

A Peanuts Gang Anniversary Celebration

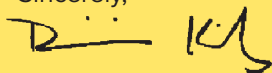
Dear Educator,

It was 55 years ago when the Peanuts comic strip introduced its first African American character, Franklin Armstrong. As Peanuts fans soon learned, Franklin is a good student who loves science, music, and sports, especially baseball, swimming, and hockey. And like the other kids in the Peanuts Gang, Franklin is always ready to lend a helping hand.

To celebrate Franklin's 55th anniversary, Peanuts Worldwide and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired have created three easy-to-implement, standards-based classroom activities that focus on Franklin's character and personality to help generate discussion and self-reflection about the importance of friendship and finding our special talents. While learning more about Franklin, students also learn more about themselves.

We hope that you and your students will join our celebration of Franklin's 55th year as part of the Peanuts Gang and that you will share this program with other grade 3-6 teachers at your school. Please let us know your opinion of the program by visiting [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-peanuts-franklin](https://www.yomiclassroom.com/feedback-peanuts-franklin). We look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

Program Objectives

- Inspire discussion about how each person's unique talents can strengthen the bonds of friendship as seen in the adventures of Franklin and his Peanuts Gang friends
- Support language arts and STEAM skills

Target Audience

Students in grades 3-6

How to Use This Program

Download, photocopy, and distribute the three reproducible activity sheets to all students. Students will need pencils, crayons, or markers to complete the activity sheets.

Activity 1 Meet Franklin!

In this activity, students use math to learn that Franklin is celebrating his 55th anniversary as part of the Peanuts Gang, then use language arts skills to learn about Franklin's personality and drawing skills to create their own cartoon celebrating Franklin.

Start by distributing the activity sheet and asking students if they recognize the character shown at the top (Franklin Armstrong). Allow students to share what they may know about Franklin, then have them read the introductory paragraph to learn more. Students then use information from the paragraph to complete Parts 1 and 2 of the activity.

For Part 1, students solve a math problem to learn that Franklin is celebrating his

55th anniversary of his first appearance in Peanuts. In Part 2, they unscramble words to complete sentences describing Franklin.
Answers: 1. smart; 2. baseball; 3. supportive; 4. Marcie, Peppermint Patty.

Before beginning Part 3, tell students that Franklin is not only a famous comic strip character; he's also the inspiration for The Armstrong Project, created by Peanuts Worldwide to foster scholarship, mentorship, and possible internship opportunities for students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities interested in animation and



entertainment. How are Franklin and the project connected? When Charles Schulz, the creator of Peanuts, needed to give Franklin a last name, he asked his friend Robb Armstrong if it would be okay to call him Franklin Armstrong. Robb Armstrong is an African American cartoonist who got his start with help from Charles Schulz. Robb admired Charles Schulz and learned from him. Now Robb is helping art students at Howard University and Hampton University develop their talents with scholarships from The Armstrong Project, funded by Peanuts Worldwide.

Part 3 of the activity offers students a chance to explore their own artistic talents. Have them use the back of the activity sheet or a separate sheet of paper to draw a Peanuts cartoon or comic strip celebrating Franklin's anniversary.

Activity 2 Franklin Makes a New Friend

In this activity, students discuss one of Franklin's first appearances in Peanuts and use the situation to share their thoughts on friendship.

Start by explaining to students that Franklin first appeared in Peanuts when he met Charlie Brown at the beach. Soon, he befriended the rest of the children and became an invaluable member of the Peanuts Gang! Prompt students to imagine what it might have felt like when Franklin had to meet new people and make new friends. Ask: *Have you ever had to make new friends in a place where you don't know anyone? How about your first day at school or joining a new team? How did you feel? And how did you feel after you started making friends?* Help students recognize that meeting new people and making new friends can be fun.

Distribute the activity sheet and have students read the comic strip or read it together. Use the questions below the strip to start a class discussion about the process of making friends. (*What do you say? What do you do? How do you find interests and experiences to share?*) Use question 4 to have students suggest techniques for striking up a friendship with someone new.

Conclude this discussion by having students complete Part 2, which asks them to write a paragraph about the importance of friendship, what it takes to be a good friend, and what they like doing with their friends. Ask students to share their paragraphs with the class. **Answers** will vary.

As a follow-up activity, have students work in small groups or with partners to role-play their ideas for striking up a friendship. Give each team a scenario to work with — for example:

- You're taking a new bus to school and don't recognize anyone on the bus.
- You are on vacation with your family and see a group of kids playing a game that looks fun.

- You are at after-school until your mom can pick you up. You hear some kids you don't know talking about your favorite TV show.

If students need a push, remind them that just saying, "Hello, my name is ____" and adding, "I'm new here. What's fun to do here?" can help break the ice.

Activity 3 Toon into Your Talents!

In this activity, students use another of Franklin's Peanuts adventures to explore their talents and write a short story about using their talents to realize a dream.

Introduce the activity by reminding students that we're all different — we have different color hair, we like different books and games, and we have different talents, too. Distribute the activity sheet and read the comic strip in Part 1. Next, use the questions below the strip to have students think about what makes Marcie and Franklin special. Discuss their responses.

Explain that just like Marcie and Franklin, everyone has their own special set of skills and strengths that they contribute to their families, friends, and community. When Franklin was introduced in Peanuts, he brought with him empathy for his friends Peppermint Patty and Marcie at school, a knack for baseball and hockey, funny stories about his grandpa, and a kind attitude. After Franklin arrived, the Peanuts Gang benefited from Franklin's strengths, skills, and talents, and still does today.

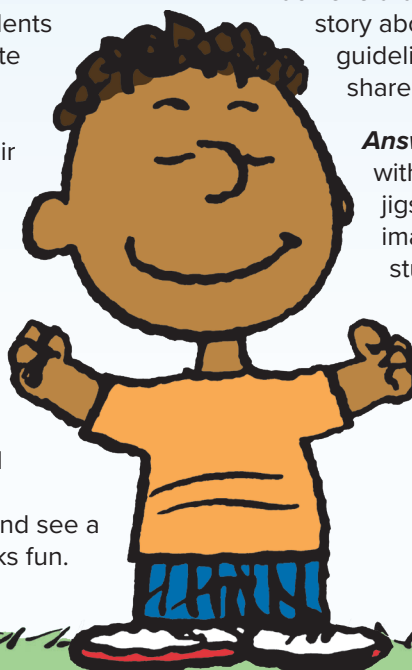
Ask students: *What are your unique interests and strengths that you contribute to your community?* Encourage students to find the range of interests and strengths that they have.

For Part 2, continue this discussion by having students talk with a partner about things they are good at and enjoy. Review the directions and have students make a list of their talents on the back of the activity sheet or on a separate sheet of paper. Ask them to choose two talents from their list and brainstorm how those two talents could help them achieve a big dream. Allow time for students to write a story about how they achieved their dream, using the guidelines on the activity sheet, then invite students to share their stories with the class.

Answers: Part 1: 1. Marcie is analytical and good with numbers and symbols. 2. Franklin likes jigsaw puzzles and music, and he has a good imagination. 3. Answers will vary. Encourage students to see that when people in a group have different interests and strengths, they can support each other and learn from each other. Part 2: Answers will vary.

Resources

peanuts.com
peanuts.com/the-armstrong-project
ymiclassroom.com/peanuts-franklin



Meet Franklin!

Franklin Armstrong has been part of the Peanuts Gang since 1968, when he first appeared in the comic strip Peanuts by Charles Schulz. Franklin is a busy kid. He's classmates with Peppermint Patty and Marcie, plays baseball on Peppermint Patty's team, and is learning guitar. He's also a member of a swim club and of 4H. But Franklin is never too busy to help his friends. He is supportive, smart, and always willing to lend a hand. And even though he sometimes thinks his Peanuts friends are a little weird, he's happy to be part of the Gang.

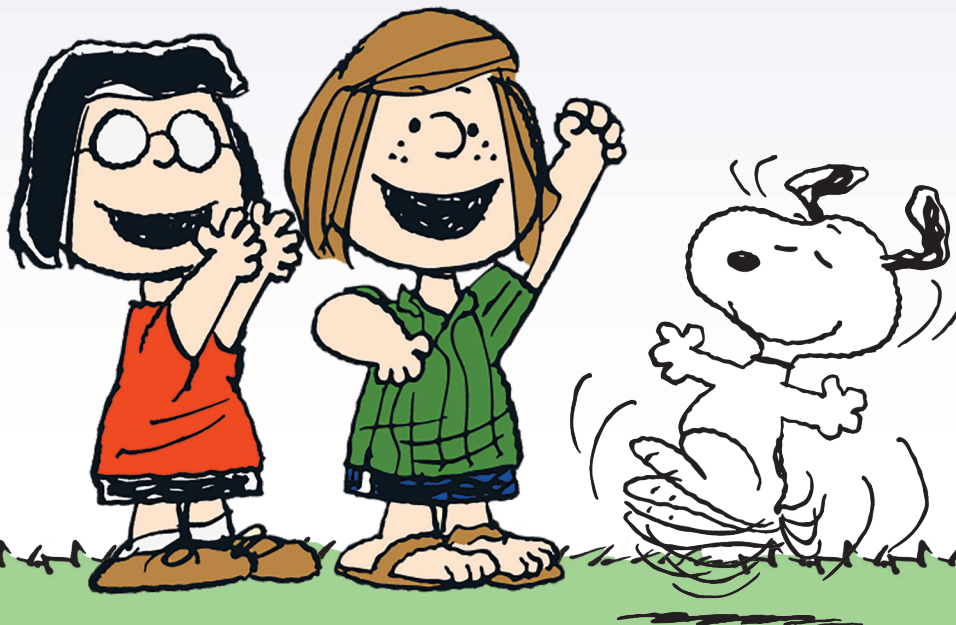


Part 1: How many years has Franklin been a part of the Peanuts Gang? Use what you've learned about Franklin to solve this equation and find out.

$$2023 - \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad} \underline{\quad} \text{ years}$$

Part 2: Now use what you've learned about Franklin to unscramble each bold word to complete the sentences below.

- Franklin is a **marst** _____ student and member of the 4H club.
- Franklin is also an athlete who plays **llabaseb** _____.
- Franklin is a **ppusetoriv** _____ friend who helps out the rest of the Gang.
- Franklin is classmates with **cieMar** _____ and **pernitmpeP** _____ Patty.



Part 3: On a separate sheet of paper, create a cartoon or comic strip that celebrates Franklin's anniversary as part of the Peanuts Gang. Try to show everyone playing a part in the celebration.

To learn more about all the members of the Peanuts Gang, visit peanuts.com/about-peanuts.

Franklin Makes a New Friend

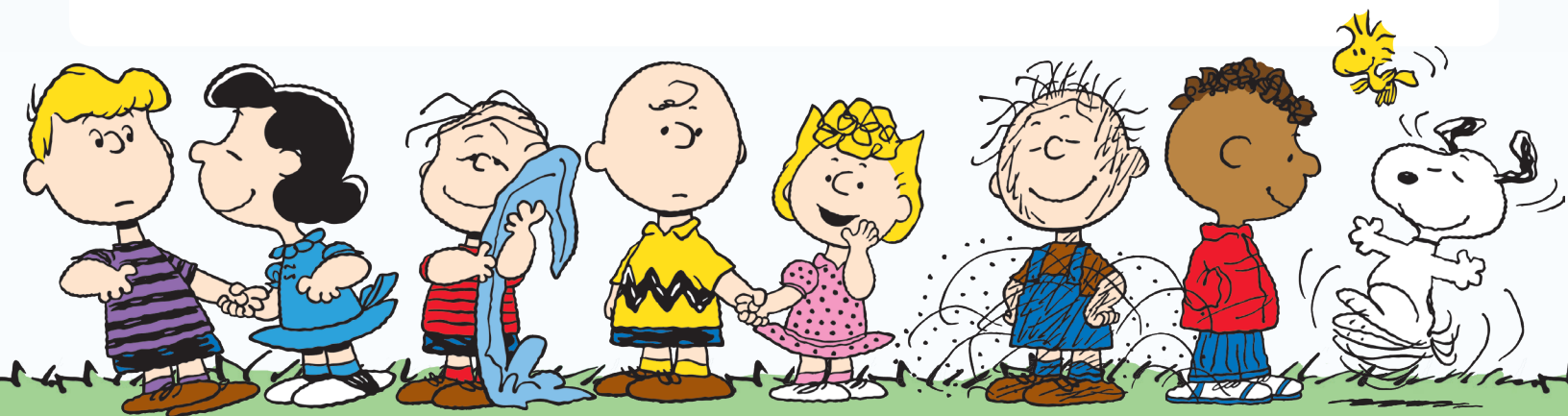
Though it can be difficult at times, making new friends can also be fun! It's important to meet new people. Franklin made a lot of new friends after his first appearance in the comic strip *Peanuts* when he met Charlie Brown.

Part 1: Learn how Franklin and Linus met for the first time in the comic strip below. Then answer the questions in a class discussion.



1. Why do you think Franklin and Linus became friends?
2. What was the initial step they took to become friends?
3. Do you think that it is easy or difficult to take the first step to meet a new friend?
4. Using Franklin and Linus as an example, what are some things you can do to start a conversation with someone to try to become friends?

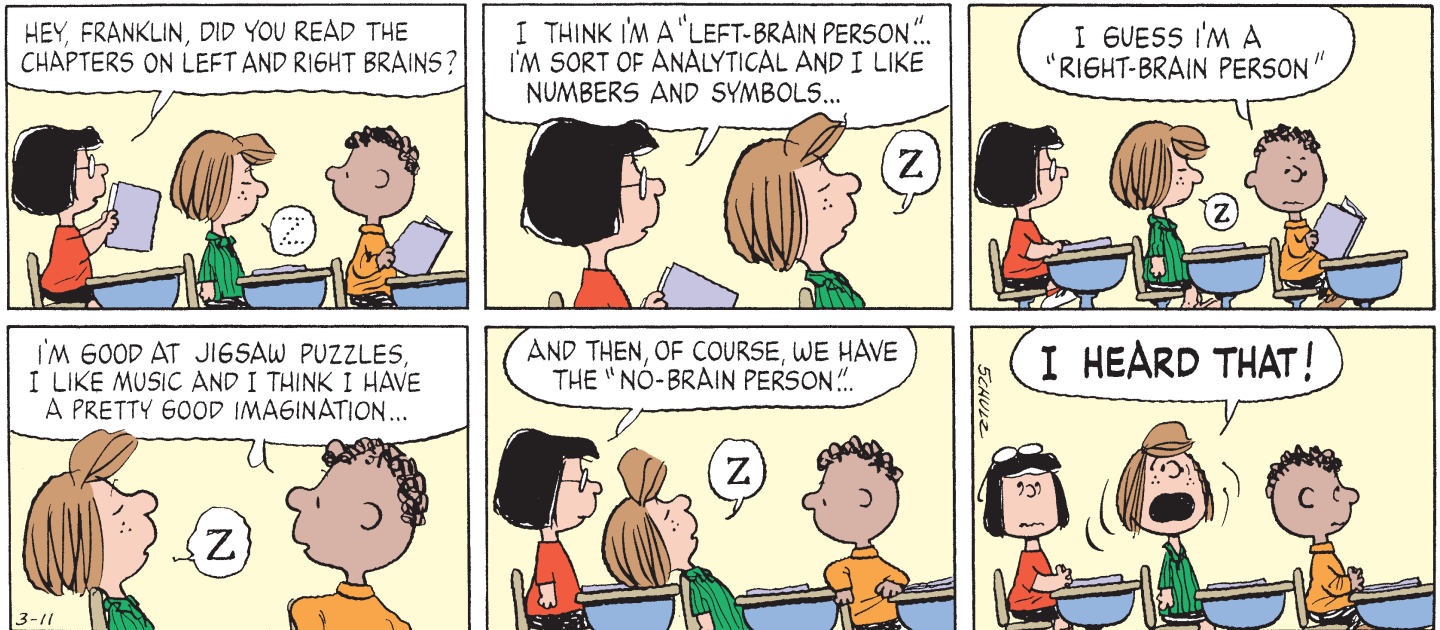
Part 2: What are the qualities of a good friend? What are your favorite things to do with your friends? In the space below, write a paragraph about the importance of friendship. Explain what it takes to be a good friend, and what you like doing with your friends.



Toon into Your Talents!

A talent is something you are good at doing. It could be a special skill. Everyone has different talents. Let's find out what talents you have!

Part 1: Read the comic strip below in which Franklin and Marcie compare things they are good at. Then answer the questions below.



1. What is Marcie's talent? What can she do well? _____
2. What is Franklin's talent? What can he do well? _____
3. How can having friends with different talents and skills benefit the group? _____

Part 2: On the back of this sheet, make a list of all the things you're good at. Then, think about where these talents can take you. How can you use your talents to accomplish your biggest dream?

Choose two talents from your list and write a story in which you use those talents to do something you've always wanted to do. Make sure your story:

- Has a beginning, middle, and end
- Shows you using your talents to accomplish a dream

