



Mendel Meets the New Boy

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities

Mendel Meets the New Boy

On Monday morning, a new boy walks into Mendel's classroom.

His name is Shlomo. He has thick glasses, a hearing aid behind one ear, and a little bounce in his walk. He carries a brown paper lunch bag, and he holds it close.

Rebbi Kaplan introduces him. "Boys, this is Shlomo. He's just moved from Montreal. Please make him feel welcome."

Mendel looks at Shlomo's hearing aid. He's never seen one up close. It is small and beige, and it curves like a tiny seahorse.

At recess, a few boys whisper. "What's that thing in his ear?" "Does he talk funny?" "Why's he wearing such thick glasses?"

Mendel feels a funny feeling in his stomach. He is curious, too. But the whispering doesn't feel right.

Shlomo stands by the fence, holding his bag. He looks a little lost.

Mendel takes a breath. He walks over. "Hi. I'm Mendel."

"Hi," says Shlomo. His voice is a bit louder than most, and it has a Canadian sound, like the "ou" in "about."

"Do you want to play ball?" asks Mendel.

"Sure," says Shlomo. "But I have to tell you, I miss some of the words if it's noisy. So I might ask you to say it again."

"That's fine," says Mendel. "I can say it again."

Shlomo smiles. "Thanks."

They play catch for a while. Shlomo's throw is strong and fast. Mendel drops it twice.

"You've got an arm," Mendel says.

"I practice every night with my brother," says Shlomo. "Hey, do you want to see something cool?"

He reaches into his lunch bag. Inside is a little silver gadget, no bigger than a deck of cards.

"What is it?"

"It's my microphone. I give it to the teacher and it helps me hear. Rabbi wears it around his neck, and it sends the sound right into my hearing aid."

"No way," says Mendel. "That's so cool. Like a secret agent."

"Kind of," says Shlomo, grinning.

Other boys drift over. "Can we see?" asks a boy named Yoni.

Shlomo shows them. He explains how it works. Mendel notices that the boys aren't whispering anymore. The ones who made faces earlier are now leaning in, nodding. They are asking questions, and Shlomo is answering, and everyone is smiling.

"Does it ever pick up weird sounds?" asks Yoni.

"Once it picked up my teacher's stomach growling in the middle of a test," says Shlomo. The boys roar with laughter.

At lunch, Mendel sits next to Shlomo. He remembers to look at Shlomo's face when he speaks. He doesn't shout. He just talks clearly.

"Do you like pizza?" Mendel asks.

"Love it," says Shlomo.

"We have pizza on Thursdays. You'll like it."

On Wednesday, Shlomo brings in a bag of Canadian maple cookies, shaped like leaves. They are gone before the first bell.

By the end of the week, Shlomo has been invited to three birthday parties and a Shabbos meal. He and Mendel have traded stickers and promise to bring Lego on Sunday.

On Friday, Rabbi Kaplan pulls Mendel aside. "I noticed you were the first one to say hello to Shlomo. That was very kind."

"It was easy," says Mendel. "He's really nice."

"Sometimes what looks different at first," says Rabbi, "turns out to be just another interesting thing about a person."

Mendel nods. He thinks about the little silver microphone and the tiny seahorse. They are just parts of a boy who throws a great curveball.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. Where does Shlomo move from?

2. What helps Shlomo hear the teacher?

3. What does Mendel ask Shlomo to play?

4. What do the boys do after Shlomo shows his gadget?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Shlomo wears thick glasses and a hearing aid. Fact / Guess
2. Shlomo is upset that people ask questions. Fact / Guess
3. Shlomo practices throwing with his brother. Fact / Guess
4. Mendel remembers to look at Shlomo when he talks. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. What could you say to a new student?

2. Why does the whispering stop when Shlomo shares?

3. How can you ask about differences in a kind way?

Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: SHLOMO, BALL, MICROPHONE, FRIEND, WELCOME, CATCH

G	M	I	C	R	O	P	H	O	N	E
W	V	M	O	U	P	L	T	S	O	J
P	C	C	A	P	M	M	L	D	W	H
A	A	S	V	W	B	O	K	Y	F	P
U	T	P	B	Y	E	A	C	U	J	O
F	C	O	I	N	R	L	L	N	I	P
R	H	M	U	P	M	A	C	L	M	K
I	K	O	F	D	F	Y	K	O	U	J
E	U	L	F	L	N	N	K	V	M	L
N	T	H	W	R	B	V	A	H	P	E
D	C	S	I	T	C	T	D	G	G	G



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. LOHOSM = _____

2. SSGLAES = _____

3. OCMIEOPHNR = _____

4. ZPIZA = _____

5. MNAOELRT = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"Hi, I'm Mendel. Want to play?"

"Can you say that again?"

"Thanks for showing me."



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Welcome Chart

#	New person	Something I asked	Something we shared
Person 1			
Person 2			
Person 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw two boys playing catch by the fence in the schoolyard.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing of two boys playing catch by a fence in a schoolyard.



Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Montreal
2. A small microphone that sends sound to his hearing aid
3. Catch with a ball
4. Stops whispering and asks questions

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: SHLOMO, GLASSES, MICROPHONE, PIZZA, MONTREAL

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.