

HOW PUZZLING!



Characters

Angie Arithmetis
Roman Numerallen
Willie Wordproblo

Amanda Algebran
George Geometris
Ms. Mathus

Setting

This reader's theater takes place at Dullsville School on the last day of the school year.



Angie



George



Ms. Mathus



Amanda



Willie



Roman

Act 1

Angie: Hey, everybody! I got a letter from Sally. She always has such strange stories to tell about her school.

Roman: Is she your friend who goes to Wayland Jr. High?

Angie: Yes, she calls me on the phone all the time. I love to hear about the outlandish things they do there.

Willie: I visited Wayland once. It's awesome! They add words instead of numbers in math.

Amanda: Angie, remember when you brought one of Sally's homework papers to school? It was so bizarre—I had no idea what it was.

Roman: What was so bizarre about it?

Amanda: The writing was weird. Everything was backwards.

George: Why?

Amanda: Sally said the assignment was to write sentences that could only be read when held up to a mirror.



Problem Solving Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will participate in an oral reading, focusing on the use of appropriate expression.
- **Content Area:** Students will become familiar with strategies that are helpful in solving math problems.

Summary

How Puzzling! is the story of a group of students that learns about an interesting school that their friend, Sally, attends. Everything at Wayland School where Sally goes is a little different and requires some heavy-duty problem solving skills. The students think this kind of school would be much more fun than their school, Dullsville. Ms. Franks, their teacher, overhears them complaining about their boring school and decides to show the students just how much fun Dullsville can be!



Materials

- *How Puzzling!* script booklets
- *Problem Solving Character Masks* copied on cardstock

Introduce the Literature

Write one of the strange word problems found in *Sideways Arithmetic from Wayland School* by Louis Sachar on the board. Give the students 5–10 minutes to find the solution on their own. Then, show them how to solve the problem. Ask the students how they would feel if they went to a school where math problems were written this way. Would it be fun? Would they enjoy the challenge? Read *Sideways Arithmetic from Wayland School* with the class. After reading the book, ask the students if they wish they, too, could attend Wayland School. Have students work in pairs to design a school similar to Wayland School. What would they change about Wayland School? What would be different and unique? Would it be a school that focuses on math and problem solving or on another important skill? Have students create brochures to advertise their schools.



ELL Support

Problem solving can be difficult for English language learners because it involves mastering complex concepts and difficult terminology. Review essential vocabulary and explain the story line of the script. Another suggestion is to walk through some problems as a class to make all of the students feel more comfortable, as well as to give students an opportunity to answer the riddles in the script at the same time the children in the script answer the riddles.

Involving All Students

Divide students into groups of six. Assign each group a riddle from the script, but do not allow them to see the answers. Ask the groups to answer the assigned riddles before the class reads the script. Allow the class to discuss their answers after the script has been read, to explain their reasoning when they answered the riddles and to explain their answers.