



Dragons Can't Spell

Lesson Plans Aligned to the Alberta Program of Studies

Lesson #: 1

Grade Level: 1

Lesson Title: Comprehension Questions & Talking about Anxiety

Subject: English Language Arts

Expected Length: Approximately 45-70 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will orally answer comprehension questions related to “Dragons Can’t Spell”
2. Students will begin to think about anxiety and how it affects their thoughts and bodies
3. Students will begin to think about the strategies they can use to overcome anxiety

Materials Needed:

- “Dragons Can’t Spell” picture book
- Chart paper or board to write on
- Assessment Check Sheet (See Appendix 1)
- Venn Diagram (See Appendix 2)

Specific Outcome Statements

1

- 1.1 share personal experiences that are clearly related to oral, print and other media texts
- 1.2 listen and respond appropriately to experiences and feelings shared by others

2

- 2.1 (a) use knowledge of context, pictures, letters, words, sentences, predictable patterns and rhymes in a variety of oral, print and other media texts to construct and confirm meaning
- 2.1 (b) use knowledge of print, pictures, book covers and title pages to construct and confirm meaning
- 2.3 tell what characters do or what happens to them in a variety of oral, print and other media texts

3

- 3.4 answer questions directly related to texts

4

- 4.3 be attentive and show interest during listening or viewing activities

5

- 5.1 share personal experiences and family traditions related to oral, print and other media texts

Introduction (Before You Read “Dragons Can’t Spell”):

Approx. Time Needed (5-10 minutes)

1. Before you begin reading the story, ask the students a variety of questions that are related to the story’s themes and ideas. These introductory questions will help the students to connect prior knowledge to the plot points and character dilemma. Here are some ideas of questions you can ask:
 - *Have you ever had a silly dream?*
 - *Have you ever had a bad dream (nightmare)? How did you feel after you woke up?*
 - *Have you ever felt nervous about doing something new? How did those nervous feelings finally go away? (If the students are having trouble thinking of new experiences, give the example of starting grade 1).*

Reading the Story: Comprehension Questions

Approx. Time Needed (15-20 minutes)

2. As you begin reading through “Dragons Can’t Spell”, keep the students engaged and thinking by asking open-ended questions. Here are some ideas of questions you can ask:
 - *Why was Jimmy having a nightmare? What was his nightmare about?*
 - *How would you feel if you had forgotten how to spell your own name?*
 - *What do you think of Jimmy’s plan? Can it succeed?*
 - *Why doesn’t Jimmy want to go to school?*
 - *Where is Fire Breath going as he’s walking down the sidewalk?*
 - *How do you think Fire Breath is feeling as he’s walking to school?*
 - *How do you think Fire Breath is feeling as he’s looking up at the school?*
 - *How do you think Fire Breath is feeling as he’s sitting in Jimmy’s seat? What clues are given to show you how he feels?*
 - *What do you think the word “anxious” means?*
 - *What do you think is going to happen when Jimmy says “oh no”?*
 - *What happened after the burp?*
 - *What made Jimmy decide to go to the spelling bee after all?*
 - *Where is Jimmy going as he’s running?*
 - *What prize does Jimmy win? Why is he giving it to Fire Breath? Is it okay that Jimmy didn’t win 1st place?*
 - *How do you think Jimmy was able to overcome his anxious feelings?*

**Depending on the energy levels of your students in this moment, you may want to complete the next portion of the lesson at their desks. However, if they are still sitting and paying attention, feel free to complete it as a whole group activity.*

Discussion on Anxiety & Venn Diagram:

Approx. Time Needed (20 minutes as a whole group activity or 30 minutes individually)

3. After reading “Dragons Can’t Spell”, begin the anxiety-talk by asking this question, or other open-ended questions:
 - Feeling anxious is like feeling nervous. *What kinds of things make you feel anxious or nervous?* (Keep in mind that sometimes we feel anxious but we don’t know why, and people feel anxious for many different reasons). If the students are having trouble coming up with situational ideas that bring about anxiousness, steer them back in the right direction with a few of these examples: you might feel anxious if you can’t find your mom or dad in the grocery store, or you might feel anxious if you’ve lost your dog or cat. You might also feel anxious if you had homework, but you forgot to complete it.
4. Discuss the feelings of anxiousness: Ask:
 - *What does your body feel like when you’re feeling anxious?*
 - *Can you think of a time you were anxious and your body started to feel different?*
5. Explain that Jimmy and Fire Breath both felt anxious, but they felt anxiety in different ways. For this next question, feel free to display their answers in a large Venn diagram (as a whole group activity) comparing the two different reactions (refer to the chart below). You can also hand out a small Venn-Diagram to each student, if you want the students to complete it individually.
 - *Ask: How does Jimmy’s body show anxiety, and how does Jimmy imagine Fire Breath’s body showing anxiety? Do they react differently?*
 - As you’re having this discussion, and filling in the Venn Diagram, explain that people feel anxiety in many ways, and it might look different to everyone.

How the Characters Reacted to Anxiety

Jimmy's Reactions	Same Reactions	Fire Breath's Reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woke up worried • Had nightmares • Wanted to avoid the spelling bee, and thought of excuses • Forgetfulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His stomach started to gurgle • His mouth felt dry • He was sweating • He felt gassy and needed to burp

How Can we Reduce Anxiety?

Approx. Time Needed: 5-10 minutes

6. Students will brainstorm ways to help reduce anxiety. Write down their answers on chart paper, or on the whiteboard, so they can refer to them during the next lesson. Here are some questions to help get the conversation started:
 - Jimmy went to the spelling bee even though he was feeling nervous. He was able to defeat his anxious feelings. *How was he able to overcome, or defeat, his anxious feelings and go to the spelling bee after all?* This concept can be quite tricky for such young students. If they are having trouble coming up with ideas as to how Jimmy was able to overcome anxiety, here are some ideas to get the students thinking:
 - Jimmy had practiced for the spelling bee and he didn't want all that practicing to go to waste.
 - Jimmy didn't want the spelling bee to be ruined, because deep down, he knew he could do it. He just needed to be brave.
 - *How can you overcome anxious feelings when you're feeling like Jimmy? How can you help yourself feel better?*

Assessment: Check Sheet

**Check Sheet Tips: Obviously you can't be in two places at once, so if it's just you in the classroom, and you need someone to check whether the students are engaging with questions and personal experiences, record your story time with a video camera and play it back later. If you have a teaching partner or educational assistant, he/she could complete the Check Sheet recording.*

Assessment Check Sheet

Choose 1-3 specific outcomes (from the outcome chart on the first page of this lesson) that you'd like to assess. Write the outcome number on the left-hand side and the student names in the diagonal boxes. Then assess away!



Dragons Can't Spell

Lesson Plans Aligned to the Alberta Program of Studies

Lesson #: 2

Grade Level: 1

Lesson Title: How Can We Overcome Anxiety?

Subject: Health & Life Skills

Expected Length: Approximately 40-55 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will orally answer comprehension questions related to “Dragons Can’t Spell”
2. Students will begin to think about anxiety and how it affects our thoughts and bodies
3. Students will begin to think about (and use) strategies to reduce anxiety

Materials Needed:

- Chart Paper or Whiteboard
- Access to a Smartboard or Projector
- YouTube Video: Jessica's "Daily Affirmation"
- Draw & Identify Page or Draw & Write Page (Appendix 3 & 4)

Specific Outcome Statements

W

- 1.1 describe the health benefits of physical activity

R

- 1.1 recognize and demonstrate various ways to express feelings; e.g., verbal and nonverbal
- 1.2 identify physiological responses to feelings; e.g., being sad can make you tired
- 1.3 identify positive and negative feelings associated with stress/change

Introduction – Review & Recap:

Approx. Time Needed (10-15 minutes)

1. Pick a student to begin a retelling of “Dragons Can’t Spell”. Then pick more students to continue the recap until the full story has been retold.
2. Ask: *Does anyone remember what it means to feel anxiety?* Feel free to remind the students that anxiety is very much like nervousness, but you might feel more things happening inside your body, and it might last longer than feelings of nervousness.
3. Ask: *Can anyone give an example of a time you felt anxious?*
4. Review the various ways you can reduce anxiety (discussion from Lesson 1).
 - Ask: *How did Jimmy and Fire Breath react to anxiety? What things happened inside their bodies?*

Practicing Ways to Reduce Anxiety:

Approx. Time Needed (15-20 minutes)

5. Now you will get the students to try out some anxiety-reducing methods. Explain that all these methods help you to feel better when you’re feeling anxious.
 - Before you practice these methods, add them to the list of ways we can reduce anxiety.
 - Have the students stand up and find a space all their own. Have them extend their arms, and if they aren’t touching anyone else, then they have enough space.

To defeat anxiety, you can:

6. **Stretch!** Practice a few stretches:
 - Reach your hands to the ceiling, and then slowly wave your arms from side to side as if you’re a tree blowing in the wind.
 - Touch your toes and hold your position for 5 seconds.
 - Lie down on your back and extend your limbs as far as they can stretch.
7. **Dance!** Dancing helps your body feel great!
 - Play a fun song for the students and have them dance in their own ways.
8. **Breathe Deep!** Practice deep breathing exercises with the students:
 - 1 large breath in through the nose, and then slowly let it out through the mouth. Do this 3 times.
9. **Think Positively!** Thinking positive thoughts about yourself and what you can accomplish will help you feel great! Being positive and kind to yourself is very important to your health.

- You can tell yourself: I'm brave! I can do it! I'm smart!
- Play this amazing YouTube video: Jessica's "Daily Affirmation" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR3rK0kZFkg>)

10. **Talk it Out!** When you're feeling anxious you can talk to someone about your feelings. For example, you can talk to your parents or a teacher – or even a stuffed animal! Talking to someone always helps!

- Spend a few minutes discussing how the students feel now that they've had the chance to be physically active and practice these methods. They may feel more energized and less anxious.

Choose Your Next Activity – Journal Pages:

Approx. Time Needed (15-20 minutes)

- Have your students choose which activity they would like to complete independently, or if you have the time, allow them to complete both. Have the students go back to their desks to complete the next portion of the lesson.

Draw & Identify Page (Appendix 2):

Option: Use this page for weak/struggling writers.

Have the students draw a picture of themselves from head to toe and then circle the areas on their bodies that start to feel different when they feel nervous or anxious. They will also have the chance to complete the writing prompt: When I'm feeling anxious or nervous, I can do these things to help me feel better... (They should be able to mention 1-2 of the strategies that were practiced.)

Draw & Write (Journal Page) (Appendix 3):

Option: Use this page for your stronger writers.

Hand out the journal page and explain the prompts. Students will have the opportunity to draw a picture of their favourite stuffed animal or toy, and write a response to this prompt: How could your stuffed animal help you feel better when you're feeling anxious or nervous?

Assessment:

Use the Draw & Identify page and the Draw & Write page to determine whether your students understand 1-2 methods that can help them express feelings of anxiousness. Use the accompanying assessment Check Sheet.



Dragons Can't Spell

Lesson Plans Aligned to the Alberta Program of Studies

Lesson #: 3

Grade Level: 1

Lesson Title: Puppet Play: How Can We Overcome Anxiety?

Subject: English Language Arts

Expected Length: Approximately 45-70 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will think about how they can apply the strategies they learned in the previous lesson to overcome anxiety
2. Students will present their ideas in front of others in the form of a puppet play

Materials Needed:

- Popsicle Sticks
- Glue or Tape/Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Jimmy and Fire Breath cut-outs (Appendix 5)

Specific Outcome Statements

4

- 4.3 (a) present ideas and information to a familiar audience, and respond to questions
- 4.3 (c) speak in a clear voice, with appropriate volume, to an audience
- 4.3 (e) be attentive and show interest during listening or viewing activities

5

- 5.2 (a) work in partnerships and groups

Introduction – Review:

Approx. Time Needed (5-10 minutes)

1. Remind students that in the previous lesson they learned about many different ways that they can overcome or defeat anxiety. Ask your students if they can remember any of those strategies.
2. Go over each strategy that you wrote down on chart paper or the white board.

Modeling the Next Portion of the Lesson:

Approx. Time Needed (10-15 minutes)

3. The students are going to get the chance to make their own puppets and puppet show (read below). However, before they can be set loose to tackle this project, it would be wise to go over what's expected of a presenter and a listener.
4. As listeners, explain that they should be using their whole body to listen to the speaker or presenter. If you have a whole-body listening poster, refer to it now. If not, explain what each of these body parts should be doing when they are listening with their whole body: eyes (should be looking at the presenter), ears (should be listening to what is being said), mouth (should be quiet), hands (should be folded in their laps or not fidgeting), feet (should be still), and brain (should be thinking about what the presenter is saying).
5. Explain that when you are the speaker or presenter, you need to speak clearly and at a good volume so that everyone can hear you. Model this by speaking too loudly, too softly, and with too much of a mumble. Your students will know, and point out, right away that you're doing something incorrectly!
6. Explain what their task will be. (see below)
7. If you feel it's needed, model what a puppet play might look like.

Puppet Play:

Approx. Time Needed (30-45 minutes)

8. The students will now create Jimmy and Fire Breath puppets out of the cut-outs available with this lesson (Appendix 4). Give them approximately 15 minutes to colour them and cut them out. Then, have them glue (or tape) Popsicle sticks to the back of the characters.
9. Give the students this prompt:
 - *Jimmy is feeling too anxious to go to his third-grade spelling bee. It's up to Fire Breath to give Jimmy some great advice to help Jimmy get to school.*

- Their task is to create a short skit (using their puppets) to show how Fire Breath might help Jimmy get to school. They should be using the strategies on the chart paper to help them come up with a skit.
 - If your students are strong writers, have them write down their character's lines. If not, have them orally practice their skit a few times before presenting.
10. Give the Students an opportunity to present their puppet play to another group, or to the whole class, depending on time.

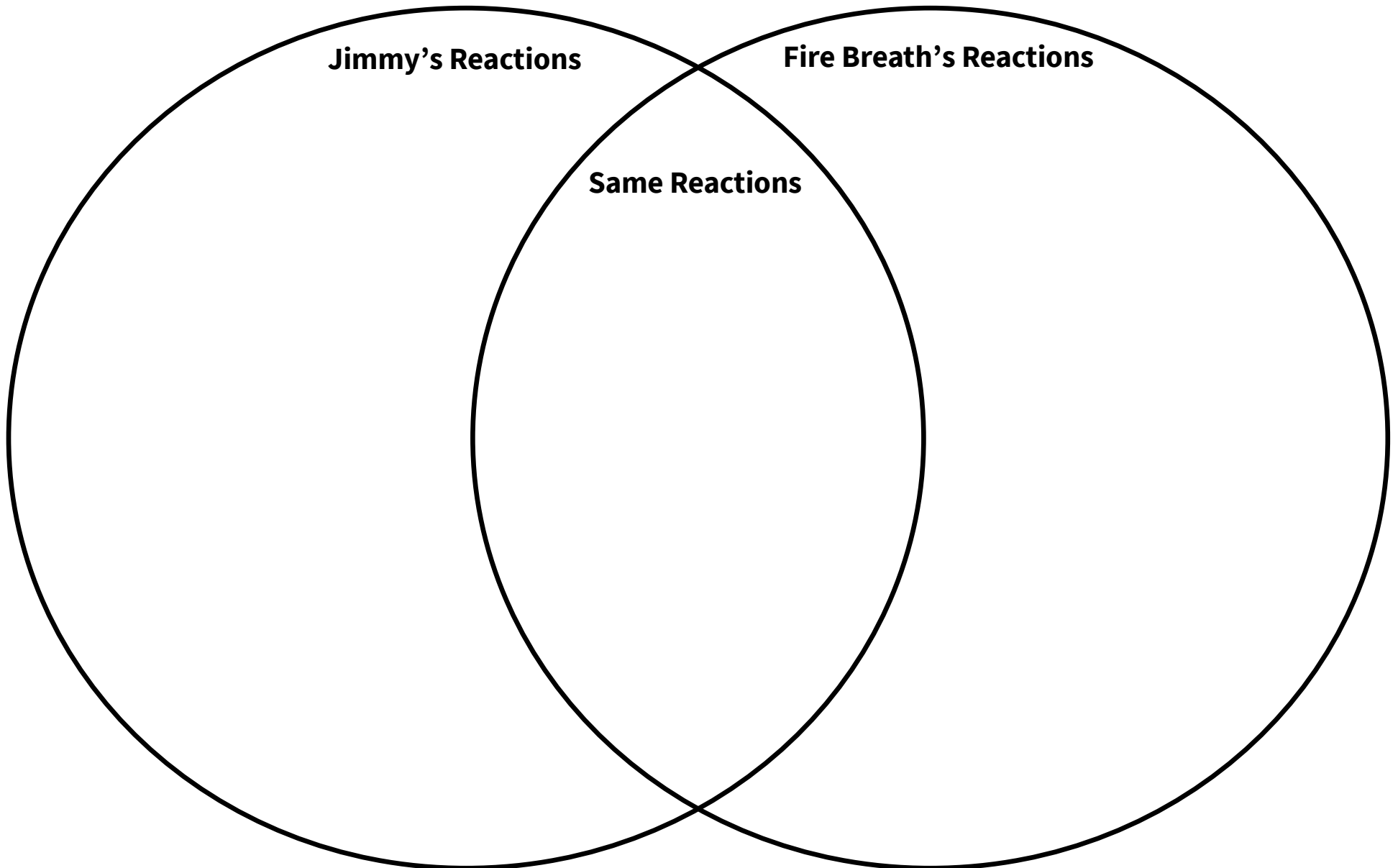
Assessment:

11. As you're walking around, listening to the various puppet plays, assess whether the students are beginning to understand that there are many strategies we can use to help our minds and bodies feel better. Students should be able to give the Jimmy-puppet at least one piece of good advice to help him get to school.
12. Pick 1-3 of the specific program of studies outcomes listed at the beginning of this lesson and use the assessment Check Sheet (Appendix 1) to assess those outcomes. For example, you may want to assess whether your students can speak in a clear voice, with appropriate volume.

Name:

Date:

How do the Characters React to Anxious Feelings?

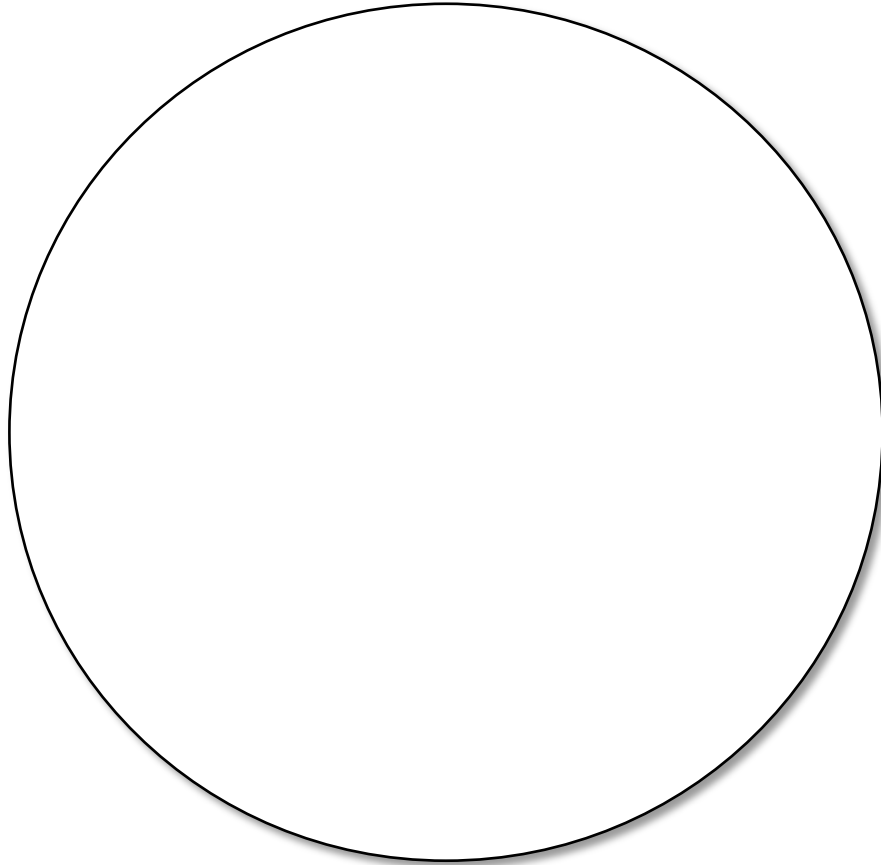


Name:

Date:

Draw & Identify

Draw a picture of yourself from head to toe. Then, circle the parts of your body that start to feel different when you feel nervous or anxious.



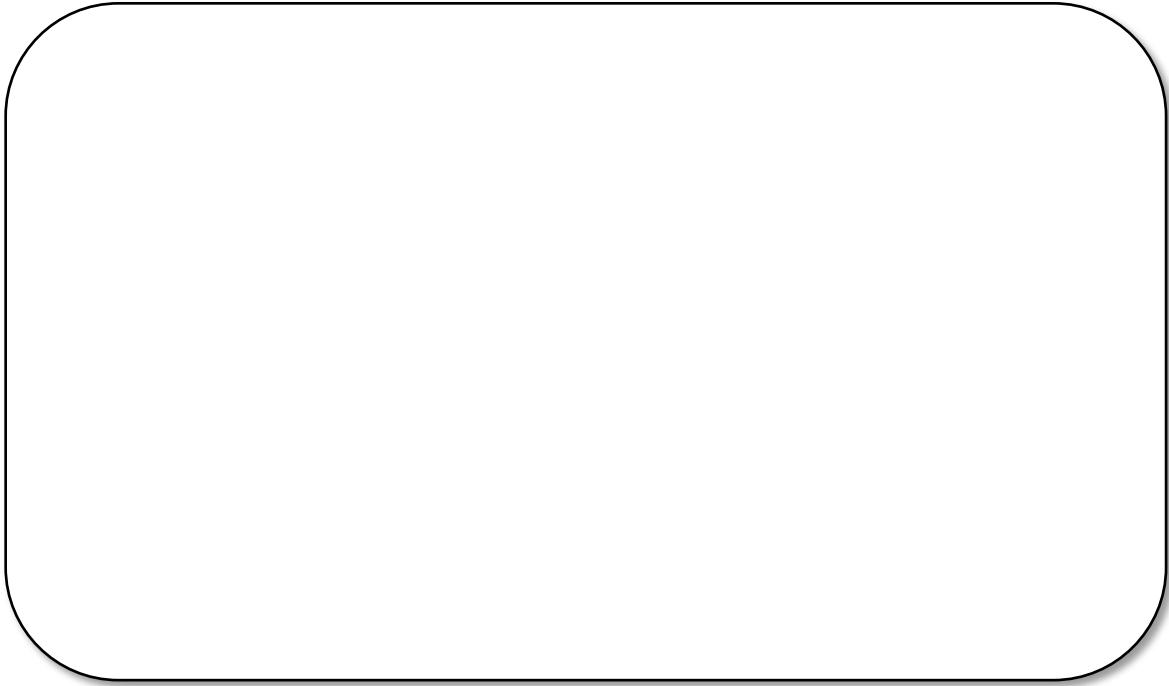
When I'm feeling nervous or anxious, I can do these things to help me feel better:

Name:

Date:

Draw & Write

Draw a picture of your favourite stuffed animal or toy.



How could your stuffed animal or toy help you feel better when you're feeling anxious or nervous?

Jimmy & Fire Breath Cut-outs for Puppet Play

