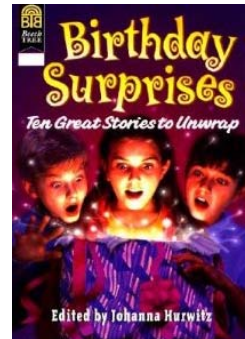


# Boxes of Hope and Inspiration

## Teacher Information

**Overview:** Students will read an inspirational story called “Hattie’s Birthday Box” and will create boxes of hope for their classmates. The story can be found in some basal readers, but it’s also available in the anthology, Birthday Surprises: Ten Great Stories to Unwrap. This lesson description assumes that you will grade the project, but you can use it as a non-graded activity as well.

**Suggested Time Frame:** Allow several weeks for the completion of the project; exact times will vary depending on class time devoted to the project.



### Introducing the Activity

#### 1. Read “Hattie’s Birthday Box”

Read and discuss the story, “Hattie’s Birthday Box.” Tell students they will be creating their own boxes of hope and inspiration for each other. If you can’t locate this story, you can introduce the project by telling students that with a special project you have planned for them, they’ll discover that sometimes the best gifts don’t cost a penny.

#### 2. Distribute Information Letters

Give out the Boxes of Hope information letter (page 3). Discuss each part of the letter with your students and have them take it home to get it signed. Explain what is meant by an “appropriate” box. They can bring in a shoe box or something of similar size. If students have an extra box, ask students to bring it in to share with a student who can’t find a box. Collect the boxes as they arrive and store them in your classroom.

#### 3. Complete Surveys

Distribute the student surveys (page 4) and allow plenty of time for students to complete them. Collect their surveys, fold them in half, and place them into a large box.

#### 4. Draw for Box Buddy Names

Ask each student to draw out a survey without looking. When everyone has a paper, allow them to peek at the name of their Secret Box Buddy. Give out the Boxes of Hope and Inspiration Contracts slips (page 5) and have them write their buddy’s name on the slip. Collect the contracts and keep them for your own records.

### Creating the Gifts and Boxes

#### Getting Started

While you are waiting for the letters to be signed, students can begin observing their Box Buddies and working on the gifts. If you plan to grade the project, review the rubric with them so they will know what is expected. This part of the activity will take a week or more because you need to allow at least one day per gift. Since these activities involve reading and writing, they can be integrated into your regular literacy instruction. Monitor student progress on the items and use the checklist (page 6) to make sure each student stays on track. Begin gathering materials for students to use when creating their gifts, such as craft items, special paper, coloring materials, etc.

#### 1. Write 5 Genuine Compliments

ask students to start making notes about the compliments they will write. Discuss the types of compliments that would be appropriate. Students should look at their Box Buddy’s survey to see areas that might work for compliments. They can write their compliments on the Five

# Boxes of Hope and Inspiration

## More Teacher Info

Terrific Things About You printable (page 7), or they can write them on individual slips of paper. They might even choose to create a folded greeting card and write the compliments on the card.



### 2. Write Poems or Short Stories

Have students look at their surveys to help them think of a poem or short story they could write. Students can write acrostic poems if they have trouble coming up with other ideas.

### 3. Write Letters of Encouragement or Inspiration

Once again, have students look at the surveys to get ideas. They should write their encouraging letters about items of importance to their buddies. For example, students might give encouragement about their buddy's future career or an area they are trying to improve.

### 4. Draw Illustrations

Refer to the surveys for ideas for drawing creative illustrations. Students might want to do a collage of pictures of their buddy's favorite things, draw one illustration with a caption, or draw a funny cartoon strip.

### 5. Make Gifts

Students can make their items at home, but you'll want to provide class time and materials for those who can't do them outside of class. If students do them at home, make sure they know that the items must be homemade and not store bought.

## Project Wrap-Up

### 1. Checking Projects

Make sure the due date is several days before the sharing day so you have time to check and/or grade the projects. Some students may need to redo portions of their project. It's important that each student has a gift to wrap and share. Use the rubric on page 8 to score the projects.

### 2. Wrapping Gifts

Ask parents to send in rolls of gift wrap, tape, and bows before the wrapping day. In most cases, you'll need to demonstrate how to wrap a gift. Students have trouble figuring out how much paper they will need and knowing how to fold and tape the ends. Have students secretly place their gifts inside the boxes and tape them shut before the wrapping process begins to be sure that others don't see what's inside. It may be helpful to let students work with a partner as they wrap their gifts so that they assist each other.

### 3. Sharing the Gifts

If your class plans a holiday party, this is a perfect time to share the gifts. Have students gather in a circle, with each student taking a turn in the middle. The student in the middle announces the name of his or her buddy and presents that student with each gift and the box.

This activity was developed by Nathania Vanderham of Phoenix, Arizona, and was adapted and formatted by Laura Candler. Boxes of Hope and Inspiration is available on the Seasonal page at Teaching Resources, [www.lauracandler.com](http://www.lauracandler.com). You may email Nathania at [Nathania.Vanderham@dvusd.org](mailto:Nathania.Vanderham@dvusd.org) if you have questions or comments about her activity.

# Boxes of Hope and Inspiration

After reading the touching story, “Hattie’s Birthday Box”, we will now create our own Boxes of Hope and Inspiration! Each student will create one Box of Hope and Inspiration for a classmate. You will draw names for this special project. Once you have drawn the name of your Secret Box Buddy, you can begin! For the next couple weeks, you are to quietly and secretly observe that person. Look for some things about them that may inspire you to write about.

Your assignment is to include following items in your box :

- 5 compliments
- 1 original poem or short story
- 1 letter of encouragement or inspiration
- 1 creative illustration
- 1 handmade gift



Please bring a box for this activity by the due date shown below. Class time will be provided for working on this project, but you can also work on it at home or in your free time. Because class time will be given, this project will be graded. Please look at the rubric to see what is expected for each part of the project.

Remember to stay positive and put forth the quality and effort that you would want from someone else! Be sure to either type the items or write them neatly.

During the week before we leave for break, we will all get together and share our boxes of hope and inspiration! That is when you will reveal your box to your Secret Box Buddy! It is a great way for us to say goodbye for the holidays!

## Attention Parents!

Please read over the above assignment with your child. Make sure that the both of you understand this assignment and if there are any questions, feel free to ask. Then sign below so I know you are aware of this project. I will simply check it off and return this paper back to your child.

Bring box by: \_\_\_\_\_ Project Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Boxes of Hope Survey



First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out the following information so that your box buddy can personalize it just for you! Give as much information as possible and feel free to add anything else you would like to them to know! Feel free to write on the back or another sheet of paper if you would like.

1. Name your favorite:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Hobby: _____          | g. Animal: _____         |
| b. Sport/Activity: _____ | h. Food: _____           |
| c. Car/Vehicle: _____    | i. Dessert/Treat: _____  |
| d. Color: _____          | j. Music: _____          |
| e. Movie: _____          | k. School subject: _____ |
| f. T.V. Show: _____      | l. Book: _____           |

2. Do you collect anything? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you want to be when you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you have any brother or sisters? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are your special talents? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your dream vacation? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is something about yourself that you would like to change or improve?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How would your mom or dad describe you? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How would you describe your personality? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What else would you like your box buddy to know about you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Boxes of Hope and Inspiration Contract

For “The Box of Hope” activity, I am giving my box to \_\_\_\_\_.  
I promise to keep this name a secret from my friends. I can tell my family at home, but do not want to spoil the surprise for my secret person. I will put all the effort into my special box, just as I would want someone to do for me.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



<i>Boxes of Hope and Inspiration Project Checklist</i>	Box Provided	Five Genuine Compliments	Poem or Short Story	Letter of Encouragement	Illustration	Handmade Gift	Project Completed
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
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22.							
23.							
24.							
25.							
26.							
27.							
28.							
29.							
30.							

# Five Terrific Things About You

The worksheet is a large rectangle divided into four quadrants by a vertical line and a horizontal line. The quadrants are labeled with bold numbers: 1 (top-left), 2 (top-right), 3 (bottom-left), and 4 (bottom-right). In the center, a diamond shape is formed by the intersection of the lines, labeled with a bold number 5. At the top center, there is a horizontal rectangular box that overlaps the top edge of the main rectangle.

# Boxes of Hope Scoring Rubric

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Project Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

Category	20	15	10	5	Points Earned
<b>5 Specific Compliments</b>	The five genuine compliments have no distracting errors, corrections, or erasures and are easily read. It appears the student spent a lot of effort composing the compliments.	The five compliments have almost no distracting errors, corrections, or erasures and are easily read. It appears the student worked hard on them.	The five compliments are fairly readable but the quality is poor in some parts. It appears that the student ran out of time or didn't put much thought into the compliments.	The compliments are messy, hard to read, and not very specific. It appears that the student composed them at the last minute without much care.	
<b>Poem or Short Story</b>	There are no spelling errors or grammatical errors in the poem or story, and the content is written in an engaging and interesting manner.	There are some spelling errors or grammatical errors in the poem or story, The content is somewhat engaging or interesting.	There are many spelling errors or grammatical errors in the poem or story, and/ or the content is not particularly engaging or interesting.	There are many spelling errors or grammatical errors in the poem or story, the content is weak, and the piece shows a lack of effort..	
<b>Letter of Encouragement or Inspiration</b>	There are no convention errors, and there are at least three paragraphs. The letter is encouraging or inspiring and was clearly written for the recipient.	There are some convention errors, and there are at least two paragraphs. The letter is encouraging or inspiring and seems to have been written for the recipient.	There are many convention errors, and/or the letter is too short. The letter is very general and is not particularly encouraging or inspiring.	Very little effort was put into this letter. It is neither encouraging nor inspiring.	
<b>Illustration</b>	Illustration was creative, little to no white was showing, a nice sized, white paper was used and it was very neatly done.	Illustration less creative, a lot of white was showing, a small sized, white paper was used and it could have been more neatly done.	Illustration was not creative, too much white was showing, paper was too small, lined paper was used and it was not neatly done.	There was no creativity, no color used, lined paper was used and it was done carelessly.	
<b>Hand-made gift</b>	It appears the student spent a lot of time and effort getting things just right. Specific details were included for the person receiving the box.	It appears the student worked hard on the gift, but specific details were not added for the person receiving the box.	It appears that the student ran out of time or didn't put much thought or effort into the gift.	Very little time, effort, or thought appears to have been put into the gift.	
<b>Total Points</b>					