

I Am Special Book

Inclusiveness can be a difficult topic with students in this age group because they are focused on finding friends that are exactly like themselves. This first lesson introduces the concept of unique qualities, focusing on how each person in the class is special. If we are to include everyone, we must first break down barriers and stereotypes, even at this age. Each student will create an “I am Special” book which will be shared with the class to highlight their unique qualities.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- “I Am Special” booklets (for each student and one completed by teacher)
- Basic art supplies
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Small envelope
- Gluesticks

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
[See last page for details.](#)

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Identify ways that make them special both physically and emotionally.
- Explain the importance of valuing others for what they bring to the classroom.
- Demonstrate ways to include others that are different from themselves.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

The topic of inclusiveness is often overlooked once we reach adulthood. We seem to falsely assume that loneliness, bullies, and cliques are a thing of the past. However, it is just as difficult, if not more so, once we have developed our own comfort levels on different hot button topics, personality types, and overall approaches to life. They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but that's not true! It might be harder, but we can and should strive to grow in kindness daily. This week, examine your surroundings at school carefully. Are there any new teachers that you are unfamiliar with?

Maybe you are that new teacher and are feeling exceptionally shy. Identify three people this week to include in some capacity. Perhaps it's the old “saved you a seat” at lunch adage, an invite to walk the playground during lunchtime, or even a morning coffee to brighten their day! Your efforts to include others will definitely increase the kindness quotient in your school exponentially.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Work with English Language Learners and low-literate students by reading the prompts and writing in their answers.
- Use total physical response when explaining each page to the class to increase comprehension.



Share

5 minutes

Gather the class at your community/circle time area. Review the concept from last month (CARING):

- Name one time today someone treated you in a kind and caring way. (held the door open, fed you breakfast, drove you to school)
- How can you show gratitude when someone treats you with kindness?

Ask the following questions to spark interest:

- Have you ever been told that you are special?

How did it feel when you heard those kind words?



Inspire

What is Special?

5 minutes

Explain that many of us have heard the word, “SPECIAL”. Maybe someone has told you that you are special because of your kind words, warm hugs, joy of reading, or even silly jokes! Every person is special in his or her own way. The word special means different from the usual, but in a good way! Sometimes we feel that being different is bad, but you can’t be SPECIAL by being the same as everyone else. In our class, being different will be celebrated! No one needs to feel left out because they are different. We can include everyone and help them feel proud of what makes them special.

How are we Special?

5-7 minutes

Explain that every single person in our class is special in many, many ways. As a group, take some time to brainstorm ways that people have felt special. Use these questions to get the conversation started:

- What are you really good at? (legos, art, math, etc.)
- What do you like to learn? (you will get a lot of random answers here—that increases the specialness!)
- What do you want to be when you grow up? (doctor, mom/dad, dancer, truck driver...lots of fun answers)
- What makes you different from other people? (hair, skin, glasses, helmet, etc. It’s ok to bring this up now; you can focus on how this makes them special. Find ways to make these differences a positive instead of a negative in your class.)
- What do you like best about yourself? (hair, eyes, etc.)



Empower

5 minutes

To highlight what makes each person special, students will create a personalized “I Am Special” book. Review each page, making sure to present any obvious differences as a celebration.

Our class is so lucky to have such a variety of special children here! If everyone looked/acted/dressed exactly like each other, we would have a very boring class! Thank you for being you!

Pages:

- Face (topics that may come up are skin/hair/eye color)
- My handprint
- Family Page (topics that may come up are divorce, living with foster/grandparents, etc.)
- My footprint
- I am this tall (using string, measure each student and have them place the string in an envelope, then glue to the page)
- When I grow up...
- My favorite game/subject...
- I am good at...



Reflect

5 minutes

Explain that you will save each book and read it aloud during that student’s “Student of the Week” time throughout the year.

Our class is full of individuals that are special in their own way. It is our job to make each person feel special and included.

Ask the following questions to judge understanding of this concept:

- How can we include new students when they join our class?
- What is one thing someone in our class can do that you would like to learn more about? (drawing, math, games, etc.)

Every person in our class is special! We are all different and that is a good thing. We all have talents that can help others and it is important to be kind and care for them when we can. Sometimes meeting someone that is different than what we are used to can seem scary. Just remember, different is special! So look around and find somebody new to include this week.



Extension Ideas

- At Home: After presenting the book during the “Student of the Week” time, send the book home and invite the family to celebrate the specialness of their child in some capacity. Some ideas might be to make a special meal or share special music.



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AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

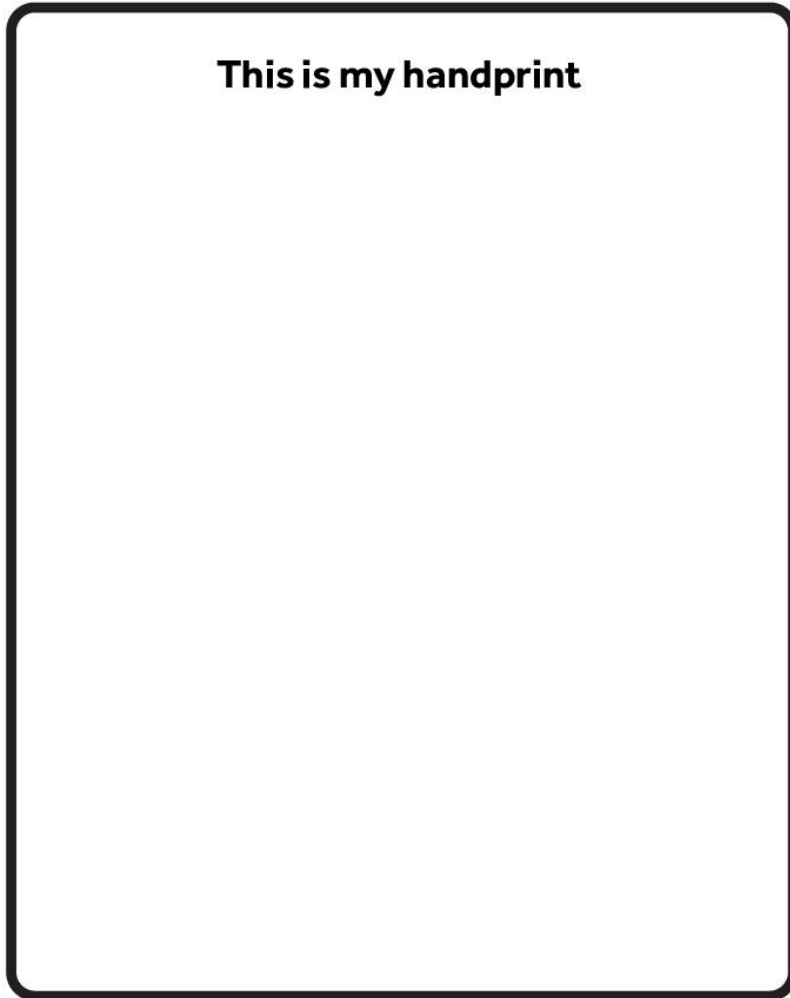
Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

All About Me!

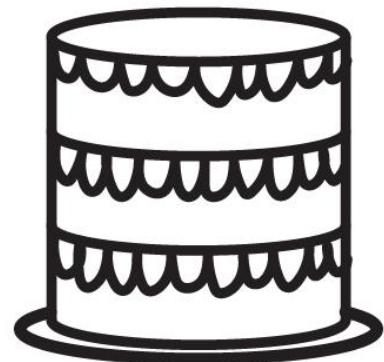
My name is:

This is my handprint



I am

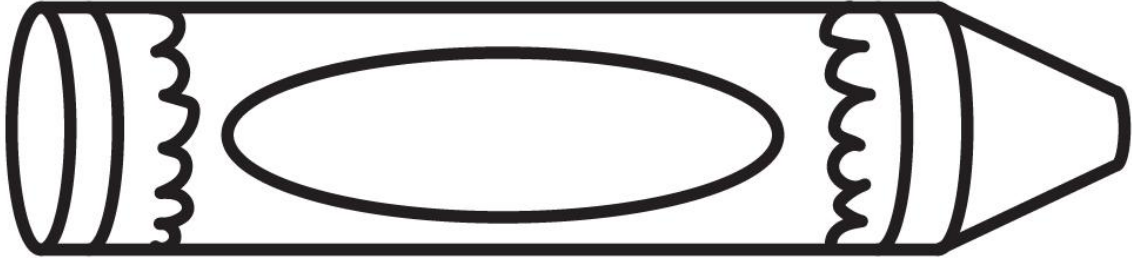
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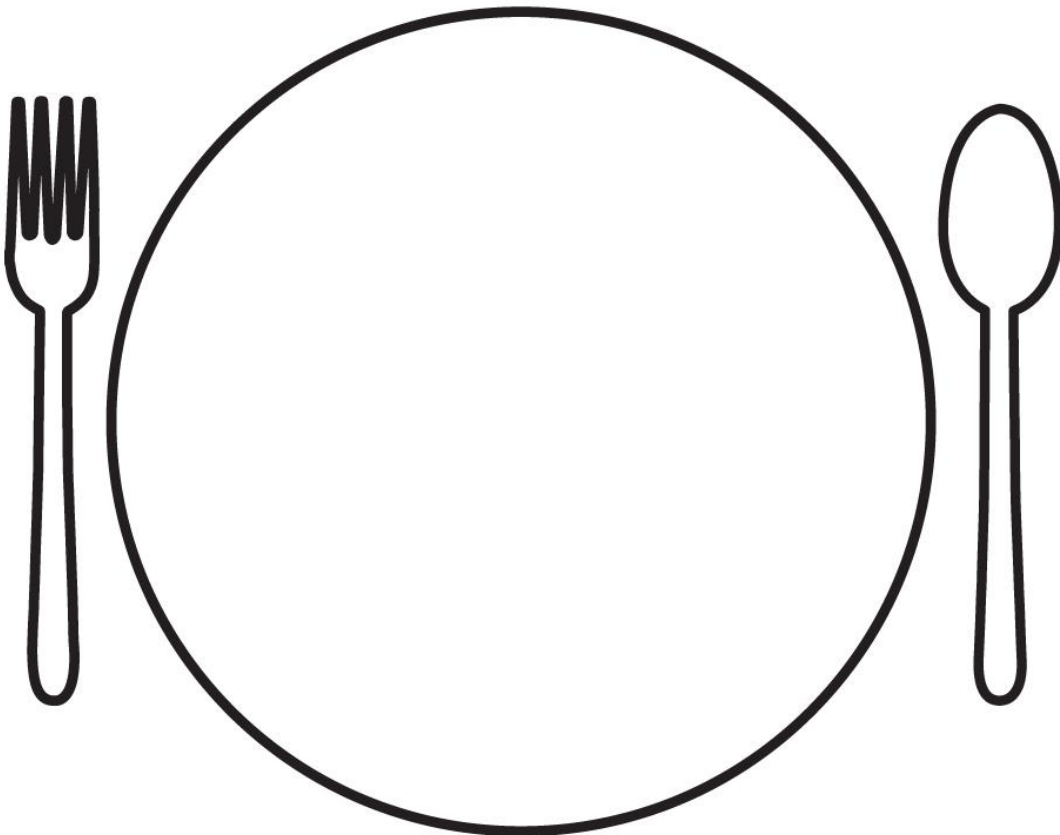
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My favorite color is



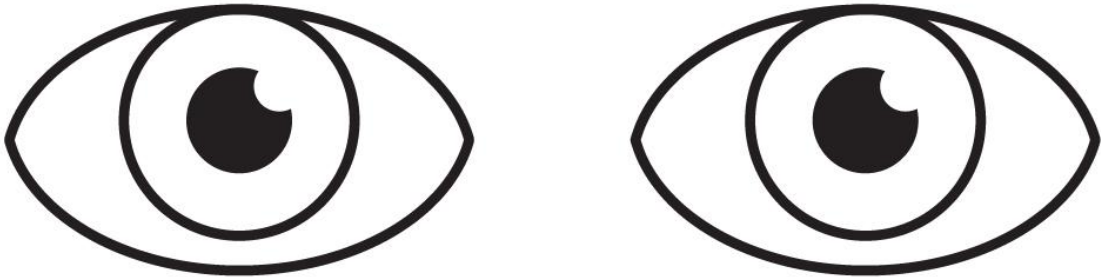
My favorite food is



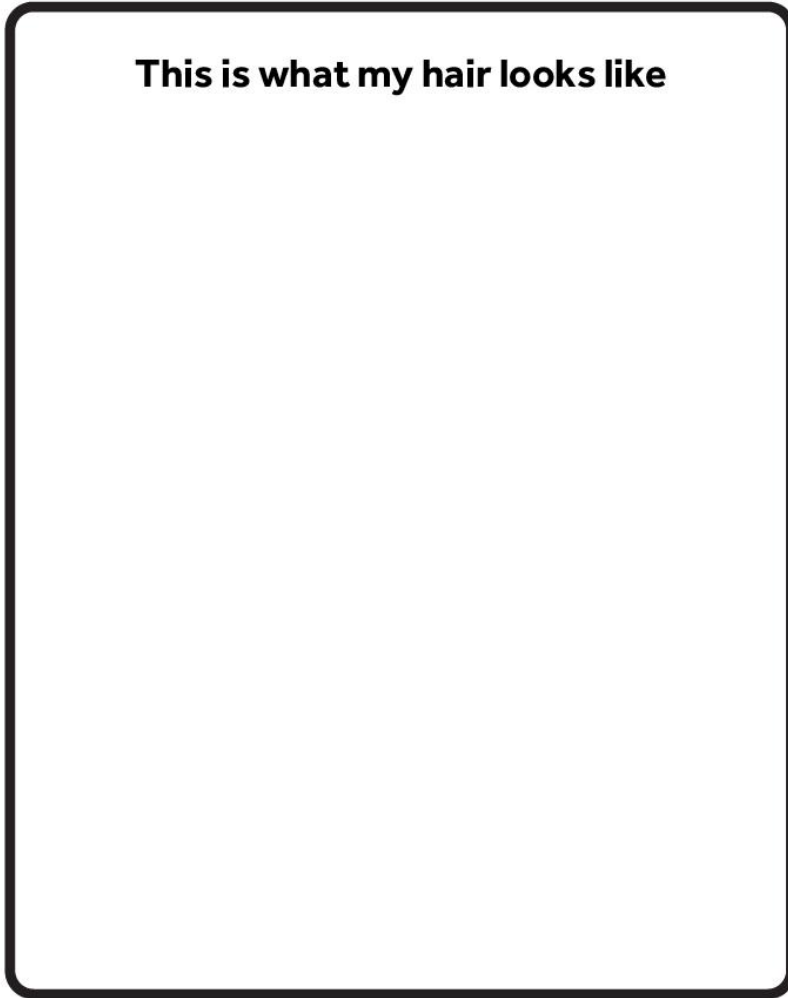
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My eye color is



This is what my hair looks like



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My favorite game to play



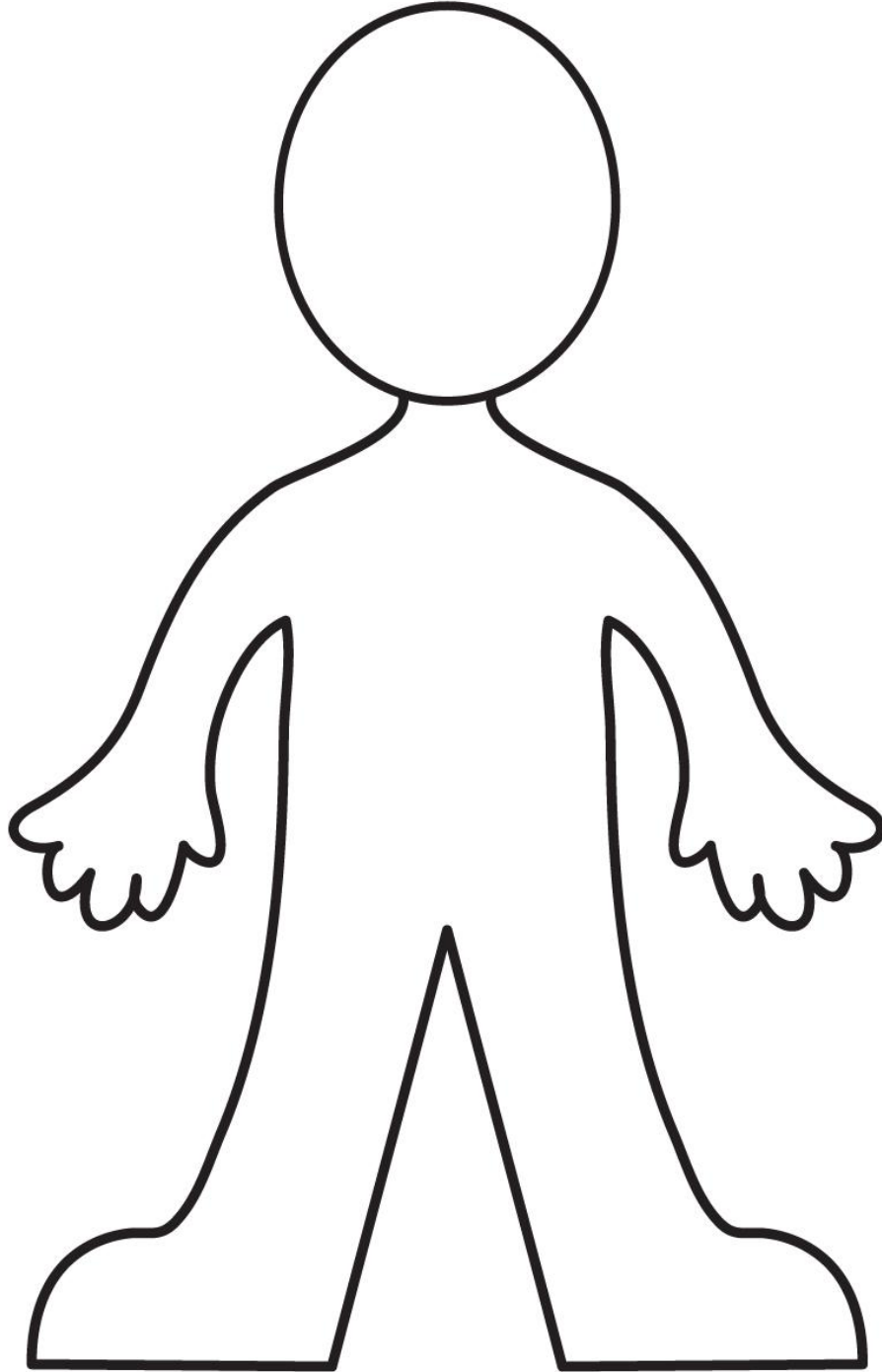
This is my family



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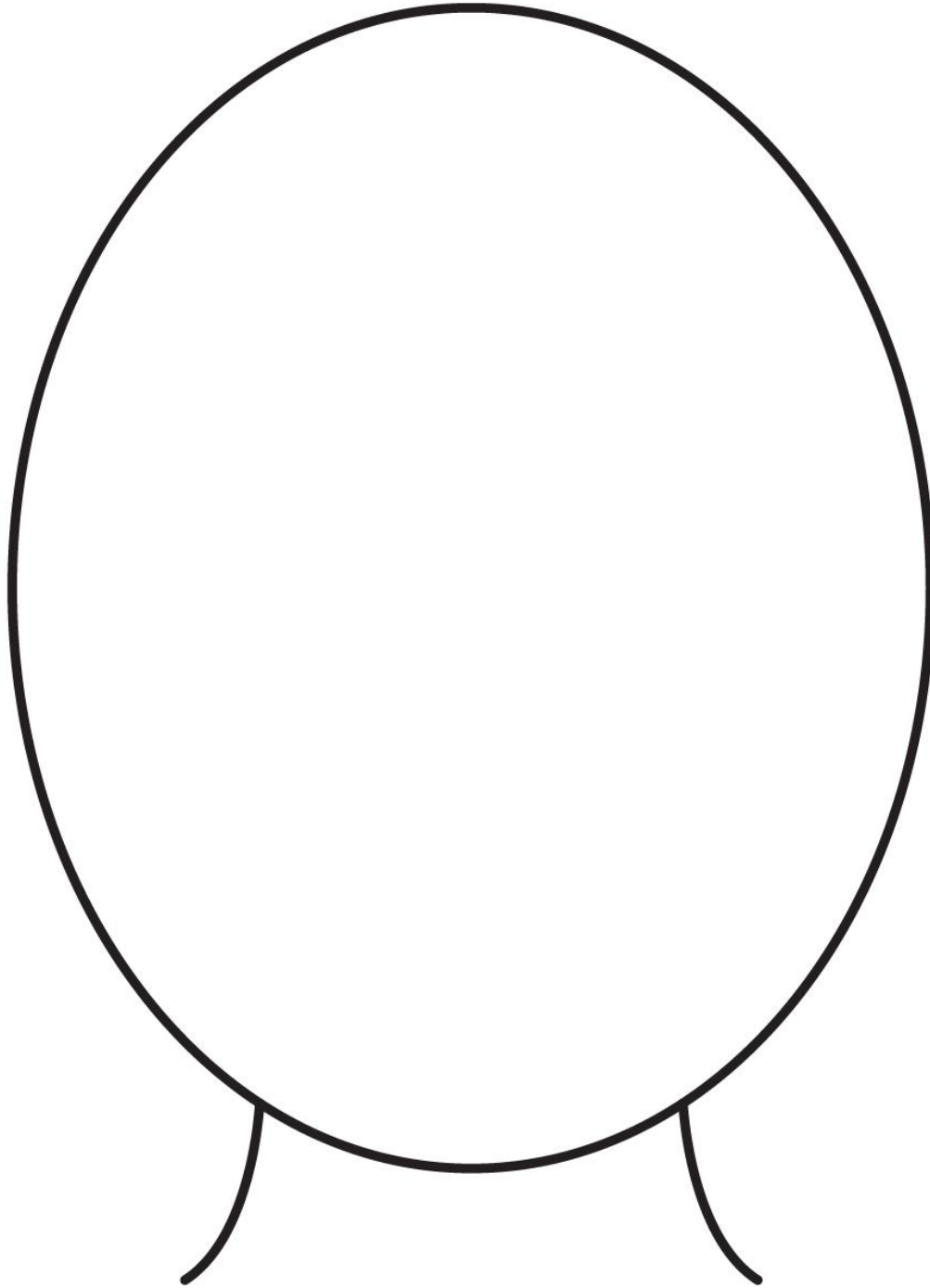
My favorite outfit



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My self-portrait



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My favorite video to watch



This is my pet



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