



February 18 is **No One Eats Alone® Day**—a day created by students for students to close the door on differences and create a safe, inclusive school environment. It's also a great time to develop the **Link** critical thinking trait with this ice-breaker activity. So, let's partner with schools across America to help students find common ground and ensure no one eats alone!

[Read more about No One Eats Alone Day!](#)

Note: Preview literature and Internet websites for appropriate content to match your district guidelines.

Getting Started

Critical Thinking Trait Focus: Prior to lunchtime, review the **Link** critical thinking trait with students and explain they will be using it to help make connections with their classmates.



Link: I apply knowledge to reach new understandings.

Learning Standards Focus: make connections to personal experiences; use organizational patterns such as logical order; recognize and understand relationships, systems, and cycles; use social skills by building and maintaining healthy and respectful relationships

Vocabulary: inclusion, link, connect, relationship, social, encourage

Materials: construction paper strips, markers, tape or stapler

Instruction

Activity Directions

1. Introduce students to the activity using a short title or excerpt to read aloud from the Literature Connection list (see literature connection titles below) or a title of your choice that follows the theme of healthy relationships, inclusion, or making connections.
2. Prompt students with thought-provoking questions to facilitate the development of the **Link** critical thinking trait. Examples include:
 - “How is ___ connected to ___?”
 - “What ideas validate ___?”
 - “What can you infer about ___?”
3. Facilitate a discussion with students to review the importance and implications of inclusiveness.



4. Provide each student with a construction paper strip to take with them to the lunchroom.
5. At the lunch table, a student begins by writing a random fact on a link of chain using their construction paper strip. Another student uses the link of chain to think of a personal connection to the original fact, and so on. For example:



Activity Extensions and Variations

- Create a challenge by extending beyond the lunch table to include the entire class, grade level, or even campus!
- Facilitate a brainstorming session with students to find a connection between small group chains to link one group's section to another group.
- If the lunchtime schedule doesn't permit extra time for this activity, try it in small groups during class.

Reflect

After students have used the **Link** trait to search for interpersonal connections, facilitate a discussion about their thinking and learning. Guide students as they focus on how the **Link** critical thinking trait helped them complete the task. Emphasize the importance of using the **Link** trait to make connections with their peers.

Literature Suggestions

Books about connectedness and friendship: *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig, *The Seeds of Friendship* by Michael Foreman, *The Lonely Book* by Kate Bernheimer, *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* by Dan Santat, *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts

Additional Web Resources: [All About Empathy \(for kids!\)](#)