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Summer of the Swans

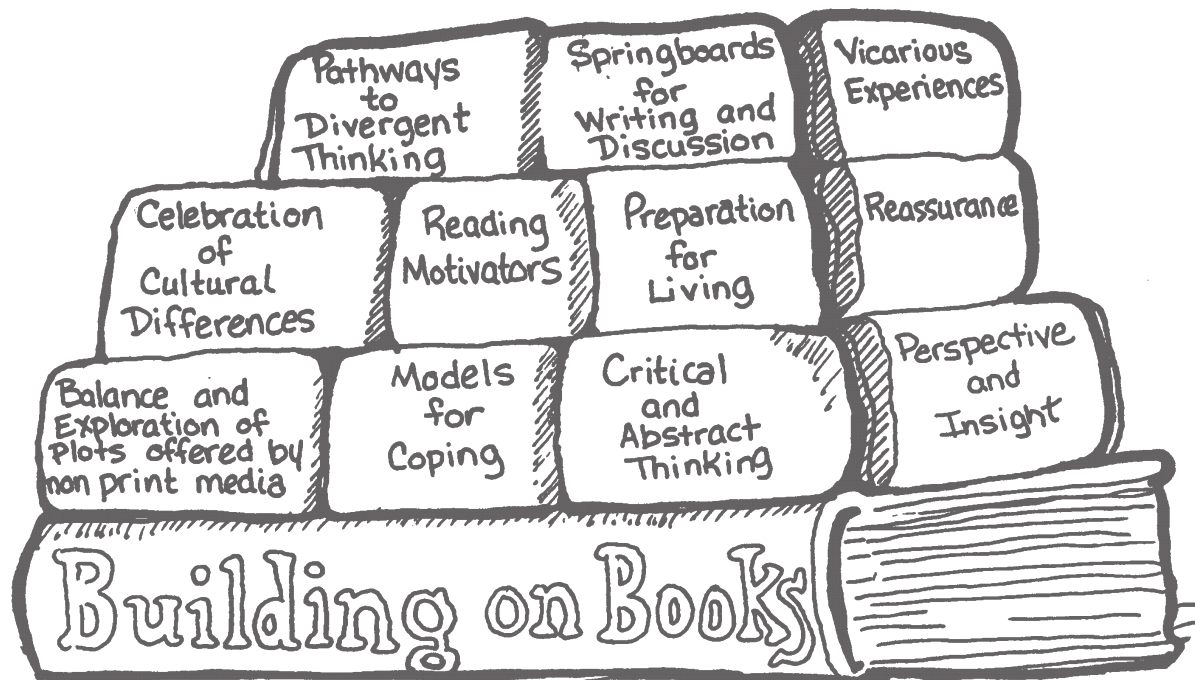
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- Prejudice
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- School Life
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Bibliotherapy

The 'What?' and the 'Why?'

Bibliotherapy is a big word for a simple concept. It is the use of books to examine ourselves and gain insights that may help us live richer, more mentally healthy lives. Despite the use of that intimidating word *therapy*, bibliotherapy is not intended to be used in a clinical sense in the classroom. Knowledgeable educators can match individual students with books that can comfort and open doors for thought and discussion. This can be done on a classroom as well as individual level, with such books serving as motivators for reading and as launching pads for insightful writing, discussion and creative endeavours.

Studies have shown that those children we recognise as 'resilient', who weather life's storms and blossom into people with stable personalities, tend to be readers (Werner, 1984). The reader may search for a relevant book, be directed to one or stumble upon one accidentally. However it happens, the rewards for individual students as well as entire classrooms are too valuable to be ignored.



Me in a Nutshell




'Me in a Nutshell' is a simple get-acquainted activity. A great deal of information about a student can be gleaned from a few lines and in most cases, a teacher will immediately have an idea about the types of books that might interest a particular student, as well as relevant insight into that student's personality.

Use the master on the following page as a guide for students. The format for filling out the sheet is listed below:


- Line One: first name
- Line Two: adjective describing self
- Line Three: adjective describing self
- Line Four: 'feeling' descriptor or statement
- Line Five: statement
- Line Six: family relationship (ex.: brother, sister, etc.); name
- Line Seven: name of friend(s)
- Line Eight: noun or statement
- Line Nine: statement
- Line Ten: statement
- Line Eleven: statement
- Line Twelve: statement
- Line Thirteen: statement
- Line Fourteen: last name



The simplicity of this activity is quite deceiving. For example, read about 'Chris in a Nutshell' below:

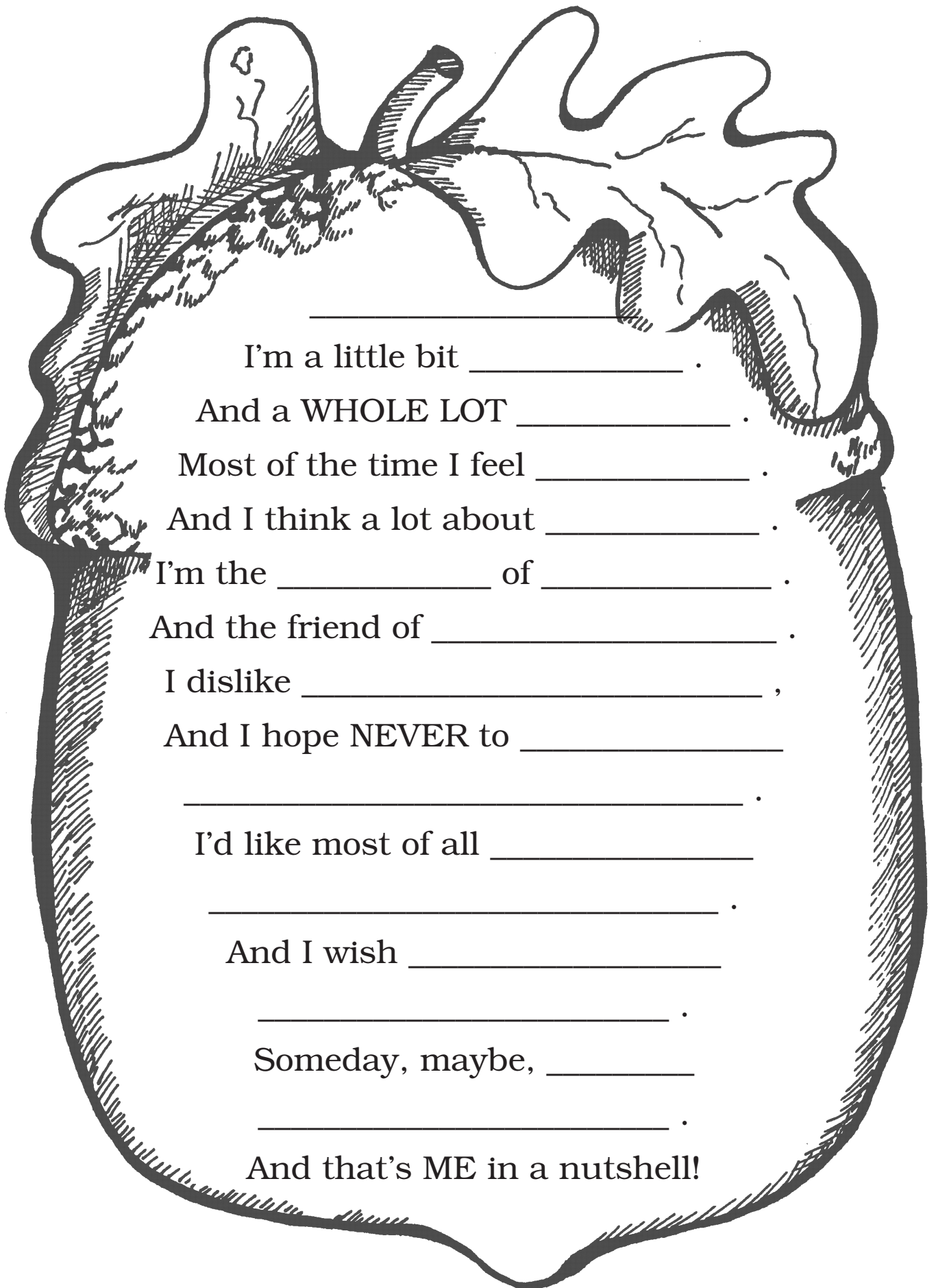


Chris.
I'm a little bit funny,
And a whole lot energetic.
Most of the time I feel pretty good,
And I think a lot about basketball.
I'm the brother of Lon,
And the friend of Brandon.
I dislike writing poetry,
And I hope NEVER to have detention.
I'd like most of all to be able to draw,
And I wish I could see my dad more often.
Someday, maybe, I'll be a pilot.
Smith.



Right away, it is easy to guess that books about basketball, drawing and pilots would probably interest Chris even if he is a reluctant reader. It would be a challenge to try to find poetry that might appeal to him and want to make him read more. Chris has given us other clues to his personality that might prove insightful later.

Hint: You might fill one of these out as well. Students will enjoy knowing a little more about their teacher!



I'm a little bit _____ .

And a **WHOLE LOT** _____ .

Most of the time I feel _____ .

And I think a lot about _____ .

I'm the _____ of _____ .

And the friend of _____ .

I dislike _____ ,

And I hope **NEVER** to _____

_____ .

I'd like most of all _____

_____ .

And I wish _____

_____ .

Someday, maybe, _____

_____ .

And that's **ME** in a nutshell!

The Reality Panel Talk Show



*The Reality Panel Talk Show
serves a number of purposes:*

- It serves as an alternative book reporting method, fostering creativity in participants and sparking interest in listeners.
- It tends to foster group discussion and invites higher-order thinking and insight.
- Invariably, one of the 'characters' in your talk show will strike a chord with a listener . . . another reader has been 'hooked'!