it to make a ring. Children will be excited to watch their friendship rings grow, until at last they can take them down and read them.

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## Book Break

### **Saint Valentine**

by Robert Sabuda (Atheneum, 1992)

Surprise! While we might associate roses with Valentine’s Day, the *crocus* is actually the “official” flower of this holiday. Learn more about the history of this favorite February holiday with this exquisitely illustrated book.