



Absolutely Not

Language-based Lesson Plans

Optimist & Pessimist Discussion

Talk about how the book is about an optimist (Gloria) and a pessimist (Frieda). Talk about what it means to be an optimist or a pessimist. Divide the class into two groups and tell one group they will be pessimists and the other group they will be optimists. Describe for the class scenes or objects that have both good and bad points of view about them.

For example, an ice cream sundae might be seen as delicious and fun by an optimist, but messy, fattening and bad for the teeth by a pessimist. Some other subjects to try might be a roller coaster, a horse, a television, a lake, etc.

This can also be done as a writing exercise. Have each student fill out the attached handout “Something I like is _____.”

Optimist & Pessimist Story Idea #1

Have students write their own story about an optimist and a pessimist. Start them with the first sentence to establish the scene, such as, “Two friends go to the amusement park.” or “Two friends go to the playground.” Ask the students to write about what happens when the two friends encounter the same situation. (For example, they might feel a drop of rain. Is that good or bad? What will it mean for the rest of their day?)

Optimist & Pessimist Story Idea #2

There is an old type of story where the storyteller plays the part of both an optimist and a pessimist, alternating between each. It can be told with the help of a straight man, or a willing audience. It goes something like this...

Storyteller: “Looks like it’s going to rain today.”

Straight man: “That’s too bad.”

Storyteller: “Oh, no, it’s good. It will help the flowers grow.”

Straight man: “Oh, that’s good!”

Storyteller: “Not at all. It’s bad. I’m allergic to flowers and they make me sneeze.”

Straight man: “I’m sorry. That’s too bad.”

Storyteller: “No, it’s good. I own a tissue factory. When people sneeze, I make money.”

...and so on. Have students try to write a story in this vein. How far can they take it? This can be a fun story for a group (or an entire class) to write together.



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Name _____

Something I **like** is: _____

What Gloria (an optimist) would say:

What Frieda (a pessimist) would say:



Absolutely Not

Name _____

Something I **hate** is: _____

What Gloria (an optimist) would say:

What Frieda (a pessimist) would say:
