

educational  
**TEACHING GUIDE**

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# NAMASTE IS A GREETING

## teaching guide

### ABOUT THE BOOK

What is namaste? It's found in a smile, a friendship, a celebration. It exists in silence; it can be said when you're happy or when you're feeling low. For one small girl in a bustling city, namaste ("I bow to you") is all around her as she and her mother navigate a busy marketplace—and when she returns with a little plant and chooses to give it to an elderly neighbor, it can be seen in the caring bond between them. In a sweet, universal text, debut author Suma Subramaniam shines a light on a word with significance far beyond yoga class, while artist Sandhya Prabhat makes the concept of mindfulness come alive in delightful illustrations likely to draw children in again and again.

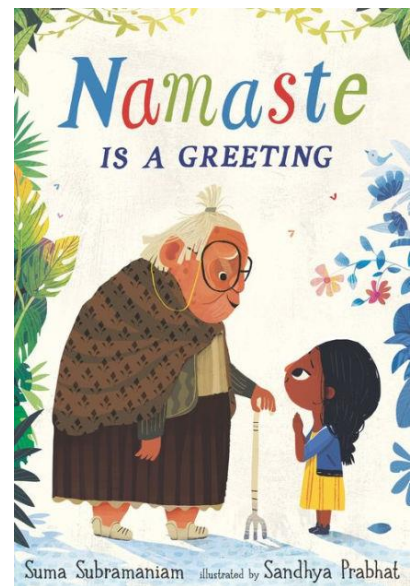
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### SUMA SUBRAMANIAM

Suma Subramaniam is an Indian American author and volunteer for We Need Diverse Books. She is a contributing author for *The Hero Next Door* (Penguin Random House) and the author of *Namaste Is A Greeting* (Candlewick). She has an MFA in Writing from Vermont College Of Fine Arts. *She Sang For India* is her nonfiction picture book debut.

AUTHOR – SUMA SUBRAMANIAM

ILLUSTRATOR – SANDHYA PRABHAT



### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading *Namaste is a Greeting* consider the following activities to engage your readers.

1. Take a picture walk of the story, flipping each page and pointing out the illustrations. Encourage students to predict what will happen in the story.
2. Host a class-wide discussion about the title. Why did the author choose that title? What might we be reading about?
3. Create a mind map to record what students already know about Namaste.



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PUBLISHER – CANDLEWICK PRESS

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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

*Namaste is a Greeting* teaches readers the many different meanings of namaste through an overarching themes of kindness and love. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.

## SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

### *mindfulness sort*

Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Namaste involves being mindful. In the story, we see the main character embrace mindfulness in many ways. This social-emotional activity allows students to better understand what it means to be mindful. This reflective exercise encourages students to use both speaking and listening skills to share with their classmates and friends.

## SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

### *empathy*

Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Empathy is a key piece in the puzzle that's Namaste. Take this metaphor a step further by inviting students to reflect on what empathy means to them by drawing different acts of empathy. The interactive puzzle pieces allow a perfect opportunity for students to share and discuss with classmates.

## WRITING

### *letter writing*

Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

We learn that Namaste is a greeting. No matter the language you speak, greetings are an essential part of life. Have students practice writing a letter to a friend or loved one with a warm greeting included. This activity includes differentiated writing paper for a range of students and learners.



# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

*Namaste is a Greeting* teaches readers the many different meanings of namaste through an overarching themes of kindness and love. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.

## WRITING

### acrostic poem

Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

In the story, we learn the many meanings of Namaste. In this writing activity, students will write about these different meanings, using each letter from the word NAMASTE. Students will enjoy this creative writing activity that allows them to think about a central concept from the story. Younger students may complete the acrostic poem with their teacher as a whole group.

## STEAM

### book page

Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Encourage students to flex their creative muscle with this super fun STEAM experience. Students will have the opportunity to design a new book page for the story. There are optional writing papers, differentiated for students in a range of grade levels. Students can then write about their creative new book page.

AUTHOR – SUMA SUBRAMANIAM

ILLUSTRATOR – SANDHYA PRABHAT

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## SOCIAL STUDIES

### namaste in different languages

Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Explore the many ways to say Namaste in different languages. Take things a step further by inviting students to research how to say Namaste in different languages (that aren't listed in the story). This cross-curricular activity encourages students to put their research, social studies, and language skills to the test.



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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

*Namaste is a Greeting* teaches readers the many different meanings of namaste through an overarching themes of kindness and love. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.



## ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS

### *heart of the story*

**Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
Students will explore the important message of the story with this activity. They'll use evidence from the text to support their thinking about what they believe the message is. The differentiated lines are appropriate for students in a range of grade levels.

## ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS

### *question flipbook*

**Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
Students will answer comprehension questions using a flipbook template to showcase new knowledge learned about Namaste.

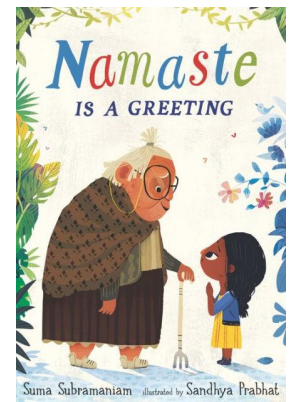
## ART

### *story bookmarks*

**Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
What better way to celebrate this fun new story than with an art project? Have students cut out bookmarks and color images from the story.

# SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY

## MINDFULNESS SORT



### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

### You will need:

- White or colored copy paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the MINDFULNESS SORT on white copy paper.
2. Using the examples from the story, discuss what it means to show mindfulness.
  - Mindfulness means paying full attention to something.. Being mindful is the opposite of rushing or multitasking. When you're mindful, you're taking your time. You're focusing in a relaxed, easy way.
3. Students should use the definition above and class discussions to help decide which sentences at the bottom of the page are examples of mindfulness.
4. Students will cut apart the sentences, read them, decide whether the sentence shows mindfulness or not, and glue the sentence in the appropriate column.
5. Encourage students to share with a partner, small group, or the entire class.
6. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group together.

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## MINDFULNESS SORT

Cut apart each sentence below. Read it and decide whether it's being mindful or not. Then, glue it in the correct column.

MINDFUL	NOT MINDFUL

Taking your time while working

Showing active listening skills.

Trying to finish multiple tasks all once.

Listening to how you feel.

Rushing through your work.

Ignoring how you feel.

Showing passive listening skills.

Understanding how others feel.

Focusing on one task at a time.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# MINDFULNESS SORT

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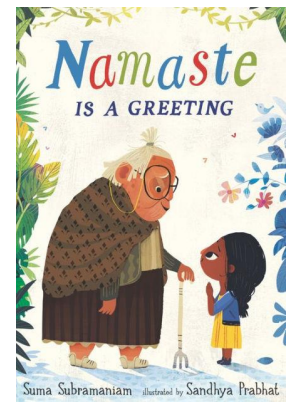
MINDFUL	NOT MINDFUL



Taking your time while working.	Listening to how you feel.	Showing passive listening skills.
Showing active listening skills.	Rushing through your work.	Understanding how others feel.
Trying to finish multiple tasks at once.	Ignoring how you feel.	Focusing on one task at a time.



# SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY



## EMPATHY PUZZLE

### Standards:

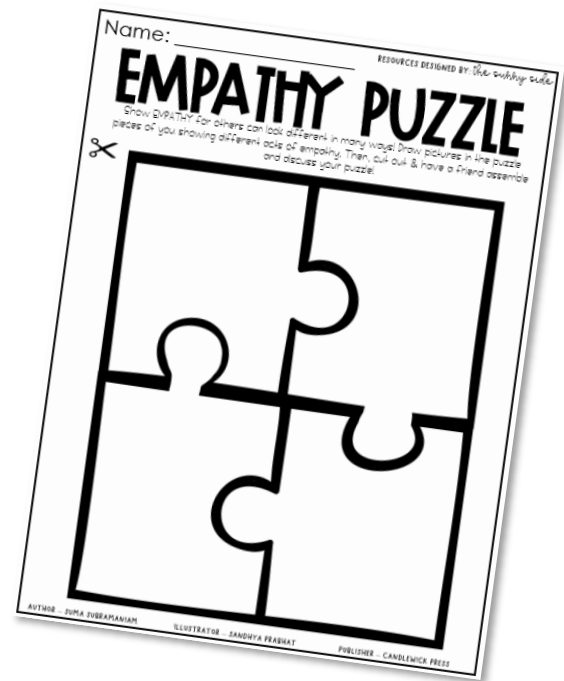
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)
- Scissors

### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the EMPATHY PUZZLE on white copy paper.
2. Discuss with students what it means to show empathy and relate that definition to the events of the story.
  - Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
3. Brainstorm a list of potential examples of empathy and record the list on the white board.
4. Encourage students to draw pictures of themselves show empathy on each puzzle piece (challenge them to come up with a different example for each puzzle piece).
5. After drawing and decorating with their favorite art supply, students should cut their puzzles apart and swap them with a partner.
6. Partnerships should discuss the acts of empathy after putting together each others' puzzles.
7. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity by having students draw pictures rather than write.

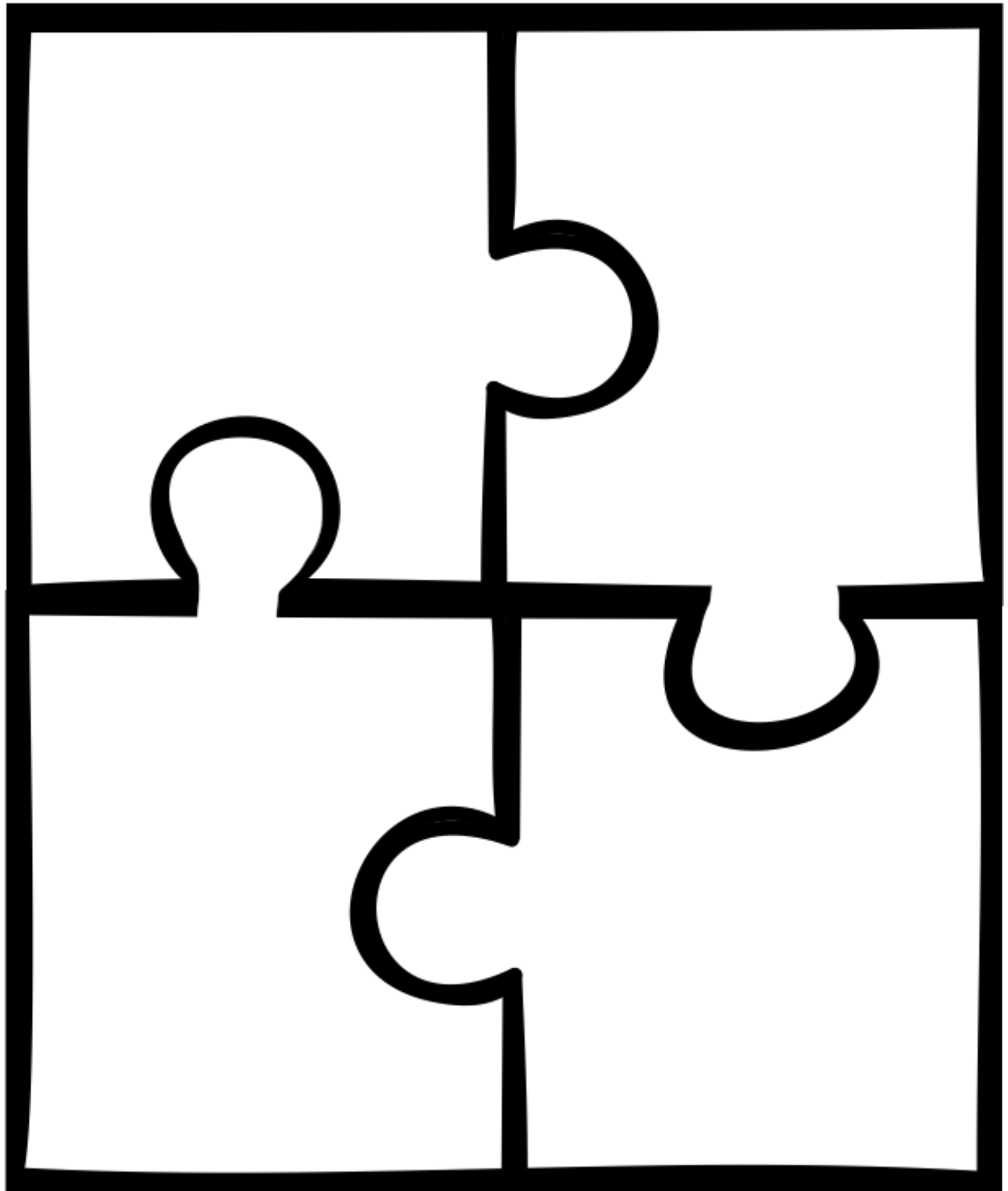


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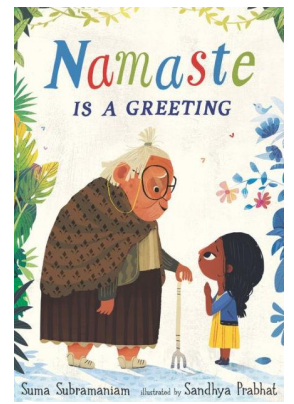
# EMPATHY PUZZLE

Show EMPATHY for others can look different in many ways! Draw pictures in the puzzle pieces of you showing different acts of empathy. Then, cut out & have a friend assemble and discuss your puzzle!



# WRITING ACTIVITY

## HELLO, FRIEND LETTERS



### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils



### Step by step to do list:

1. Decide which differentiated writing paper works best for your students and copy HELLO FRIEND letters on white paper.
2. Discuss with students how the phrase Namaste is a warm greeting.
3. Distribute the writing paper to students.
4. Encourage students to write a letter to a friend or family member, greeting them warmly.
5. In the sentences they write and questions they ask, challenge students to show empathy for the person they're writing to.
6. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group or by having students draw pictures rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# HELLO, FRIEND!



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# HELLO, FRIEND!

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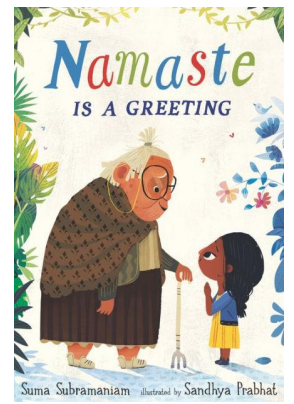
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# WRITING ACTIVITY

## ACROSTIC POEM

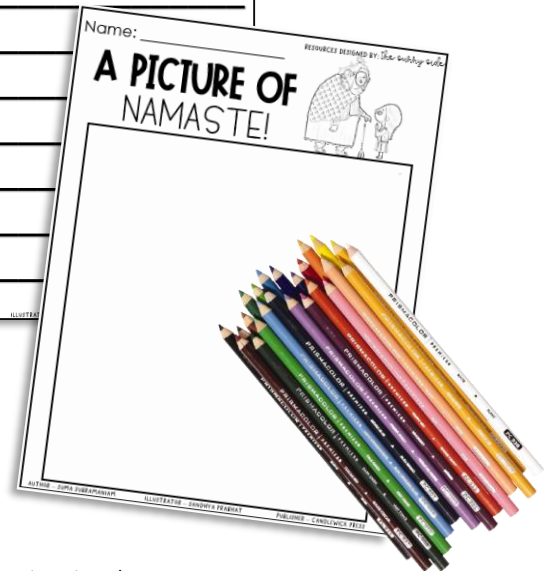
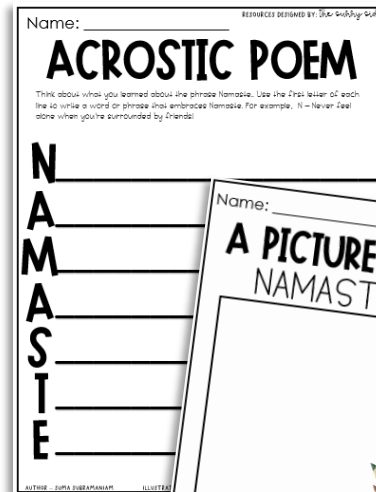


### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)
- Glue sticks
- Large colored construction paper



### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the ACROSTIC poem template on white copy paper.
2. Discuss with students what they learned about NAMASTE.
3. Brainstorm a list of potential words/phrases that students could use in their ACROSTIC poems and record them on the white-board.
4. Encourage students to capture how they can show Namaste by writing an ACROSTIC poem and drawing a picture to go along with the poem.
5. Remind students that an acrostic poem must use each letter in the word that's written vertically. The sentence or phrase should begin with each letter listed and should also relate to the topic.
6. After writing their acrostic poem and illustrating, they should glue both pages to a larger piece of construction paper (12x18).
7. Finally, have students share their poems with their classmates.
8. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity by having students draw pictures rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# ACROSTIC POEM

Think about what you learned about the phrase Namaste.. Use the first letter of each line to write a word or phrase that embraces Namaste. For example, N – Never feel alone when you're surrounded by friends!

**N** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**M** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**S** \_\_\_\_\_

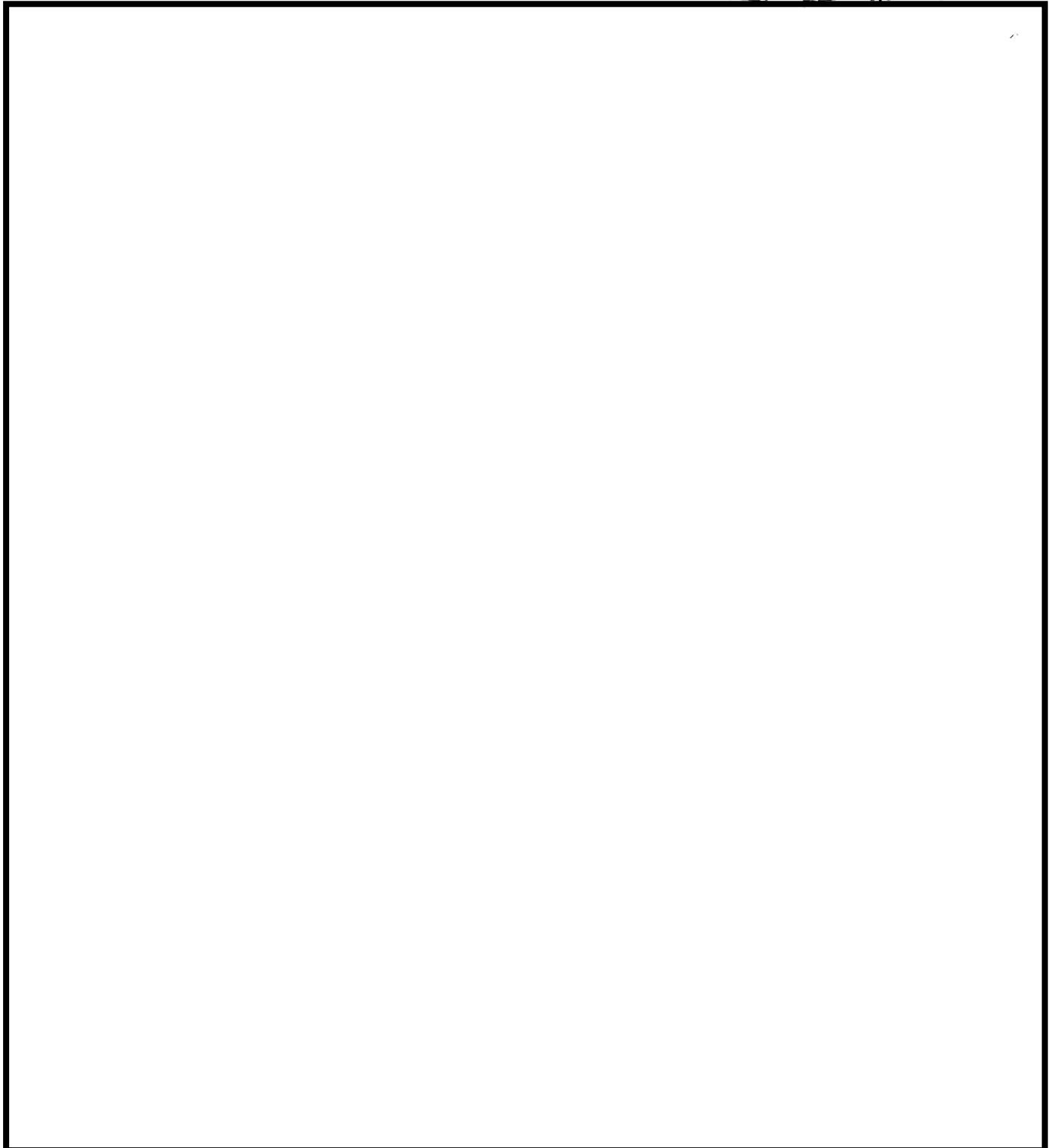
**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

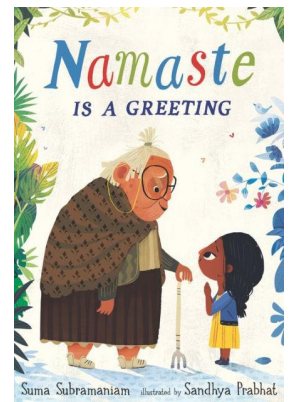
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# A PICTURE OF NAMASTE!



# STEAM ACTIVITY

## DESIGN A BOOK PAGE



### Standards:

- NGSS: 3-5-ETS1-1.
- NGSS: 3-5-ETS1-2.
- NGSS: 3-5-ETS1-3.

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)

### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the STEAM activity page on white copy paper
2. Explain that the goal today is to design a new book page to add to the book NAMASTE IS A GREETING.
3. Encourage students to capture the message of the story and the greeting with their design and illustration.
4. Distribute the STEAM page to students and allow them an opportunity to illustrate their book page.
5. Then, provide the differentiated lined paper for students to write about their book page, including what they decided to draw and why.
6. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group or by having students draw pictures rather than write.



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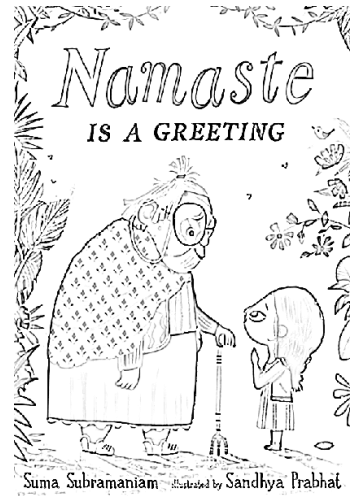


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# DESIGN A NEW BOOK PAGE!

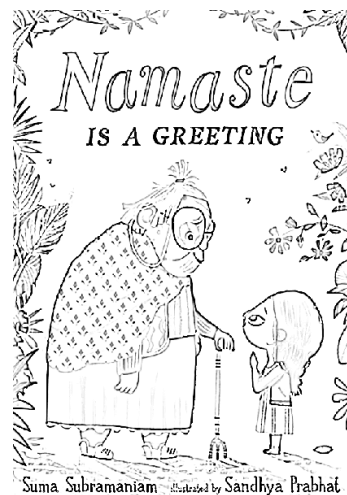
Illustrate the book page you'd add to NAMASTE IS A GREETING in the box below.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# DESIGN A NEW BOOK PAGE!

Use the lines below to describe the book page you designed and why you'd want to add it to the book.



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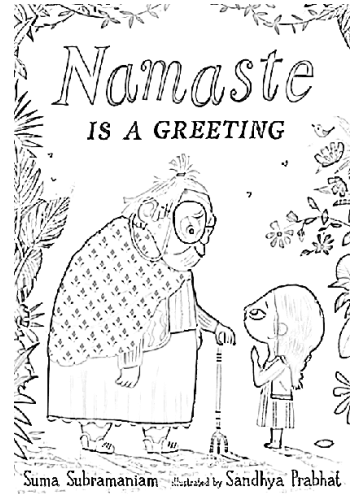
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# DESIGN A NEW BOOK PAGE!



Use the lines below to describe the book page you designed and why you'd want to add it to the book.

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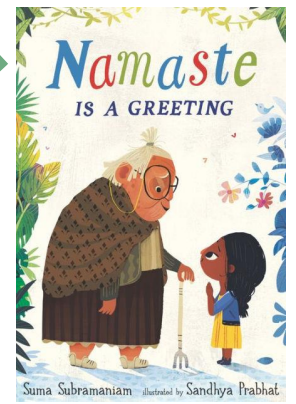


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# SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY

## NAMASTE IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

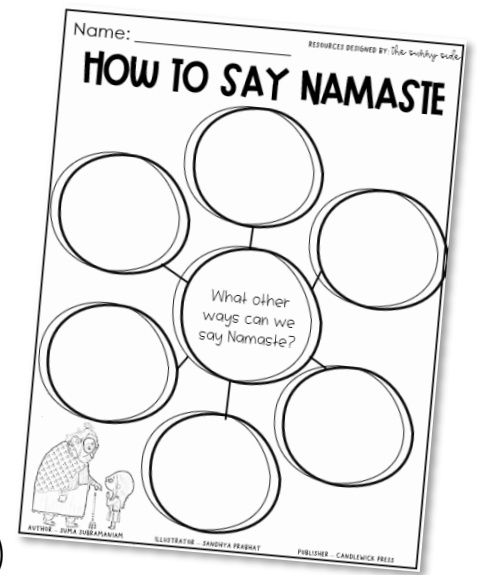


### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Access to technology (for research purposes)



### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the NAMASTE IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES graphic organizer on white copy paper.
2. Use the story (p.15 – 16) to review the other ways to say Namaste in different languages.
3. Students should write the different greetings in the mind map.
4. If time allows, complete a quick search to find greetings in other languages and record them on the back of the page.
5. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group together.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOURCES DESIGNED BY: *the sunny side*

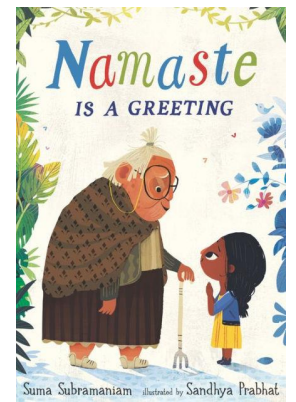
# HOW TO SAY NAMASTE

How can we  
say Namaste in  
different  
languages?



# ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY

## HEART OF THE STORY

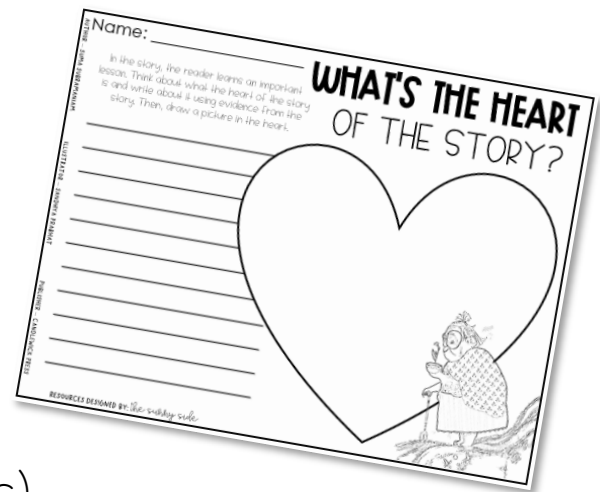


### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)



### Step by step to do list:

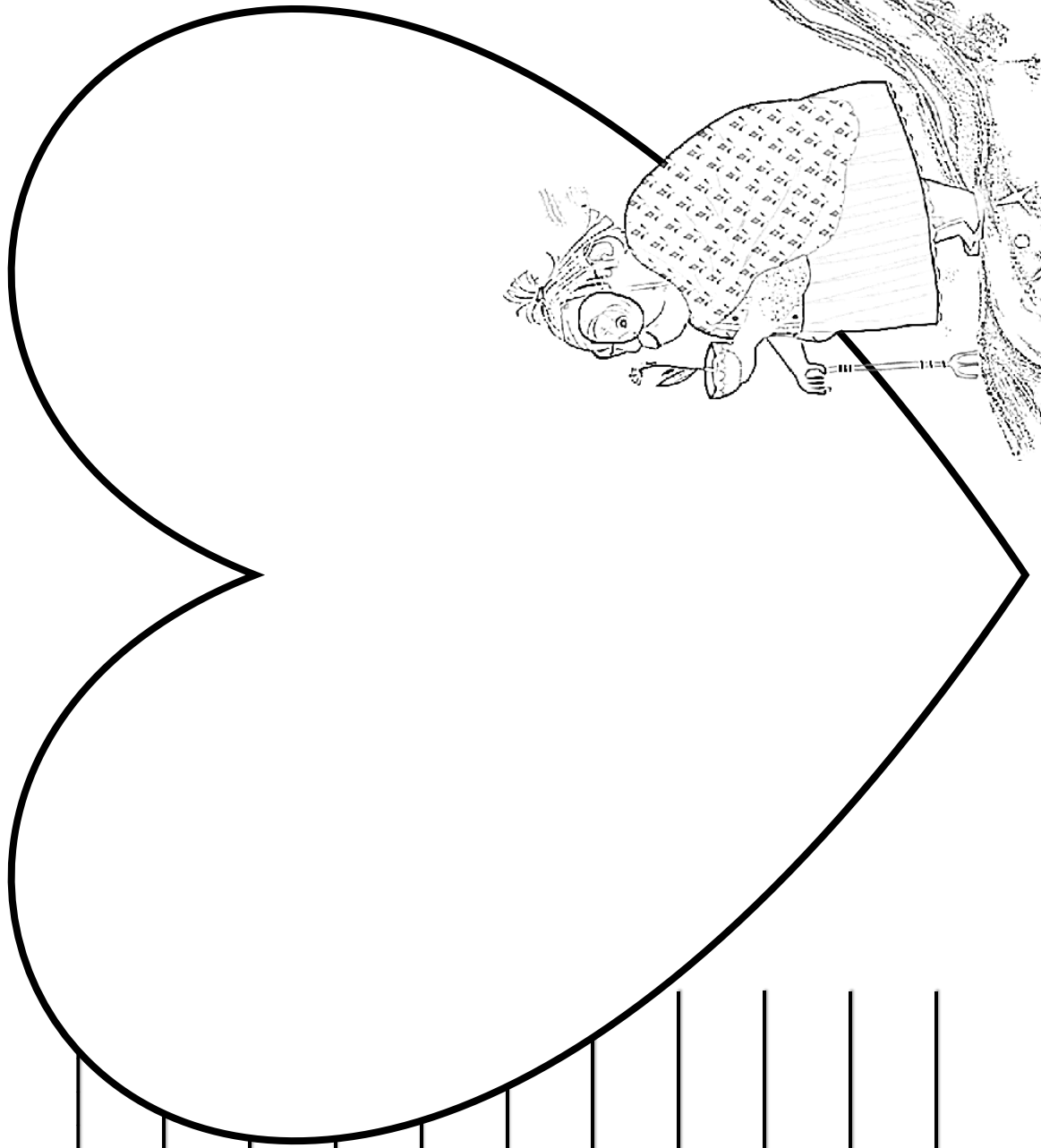
1. Decide which HEART OF THE STORY graphic organizers work best for your students and copy on white paper.
2. As a class discuss how finding the heart of a story is determining what the author hopes to teach you after having read. We can also think of the lesson.
3. Brainstorm the heart of the story using evidence from the text to support their thinking (e.g., if the heart of the story is all about friendship, then the evidence from the story should show how the author hopes to teach you a lesson in the importance of friendship).
4. Write the author's lesson on the lines and draw a picture to show the lesson in the heart.
5. Allow students an opportunity to share with other students in class.
6. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group together.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT'S THE HEART OF THE STORY?

In the story, the reader learns an important lesson. Think about what the heart of the story is and write about it using evidence from the story. Then, draw a picture in the heart.



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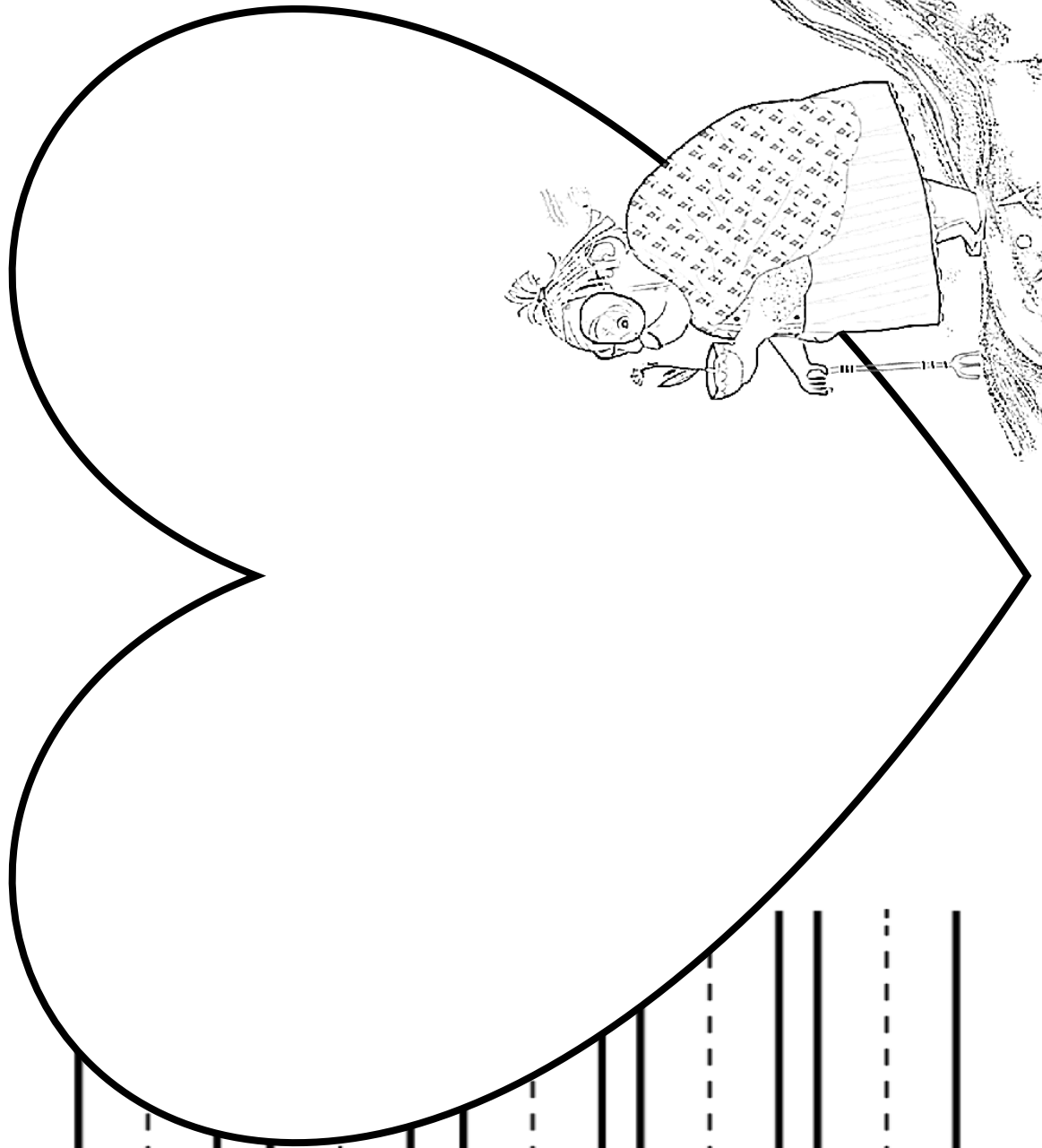
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT'S THE HEART OF THE STORY?

In the story, the reader learns an important lesson. Think about what the heart of the story is and write about it using evidence from the story. Then, draw a picture in the heart.



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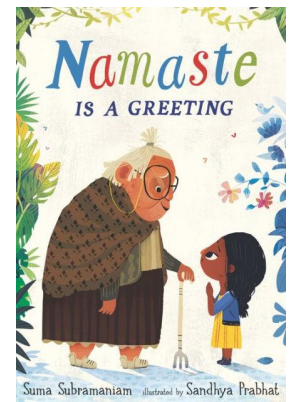
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# ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY

## NAMASTE FLIPBOOK



### Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

### You will need:

- White or colored copy paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)



### Step by step to do list:

1. Decide which differentiated flipbook pages work best for your students.
2. Copy the flipbook pieces on white or colored copy paper (copying the pages as a stapled packet works best).
3. Have students cut around the solid black lines of each flipbook page.
4. Discuss what students have learned about Namaste— what it is, when you should offer it, and other ways to say Namaste (see the answer key for specifics).
5. Students will write and respond to the above prompts on each flipbook page.
6. Have students stack the flipbook pages in order with the Namaste title page on top.
7. Staple (or if your students are old enough have them staple) the pages together at the top.
8. Students should cut apart and decorate the plant header.
9. Then, glue the plant template to the top of the flipbook.
10. After flipping through each step, you will read about what namaste means, when you should offer it, and other ways to say it.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

## Directions:

1. Gather the flipbook pieces.
2. Cut around the solid, black line.
3. Write about Namaste— what it is, when you should offer it, and other ways to say it.
4. Stack the flipbook pages in order with the Namaste title page on top.
5. Have your teacher staple the pages together at the top.
6. Cut apart and decorate the plant image header.
7. Then, glue the plant to the top of your flipbook.

GLUE PLANT HERE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# ALL ABOUT NAMASTE

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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

Blank handwriting practice lines (top section).

What is Namaste?

Blank handwriting practice lines (bottom section).

What is Namaste?

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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

What is Namaste?

What is Namaste?

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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

Blank writing area with four sets of horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for writing.

When can you offer it?

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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

When can you offer it?

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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

Blank writing area for the flipbook. The area is divided into six horizontal sections by solid lines. Each section contains a dashed line for handwriting practice. The text "Other ways to say Namaste" is written in a cursive font at the bottom of the page.

Other ways to say Namaste

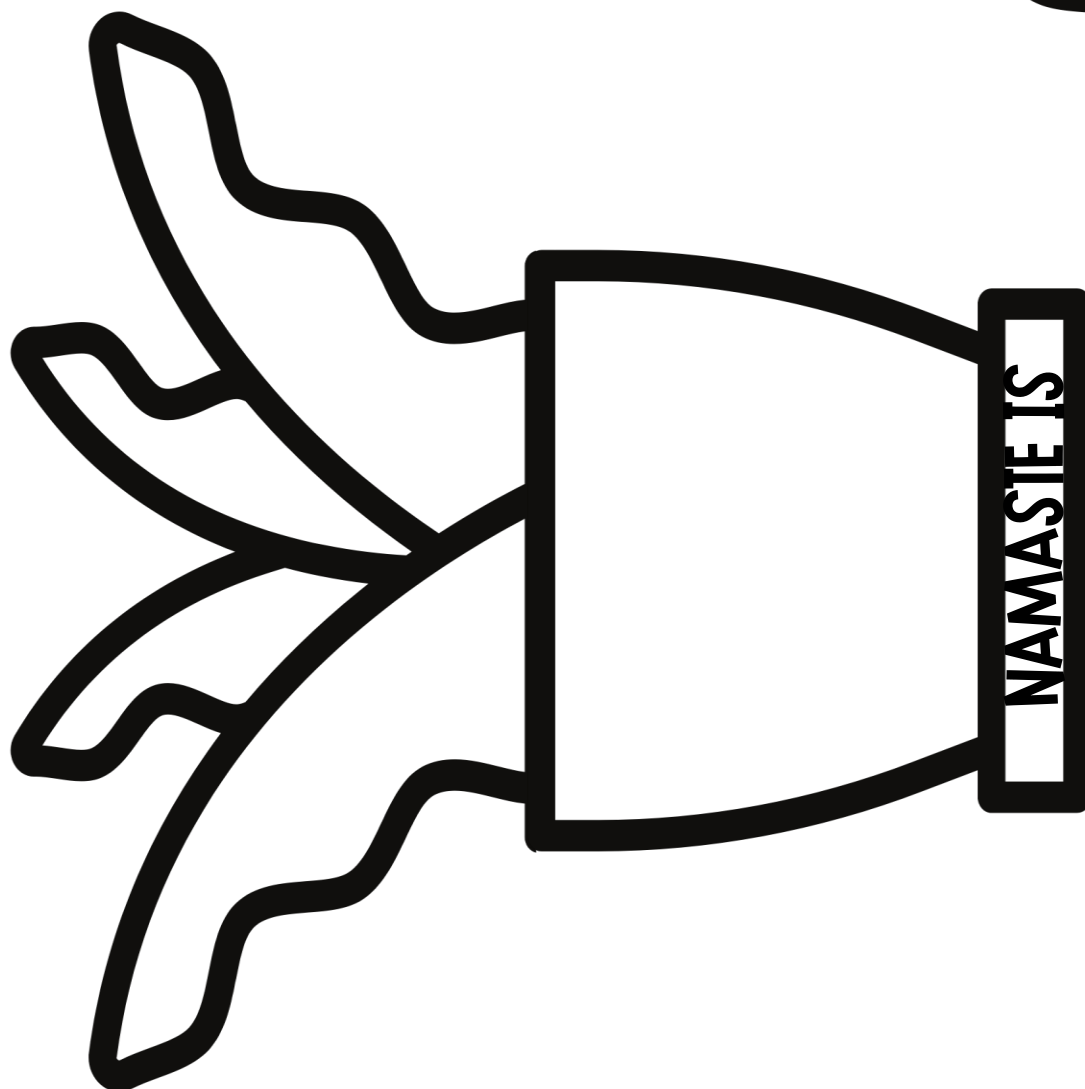
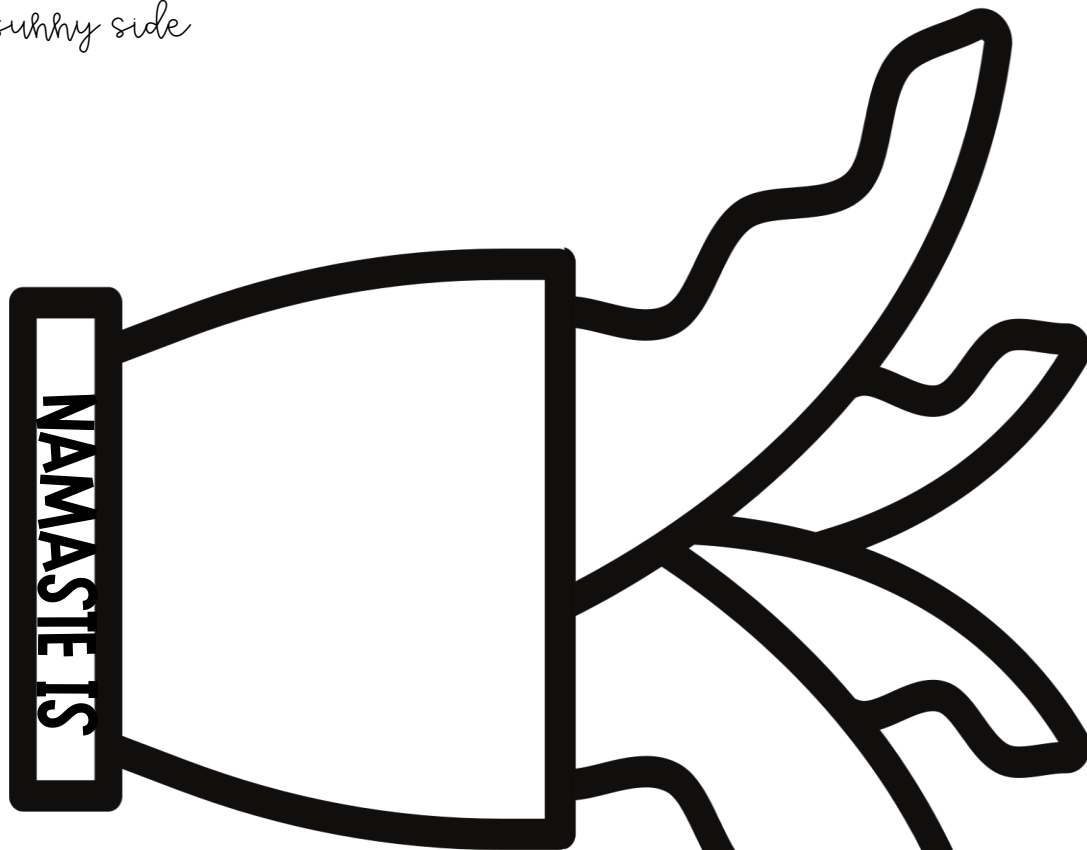
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# NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

Other ways to say Namaste

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Copy plant headers on white construction paper or copy paper. Students will cut apart and decorate. Then, glue it to the top of their flipbook.





# ANSWER KEY

## NAMASTE FLIPBOOK

Namaste is a greeting used in Indian culture. Its purpose is to spread peace and love.

What is Namaste?

When you meet someone or when you want to make a friend. You can offer Namaste to others to heal or comfort.

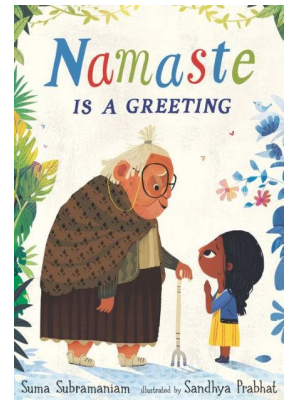
When can you offer it?

Other ways to say Namaste include Hello, Ciao, Bonjour, Aloha, among others.

Other ways to say Namaste

# ART ACTIVITY

## NAMASTE BOOKMARKS

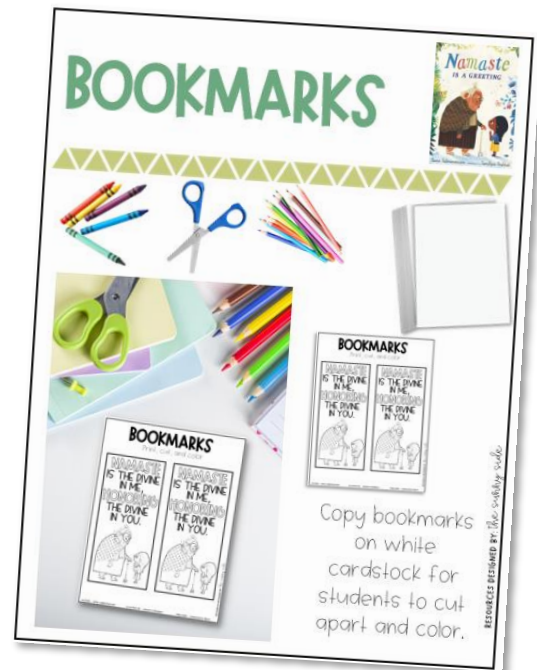


### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Crayons / colored pencils / markers
- Scissors
- White cardstock

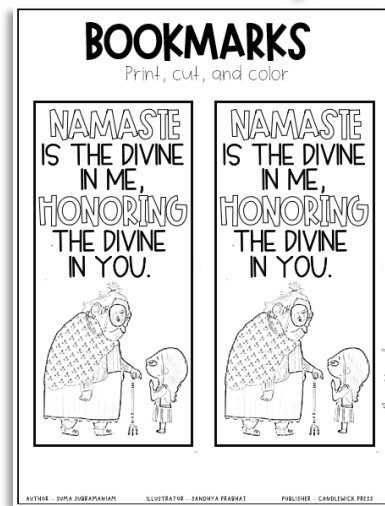
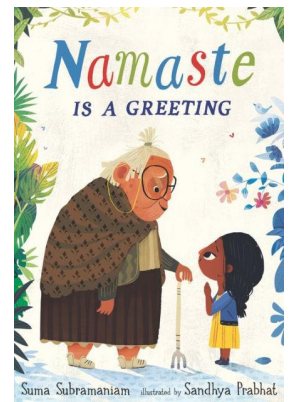


### Step by step to do list:

1. Copy the NAMASTE IS A GREETING BOOKMARKS on white cardstock for durability.
2. Have students use scissors to cut the bookmark out.
3. Then, using their desired art supply, students should color and decorate the bookmarks..

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# BOOKMARKS



Copy bookmarks  
on white  
cardstock for  
students to cut  
apart and color.

# BOOKMARKS

Print, cut, and color

NAMASTE  
IS THE DIVINE  
IN ME,  
HONORING  
THE DIVINE  
IN YOU.



NAMASTE  
IS THE DIVINE  
IN ME,  
HONORING  
THE DIVINE  
IN YOU.



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# CREDITS PAGE

## The author – Suma Subramaniam

Suma Subramaniam's interests and passions in writing for children are mostly centered around STEM/STEAM related topics as well as India and Indian heritage. When she's not recruiting or writing, she's volunteering for We Need Diverse Books and SCBWI. Suma was the short story contest winner of the We Need Diverse Books short story contest. She is also the author of *Namaste Is A Greeting*, *She Sang For India*, and other books for children and young adults. Suma lives in Seattle with my family and a dog who watches baking shows.

She has an MFA in Writing from Vermont College Of Fine Arts. Learn more at <https://sumasubramaniam.com>.



## CONNECT WITH SUMA



## The illustrator – Sandhya Prabhat

Sandhya Prabhat is an award-winning illustrator and animator whose books include *I Am Brown* by Ashok Banker, *Ignore the Trolls* by Jordan Gershowitz, *Usha* and *the Big Digger* by Amitha Jagannath Knight, and books in the *Om Child* series. Originally from Chennai, India, Sandhya Prabhat is now based in the Bay Area.



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