

Letter Writing with *After the Fall*: *How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again*

Teacher Notes from Jennifer Parisi



After the Fall: **How Humpty Dumpty** **Got Back Up Again** *Dan Santat*

This letter-writing experience is dedicated to all educators, families and students who deal with challenges and setbacks but get back up again with the support of others. May the lessons you learned through Humpty Dumpty stay with you when you face adversity in your lifetime. Like the book's author Dan Santat says, "Life begins when you get back up!"

– Jennifer Parisi

About the Author

Jennifer is a third-grade teacher in Barrington, IL. In her free time, she is drawn to her sketchbook, where she plans new content to produce, whether it be a new puppet, SEL videos or lesson plans.

- This lesson has been designed with students in Grades 2-6 in mind. Please make modifications for your classes accordingly.
- Students will write a letter, so they will need paper and a pencil.
- I recommend reading the whole book through with your class before you begin writing your letters.
- **Use the slides to guide your class through the activity.** Humpty Dumpty's birdie friend, B.G. (Blue-Green), will give directions to students throughout.
- B.G. will also give prompts for students to have quick conversations. Please encourage all students to share their reactions, making sure to address their responses through a social and emotional lens.
- Enjoy this letter-writing experience and encourage your students to continue to practice the empathy and mindfulness exemplified in the book.

Learning Targets:

- I can write my thoughts in the form of a letter where I share my feelings of empathy.
- I can choose kind and encouraging words to someone in need of help.
- I can offer suggestions to help someone with a problem.
- I can collaborate with others to help solve problems, and I can listen to my classmates' thinking.
- I can write a friendly letter with original ideas and thoughtful words.

Success Criteria:

Write a letter to Humpty Dumpty that includes:

1. Introduction, body and conclusion.
2. Words of encouragement to Humpty Dumpty.
3. Problem-solving ideas and growth mindset words and phrases.



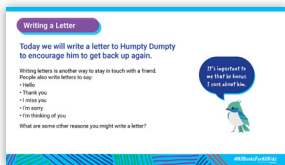
Slide 1 - Title Slide ([Click here to access the student slides.](#))

Ask the class for a summary of the book. Turn the discussion of plot points to topics surrounding social and emotional learning – what was Humpty Dumpty afraid of? How did he overcome his fear?



Slide 2

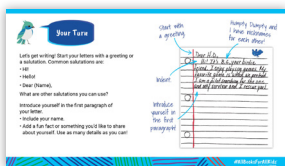
Today we will be writing a letter to Humpty Dumpty with the help of his friend from the book, Blue-Green. Start a discussion on how students stay connected with friends and family. Some answers may be texting, calling, going to the park, after school at the basketball game, on TikTok, etc.



Slide 3

After sharing that writing letters is another way to stay in touch, ask why else a person may write a letter. Answers may include: to invite a friend to a party, to say thank you for a gift, holiday cards, to pay a bill or to offer words of support when someone is sick or just feeling down.

Share that the purpose of the letter they will write today is to offer encouragement or support to Humpty Dumpty.



Slide 4

Students will need a pencil or pen and piece of paper to write their letter, or a computer (where they will print out their letter) if modifications are needed.

Explain that a letter starts with a salutation. To show where it belongs, refer to the salutation that Blue-Green uses to begin its letter to Humpty Dumpty (pictured on the slide). Talk about different types of salutations, then ask if students can think of some of their own that they'd use to begin different kinds of letters. Ask them to share.

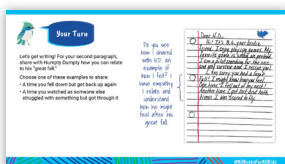
Once students have written their salutation, they can move to the first paragraph, where they will introduce themselves to Humpty Dumpty (see slide). Ask students to start by sharing something about themselves, like a fun fact. (What is your favorite TV show to binge? What kinds of snacks do you like to make for yourself? If you could buy anything right now, what would it be?) Again, you can use the example on this slide to show how Blue-Green starts its first paragraph.



Slide 5

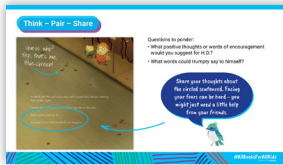
For this Think-Pair-Share, you will need to open the book to the page shown. Read that page out loud to the class. Ask your students to think for a moment about what Humpty meant when he said, "But it changed my life." Use the Questions to Ponder on the slide to help guide student thinking. Students may share with a partner or as part of a class discussion.

For younger students, guide their responses with the appropriate words to express what they're feeling: scared, frightened, defeated, embarrassed, etc.



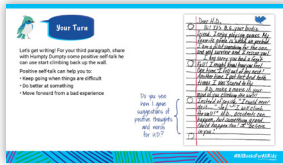
Slide 6

Students will write the second paragraph of their letter. Using their shared experiences from the Think-Pair-Share, have them offer an experience that helps them relate to Humpty Dumpty's accident. You can share with your students the differences between feeling sympathy (joining a person in feeling bad about what's happened to them) and empathy (understanding another's feelings as if we are having them ourselves). Now ask students to share with Humpty how they can relate to his situation.



Slide 7

Read this page out loud to students. Bring them back to the experience they shared on slide 6. Have students share how they felt in that moment or how they've felt watching someone they know struggle. What could they have said to themselves to keep moving? Use the Questions to Ponder to help guide the discussions further.



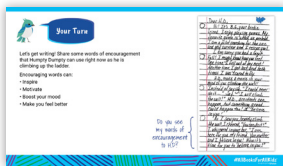
Slide 8

Students will now write the third paragraph of their letter. Ask them to focus on using positive self-talk, an approach to helps you solve problems and stay positive during stressful times. Share ideas of self-talk that could be helpful to Humpty in this situation.



Slide 9

Turn to the page shown and read it out loud to students. Discuss with students a time that they were scared or terrified. What made it scary? Were you able to share your fears, or did you keep them to yourself? Knowing that H.D. is scared to climb the ladder, what could you say to encourage him? Encouraging words are those from others or yourself that help inspire or motivate you to overcome a challenge.



Slide 10

Students will now focus the fourth paragraph of their letter, where they'll share their words of encouragement to Humpty Dumpty. Explain that encouragement means to inspire someone to keep moving forward or to pass along ideas for overcoming a struggle. Ask students what words of encouragement they could share with Humpty.

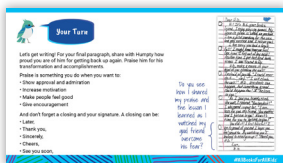
Again, point out to students that they are building their letters by placing different blocks (or paragraphs) together to form one message.



Slide 11

Humpty Dumpty went through a transformation. Turn to the page in the book with this image. Ask students to look at the picture and think about what's going on, and to support their guesses with evidence from the picture.

Talk to your students about the word "transformation," which means a complete change. The change can be in your physical appearance or in your life. What are other examples of transformations? Some ideas are a caterpillar turning into a butterfly (physical transformation), Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* turning into a human (physical transformation), an acorn turning into a tree (physical transformation), getting our driver's license (life transformation) or becoming a parent (life transformation).



Slide 12

Now students are ready to write the final paragraph in their letter to Humpty Dumpty. Here, ask students to praise H.D. for overcoming his fear. Praise means approval or admiration – it can increase motivation, make people feel good or offer encouragement. Remind students to be specific about what they're praising!

Students should also add a closing to their letter, along with their signature. The slide contains different examples of closings, but you can ask students to share other types that can be used, too. For older students, you can expand on the differences between a formal and an informal closing.

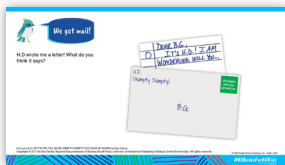


Slide 13

End your lesson by reviewing the purpose of the activity: to share feelings of empathy with a person who is going through a difficult experience by writing a letter of support. Ask questions such as:

- How does imagining what another person is feeling help you to choose the right words for support?
- Why might it make another person feel better to hear that you've struggled, too?
- What is some advice we can give people when they're down that might help them in any situation?
- How does it feel to hear that others are supporting you when you're trying to solve a problem?
- What's a great thing about receiving a letter of support?

Optional Extension Activities:



Slide 14

- Use Flipgrid to read and respond to student letters.
- What do you think H.D. said to B.G.? Write a letter from Humpty Dumpty to Blue-Green as a class or individually.

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions about the lesson, please don't hesitate to reach out to me! You can reach me at jenniferparisi714@gmail.com or on Twitter @ijenparisi.

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