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"No More Gnomes" Lesson Plan Guide

written and illustrated by Beth Mills

Unit Overview

Duration: 1 week

Grade Level: K–2

Subject Integration: ELA, Social-Emotional Learning, Science/Social Studies

Essential Question: *How do we say something honest and important while still being kind?*

Learning Objectives — Students will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the conflict between politeness and honest communication
- Understand how the story builds tension through escalation (more and more gnomes)
- Practice expressing feelings and needs in kind, clear language
- Apply understanding through creative writing, drama, and personal reflection

ONE-WEEK LESSON PLAN

Day 1: Meet Herbert and the First Gnome

Objective: Introduce Herbert, his prize-winning politeness, and the arrival of the problem

Materials: Book, feelings anchor chart, "Herbert's Medal" discussion prompt

Opening (10 min):

- Ask: "What does it mean to be polite? Can you be TOO polite? Has that ever happened to you?"
- Introduce Herbert and his award-winning manners

Main Activity (35 min):

- Read aloud through the arrival of the first gnome
- Stop and discuss: "What does Herbert FEEL? What does he SAY? Are they the same?"
- Introduce the concept: Sometimes we feel one thing but say another to be polite
- Create a class anchor chart: "Herbert feels ___ but says ___"

Closing (5 min):

- Exit ticket: "Draw Herbert's REAL face vs. his POLITE face when the first gnome arrives"

Assessment: Feelings identification, inside vs. outside emotions, story comprehension

Day 2: The Gnomes Keep Coming — Escalation!

Objective: Explore how the story builds tension through escalation and humor

Materials: Book, gnome-counting chart, tension tracking visual

Opening (10 min):

- Recall: "How many gnomes does Herbert have to deal with so far? How is he feeling?"

Main Activity (35 min):

- Continue reading—track the gnomes on a class counting chart: 1, 2, 3, 4...
- Pause after each new gnome: "Is Herbert's patience getting bigger or smaller?"
- Discuss: What is funny about this? Why do we laugh when things get worse and worse?



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- Introduce the word "escalation"—when a problem keeps getting bigger and bigger

Closing (5 min):

- Ask: "If you were Herbert, at which gnome would YOU have said something?"

Assessment: Story comprehension, escalation understanding, humor analysis, empathy

Day 3: The Hardest Part — Finding the Words

Objective: Focus on Herbert's challenge: how to say something honest and still be kind

Materials: Role-play scenario cards, feelings sentence frames

Opening (10 min):

- Ask: "Has anyone ever needed to tell someone something they didn't want to hear? What did you do?"

Main Activity (35 min):

- Read the section where Herbert tries to figure out what to say
- Discuss: Why is it so hard to say "I don't like this, please stop" to someone you care about?
- Practice together: "I feel ___ when ___ because ___. Could we ___?"
- Role-play in pairs: one student is Herbert, one is Ms. Goat—practice the conversation kindly

Closing (5 min):

- Share: "What's one kind but honest way Herbert could talk to Ms. Goat?"

Assessment: Social-emotional skill building, kind communication practice, role-play engagement

Day 4: How Does It End? Resolution Discussion

Objective: Finish the story and discuss how Herbert resolves the situation

Materials: Book, resolution discussion prompts

Opening (10 min):

- Prediction: "How do you think Herbert finally tells Ms. Goat his feelings? What do you think she says?"

Main Activity (35 min):

- Read the resolution together
- Discuss: Was Herbert's solution kind? Was it honest? Was it both?
- Connect to the big idea: Speaking up doesn't have to be rude—it can be kind AND clear at the same time
- Ask: "Is there something YOU've been wanting to say to someone but weren't sure how? What would it be?"

Closing (5 min):

- Class reflection: "What would you put on YOUR politeness medal? What are YOU especially good at?"

Assessment: Resolution comprehension, theme synthesis, personal application

Day 5: Creative Response — Write the Hard Conversation

Objective: Apply learning by expressing understanding through creative and personal projects

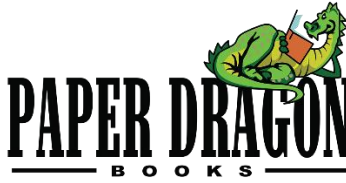
Materials: Writing and drawing supplies, project choice cards

Opening (10 min):

- Review: "What's the most important thing Herbert learned?"

Main Activity (35 min):

- Option A: Write the conversation between Herbert and Ms. Goat—what does he say? What does she say?
- Option B: Draw 3 panels showing Herbert's journey: (1) first gnome arrives, (2) too many gnomes, (3) Herbert speaks up
- Option C: Design your own "Politeness Medal" for a time YOU said something kind but honest
- Share work with a partner or the whole class



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Closing (5 min):

- Closing: "One thing I can say when I need to speak up kindly is ____"

Assessment: Creative expression, social-emotional synthesis, oral sharing

Differentiation

- **Advanced learners:** Write the story from the gnome's point of view, or create a longer conversation scene
 - **Students needing support:** Use "I feel ____ because ____" sentence frames; offer drawing as primary response throughout
 - **English Language Learners:** Pre-teach key vocabulary (polite, frustrated, honest); use picture cues and role-play
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Materials List

- Class set or big book of "No More Gnomes"
- Feelings anchor chart materials
- Gnome-counting chart (Day 2)
- Role-play scenario cards and feelings sentence frames (Day 3)
- Politeness Medal template (Day 5)
- Drawing and writing supplies