

An Educator's Guide to *What Are You Doing?* and *Why Are You Doing That?*

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An Educator's Guide for Grades K – 1

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

Overview

Chepito is a small boy who is full of questions. *What Are You Doing?* is a celebration of reading: it's the first day of school and Chepito comes across people in his neighborhood who are all reading. When he asks them why each has a different answer for him. *Why Are You Doing That?* is a celebration of food: when Chepito explores his surroundings, friends and neighbors are able to answer his questions about where his food comes from and how it is grown and prepared.

Objective:

Students will listen to the teacher read the books aloud, extend vocabulary, participate in a class discussion and complete individual activities inspired by the books.

Pre-reading:

Hold up the books and show the class both covers. Can students guess what each book will be about just by looking at the covers? Do they think that the books are about the same boy, because he is on the cover of both? Do the titles on the covers give any clues to what the books are about? Are there other ways (illustration, book size) that students can guess the books are companions?

Point out the author and illustrator names on the covers, and show students an inside back flyleaf with the author and illustrator biographies. Can students identify what the author does, and what the illustrator does? Do they feel that one is more important than the other?

Page through the interior of the books, giving students a look at the illustrations. Are there any clues in the pictures about what the stories are about or where they take place? Do students find the pictures interesting? Does the art make them want to hear the stories?

While reading the stories aloud, stop to identify any words that the students are not familiar with. Can they guess the meaning of those words from the context or illustrations? Can they suggest a different word that might have been used?

Post-reading class discussion:

Character

Can students identify who the main character of both books is? How do they know? Who are the other characters? What is Chepito's relationship to the others? How do they know? Do students like Chepito? Does he remind them of anyone — themselves, a friend, a sibling, another book character? Why and how? Is he a friendly boy? How do the author and illustrator make Chepito seem likeable? Do students like Chepito, or would they want Rosita to be the main character? Why or why not? How would the story have been different if Rosita was the main character? Is it important in a children's book, for the main character to be a child?

Plot

What are each of the two stories about? Do students like one better than the other? Which one, and why? Does an interest in the subject allow students to enjoy the book more? For example, is *What Are You Doing?* more interesting if you like to read? Can you still enjoy *Why Are You Doing That?* if you don't eat the same kinds of food that Chepito does?

Questions about *What Are You Doing?*

- Can students explain what “curiosity” is? Why is Chepito so curious? Are they? How would the story have been different if he didn't ask so many questions? Is everyone happy to answer his questions? How would the story have been different if no one wanted to answer his questions? Are students' families always happy to answer their questions? Can students suggest other qualities of Chepito's, besides curiosity?
- Chepito finds that people read many different kinds of materials. Can students name some (guidebook, manual, comic, newspaper)? Ask students to share which of these types are their favorites. Why? Can they suggest other types of reading that are not in the story? Can they suggest why, even if you did not enjoy reading, that you might do it anyway?
- Did students like the ending to the story? Is Chepito going to be a good reader? Is he going to like going to school from now on? How might the story have been different if the teacher had not read a book to him on his first day of school?
- Can the class think of other books they've read that are about books and reading? Which ones? How are they like this book, or different from it?

Questions about *Why Are You Doing That?*

- What does Chepito learn about food from asking questions in this book? Did listening to this book make students hungry? Can they suggest other questions that he did not ask?
- Where do students think the family lives? What clues about this did students get from the words and illustrations?

- Would the story have been different, if the family's food was different? Are there students who had eggs and beans for breakfast? What about eggs and bacon? Do any students have tortillas for lunch or dinner?
- This book uses some Spanish words when describing food, and there is a short glossary in the back. Read the glossary aloud to the class. Ask students if they know other Spanish words for food. Do they know Spanish words for other things? Make a list of the Spanish words familiar to the class, and post them.

Activities

Use *What Are You Doing?* to prompt students to understand and use question words. Choose one of the spreads from the book — for example, where Chepito finds a man reading a newspaper: “What are you doing?” asked Chepito. Have students make up alternate questions for Chepito to ask the man, using the other question words: who, where, when, why and how. Then have them invent answers to the questions. When finished, ask each child to choose their favorite question/answer and read aloud to the class.

Use *Why Are You Doing That?* to let students practice recognizing “ing” as a word ending. Give students a list of all the “ing” words in the book, or compile one while you are reading the book aloud. Have students identify the base word and write a definition of it.

Example: Cooking = cook = to prepare food.

Other “ing” words in the book: doing, cooking, digging, growing, throwing, tying, falling, running, milking slapping, flattening, making, hanging, lying.

Creative Writing

Have students choose one of these sentences, complete it and then write a short piece giving more details:

- I like to read, and my favorite kind of book is . . .
- I am very curious about . . .
- I would like to be friends with Chepito because . . .

Have students choose one of these topics and write a short piece about it:

- Which Chepito book did they enjoy more? Why?
- Describe a typical meal at their house and where the different parts of the meal come from.
- Ask them to think about the pictures in *Why Are You Doing That?* and write about the differences between their home and Chepito's.