



LITTLE TACO TRUCK

TANYA VALENTINE & JORGE MARTIN

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Classroom Activity Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

Little Taco Truck serves up tasty treats to the hungry workers on Union Street . . . until one day, Miss Falafel shows up with her baked pita bread and crunchy chickpea fritters—and parks in his space. The next day, Miss Falafel is there again, and this time she’s brought Gumbo Jumbo and Annie Arepas with her. Little Taco Truck’s headlights dim. What if people like Gumbo Jumbo’s spicy stew and Annie Arepas’s warm cornbread cakes more than they like his tacos? When more trucks arrive the following day and there’s no space left for Little Taco Truck, he swishes his wipers to hide his tears and heads home. At last, with some ingenuity and help from new friends, Little Taco Truck wins back his coveted parking spot. And guess what? There is enough room for everyone!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TANYA VALENTINE is an active member of SCBWI and the Atlanta Writers Club and is the author of a picture book about interracial adoption *All Bears Need Love*. She can be found online at tanyaavalentine.com and on Twitter at [@tanya_valentine](https://twitter.com/tanya_valentine).

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Originally from Spain, **JORGE MARTIN** has lived in Mexico City, San Francisco, and Hamburg, and now lives in London. He is the illustrator of *A Cat Is Better* by Linda Joy Singleton and the author and illustrator of *I’m Hungry!* Visit him online at jorgemartin.org and follow him on Twitter at [@jorgemartin](https://twitter.com/jorgemartin).

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Symbols of Hope

The primary focus of this book is fitting in. Before reading, place a cardboard box in the center of the room. Challenge students to see how many of them can fit in the box. Do not supply any directions for the first few minutes. (You may not need to supply any directions, depending on what you observe.) If they

are not able to fit more than a few students, how many feet can fit in this box at the same time? See if just putting in one foot, possibly holding onto one another, allows more students to fit. What happens if we try to see how many hands can fit? Make time for students to discuss what they noticed about fitting in the box. Was it harder to fit in the box if everyone was pushing and shoving? Was it easier when working as a team? Emphasize the importance of working together so that everyone can be included.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

PRONOUNCE YOUR FOOD!

Newer readers often need to be reminded that names (and many other proper nouns) may be difficult to read the first time! Remind your readers that they are to read the names as well as they can and to keep reading them that same way until they learn the proper pronunciation and correct it.



As a class, practice reading the names of the food trucks and their foods to get comfortable with their pronunciations. Remind students that sometimes even the teacher does not know! Will your students know how to pronounce *arepa*, *falafel*, *gelato*, *gumbo*, *taco*, or *tapas*? Students might be more eager to try new foods if they know how to pronounce their names and know the ingredients. If you are able, bring in ingredients that are used in these foods. Share

them with students and, if possible, allow them to touch and taste them.



INGREDIENTS!

As a class or in small groups, look up the ingredients that go into each of the foods found in this book, and have students write each ingredient on a slip of paper. Students can draw the various food trucks in the book or write the name of each truck on the board or a large sheet of paper. Then place each ingredient with the truck it belongs to. When you have finished, take all the ingredients and place them in a hat. Have teams of students try to assign them to the correct truck. If a cooking demonstration is not possible in class, look up cooking videos for each food in the book to see how it is made.



LIKES AND DISLIKES

Have students make a chart of their favorite foods. Have them describe these foods and why they like them. Is it something they eat at home often? Discuss how fond memories or experiences can affect why they love these foods. Then have students make a list of foods they do not like but would be willing to try again. Practice having conversations with students about how to explain why you love something to a student who does not appreciate that food. Practice speaking about why you do not like something to someone who loves that food.

FOOD AROUND THE WORLD

Early elementary curricula includes building awareness of different cultural celebrations around the world, and many of these celebrations include food! Have students map the countries (including the United States) that the foods in *Little Taco Truck* originate from. It is worth discussing that some of these foods are eaten all over the world and have been around for hundreds or thousands of years. Have a world map and a United States map ready. Review the compass rose and map conventions. Using cardinal directions, have students explain how they would travel from your location to Mexico, Spain, Italy, Colombia, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, or within the United States. For example, "From Michigan, you travel mostly south and a bit west to reach Mexico." Do this activity on a 2-D world map first. Do it again on a globe, which will allow you to ask, "Is there another direction that will work? Which one is shorter?"



Ed Spicer is a retired educator with a wide variety of experience over the last two decades. He was nominated and selected as one of Allegan's Outstanding People in Education and was a Cool Teacher winner in Michigan.

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What ingredients make up your favorite or least favorite foods?

Fill in the boxes below by drawing and labeling your ingredients. Then write a brief explanation of why you included them.

Name: _____

1. If I were making: (circle one)



2. My favorite ingredient would be:

3. My new ingredient would be:

4. The ingredient that will surprise my friends and family is:





Interview a classmate, family member, or friend about their favorite food, and fill out their answers below.

Name: _____

I interviewed: _____

This person told me about these foods: _____

I would serve this person _____

_____ because it is their favorite food!

This person does not like this food that I like: _____

They might like it if (or they will never like it because): _____

Here are pictures and labels of the foods my partner told me about:

