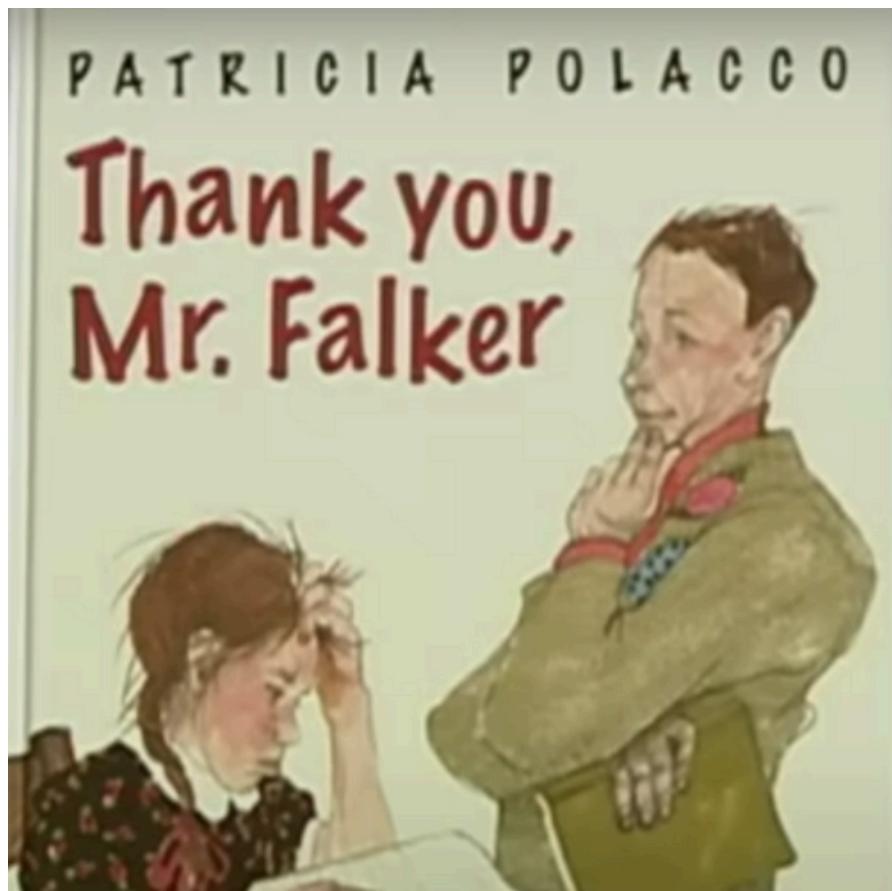


Thank you, Mr Falker

A Guide for Teachers and Parents



Written by Patricia Polacco

Illustrated by Patricia Polacco

THEMES

Health & Wellbeing

Social & Emotional Wellbeing

Inclusion & Disability

Biography

Story Discussion Guide

- Understand what dyslexia is and how it affects learning.
- Recognize the emotional impact of teasing and exclusion.
- Appreciate the importance of patience, empathy, and encouragement from teachers and peers.
- Realize that with the right support, everyone can succeed, regardless of learning differences.
- Reflect on the role educators play in shaping a child's self-worth and future.

Lesson plan

This story offers a valuable entry point for discussions on learning disabilities, bullying, and the importance of inclusive education. The lesson plan helps children develop empathy for peers who may learn differently and empowers them to support rather than ridicule.

Learning Outcome

Before Reading:

- Have you ever felt nervous or embarrassed about not understanding something in school?
- What do you think makes a good teacher?

During Reading:

- Why does Trisha feel so excited about school at first?
- What are some ways her classmates treat her?
- How does Mr. Falker behave differently from other adults?

After Reading:

- How would you describe Trisha's journey from the beginning to the end?
- What would you do if you saw a classmate struggling to read or being teased?
- Why do you think Patricia Polacco wrote this story?

Activities:

- Empathy Roleplay: Act out scenes showing how to support a struggling friend with kindness.
- “Thank You” Letters: Write a letter to a teacher or adult who helped you when you were struggling.
- Dyslexia Awareness Poster: Create an informative and encouraging poster about learning differences.

Expected Outcomes

Students will better understand the challenges faced by children with learning disabilities and reflect on the importance of encouragement and inclusion. The story helps build a classroom culture where empathy, not judgment, is the norm. Children will internalize that we all learn differently—and that's okay

Applicable SDGs

- SDG 4 – Quality Education
- SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 3 – Good Health & Well-being

SDG Explanation

- SDG 4: The story highlights the importance of inclusive, quality education by showing how specialized attention can empower children with learning differences.
- SDG 10: Trisha's journey illustrates the societal stigma children with disabilities face, and the need to reduce discrimination and build empathy in classrooms.
- SDG 3: The emotional toll of dyslexia is addressed through Trisha's experience of bullying, anxiety, and eventual healing with support.

ABOUT ZAMASAMA

Zamasama is a nonprofit platform that brings together stories from around the world to help children discover that beneath our differences—of culture, language, or belief—we share the same hopes, joys, and dreams. Today's children are tomorrow's citizens, and the responsibility of building a more peaceful, tolerant, and empathetic world lies with them. That's why it's vital to instill these values early—through stories that help them rise above the biases they inherit, and see diversity as a strength that unites us all.