

Story: [Pezzettino](#)  
Author: Leo Lionni  
Illustrator: Leo Lionni

Teacher: [Nicola Bradley](#)  
Setting of the class / school: A mixed ability Year 1 class in an urban primary school in Liverpool, UK  
Age group: 5-6 year olds (Year 1)  
Number of children in the class: 24

Learning intention: To count and compare numbers  
Key mathematical vocabularies: count, compare, more, less, greater, fewer, total, equal  
Resources needed: A copy of the book, 'I am Special' activity sheet, ink, magnifying glasses, personal whiteboard sets, True or False PowerPoint quiz, images of the characters from the story, multilink cubes, squared paper, crayons, small coloured squares of paper, glue, 'Create a Character' worksheet

### Synopsis by the publisher:

Pezzettino lives in a world in which everyone is big and does daring and wonderful things. But he is small, just a “little piece,” which is the meaning of pezzettino in Italian. “I must be a piece of somebody. I must belong to someone else,” he thinks. How Pezzettino learns that he belongs to no one but himself is the joyous and satisfying conclusion to this beautiful mosaic style picture book.

### Lesson 1 (60 minutes):

The focus of this first lesson is to explore the story and its message. **During the initial input (15 minutes)**, we read the ‘Pezzettino’ story. We discussed individuality/specialness/differences (a link to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education). Pezzettino discovers he is not a piece of someone else, he is simply himself and that is wonderful! We are all different and we are all special. The class was then split into two groups: **Group A (20 minutes) – ‘We are special’ activity** (At tables in classroom) – Children worked with the class teacher to complete ‘I am special’ activity (see Figure 1). We talked about all of the things that make us special. Children wrote sentences (e.g., “I can jump very high.”, “I am a kind friend.”, and “I love my Mum very much.”) and **Group B (20 minutes) – ‘We are different’ activity** (Outside) – Children worked with a teaching assistant to talk about their differences (e.g., stand up if you have brown hair/are a girl/have a brother). Then, they used ink pads to create handprints and finger prints on large paper. They used magnifying glasses to inspect and compare these prints. We established that our prints are unique, just like us! Then, the groups swapped so that they could all experience both activities. **During the plenary (5 minutes)**, we talked about what we had learned about ourselves and each other. We established that our differences make us interesting and unique. Children were encouraged to pay their table partner a compliment (e.g., “You are special because you are a kind friend!”).

### Lesson 2 (45 minutes):

The focus of this second lesson is to take a closer look at the characters. **During the initial whole-class activity (10 minutes)**, we looked at images of the characters from the book and discussed what we could see. Children came up with lots of independent thoughts and suggestions (e.g., the swimming one looks like a fish.) I asked some questions relating to counting (e.g., “How many pieces does this character have altogether/in total?”, “How many blue pieces are there?”, etc.). We also compared the characters and pieces using mathematical vocabulary (e.g., “This character is bigger than this one.”, “It has more pieces.”, “There are an equal number of red pieces and blue pieces.”, etc.). The children wrote their answers on personal whiteboards. Later, we then played a **‘True or False?’ PowerPoint game that I made (10 minutes)** (see Figure 2). Each slide shows one of the creatures from the story and a statement for children to consider (e.g., “This creature has 3 red pieces. True or false?”) For each slide/statement, I asked children to put their thumbs up for ‘True’ and down for ‘False’. This generated lots of mathematical talk (e.g., “I know that it is false because there are more than 3 red pieces.”). **For the main activity (20 minutes)**, I provided each pair of children with a character picture and some multilink. They worked at their tables to copy and make their creature (see Figure 3). We used questioning to generate mathematical talk focused on counting and comparison e.g., before building: “How many cubes do you estimate are needed?”, during building: “How many more blue cubes do you need?” / “Which do you need more of – red or green?” and after building: “How many cubes have you used altogether?” They repeated this activity with different characters. **During the plenary (5 minutes)**, the children walked around the classroom to explore the multilink characters, and they were encouraged them to try to identify which character they were looking at.



### Lesson 3 (90 minutes):

The focus of the third lesson is to create our own characters. I explained to the children that they would be designing and making a new character for Pezzettino to meet. First, I let the children explore their creativity and use the multilink cubes to make original characters **during the free play (45 minutes)**. During this time, I gave them challenges with certain criteria to meet (e.g., “Make a character with 10 cubes, using only 2 colours.”). Near the end of this time, I asked children to create their ‘final design’ for their character using multilink. Once children had had lots of time to explore and play, I **modelled** how to design their new character using squared paper and crayons **(15 minutes)**. **During the worksheet activity (25 minutes)**, the children wrote the name of their new character and created a collage picture using small, square pieces of coloured paper and glue. They did this on the ‘Create a Character’ worksheet, which also included some mathematical questions for them to answer regarding how many pieces of each colour and in total the character has (see Figure 4). **During the plenary (5 minutes)**, the children shared their new characters. We discussed what made them special and unique, and asked questions to encourage more mathematical talk e.g., “How many blue pieces do all of the characters on this table have in total?”, “Which is the most used colour on this table?”, “Which character has the most/least pieces?” and “How many more pieces are there in this character than this one?”, etc.

### Reflection:

As a school, we often use stories as a starting point for mathematical learning. Using stories brings mathematics alive for children, reminding them that it is actually everywhere! This book was very well received and provided a lot of fun PSHE and Maths activities. The amount and quality of mathematical talk it prompted from the children was fantastic. They were using mathematical vocabulary relating to counting and comparison without even thinking about it. Most importantly of all, the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves!

### Figures:

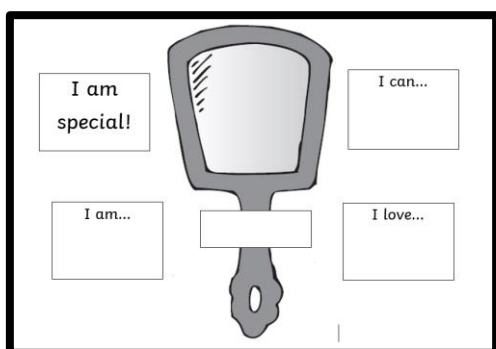


Figure 1: 'I am special' activity

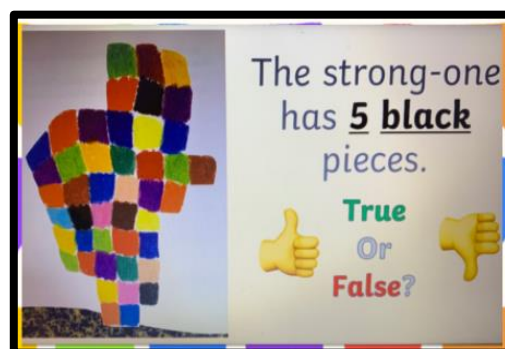


Figure 2: A slide from the True or False PowerPoint



Figure 3: Copying the existing characters

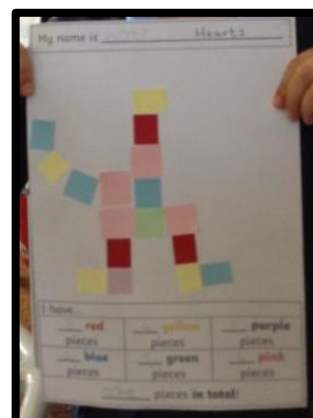


Figure 4: One of our new character creations using the 'Create a Character' worksheet