

YOUR NAME: THE MUSICAL

Use this activity to celebrate each student's unique name through rhythm and movement!

Materials Needed: chart paper, markers, rhythm instruments (or found objects like pencils, cups, desks), optional: scarves or ribbons for movement

1. Gather students in a circle and introduce the activity by celebrating names! Tell them, "Everyone's name is special. Your name belongs to you and only you! Today, we're going to turn your name into music and movement." Model with your own name first. Write it on the board and clap out the syllables (e.g., "MIS-TER RO-GERS" = four claps). Invite students to clap it back to you.
2. Next, ask: *How many syllables are in your name?* Have each student say their name aloud, and invite everyone to repeat the name and clap the syllables together. Then, introduce the concept of a "name rhythm." Using your name as a model, create a simple rhythm pattern by clapping, stomping or tapping your desk for each syllable. For example, if your name is "Sarah," you might clap-stomp (SA-RAH). Invite three to four volunteers to share their name rhythms. As each student demonstrates, encourage the whole class to echo the rhythm back.
3. Now it's time to add movement! Tell students, "Each letter in your name can have its own special dance move." Model this by choosing three to four letters from your name and assigning each one a simple movement. For example: M = Arms reach up high (like the middle hump of the letter); A = Hands meet above your head in a point (like the top of A); T = Arms stretch out to the sides (like a T shape).
4. Have students practice these movements with you. Then, invite them to create their own movements for the letters in their names. Younger students might need suggestions, while older students might choose to think outside the box and use more abstract ideas.
5. Divide students into small groups (three to four per group) or have them work individually, depending on your class size and comfort level. Invite them to create their own "Name Performance" that includes:
For younger students (Pre-K – K): Focus on rhythm and one simple movement. Students clap, use objects or other simple actions to perform their name rhythm, then choose ONE signature dance move to repeat. **For older students (Grades 1 – 2):** Students can choreograph a short sequence where each letter of their name has a different movement, creating a mini-dance. They can also experiment with levels (high, medium, low) and tempo (fast, slow). Give students ample time to practice their performances.
6. Invite each student (or group) to perform their "Your Name: The Musical" piece for the class! Encourage the audience to be supportive by cheering, clapping or joining in with the rhythm if invited.
7. After everyone has shared their performance, bring the class back together for a grand finale! Write all students' first initials on the board in order (e.g., if you have Maya, Aiden and Rory, write M-A-R). Ask: *When we put all our first letters together, can we make any words?* Challenge the class to find words using these letters. Celebrate any words you find together and tell students, "When we come together, we create something new!"

Reflection Questions:

What was your favorite part of creating your name performance?

How did it feel to share your name song-and-dance with the class?

What did you learn about someone else's name during their performance?

When we put all our initials together, were you surprised by the words we could make?