

SHADES OF FEELING

Emotional Learning Icebreaker

Nervous? Excited? Ecstatic?! Students experience a whole range of emotions about being back at school, and it's great for their social emotional development to practice expressing those feelings. This icebreaker activity allows students to share their first-day feelings in a comfortable and safe space, creating a welcoming and positive classroom community. Use this activity to start off the school year or to bond later on.

Grades

3-5

Learning Objective

Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe common feelings about going back to school. This activity gives 3rd-5th grade students practice using precise and nuanced language, a skill essential to their advancement, and also one that is highlighted in the Common Core State Standards.

Additionally, this activity engages students in social emotional learning and development by helping them express and share their feelings. Strengthen your class community by showing students that the classroom is a safe space to share, and helping them discover just how much they have in common with each other.

Standards

Grade 3: Distinguish shades of meaning that describe states of mind
(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5.C)

Grade 4: Choose words or phrases to convey ideas precisely
(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.3.A)

Grade 5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
(CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5)

Materials

- VocabularySpellingCity “Shades of Feeling” activity
- Dictionaries
- Scissors
- Glue or Tape

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Preparation (5 minutes)

- You can pre-cut the feeling cards, or hand out scissors for each group to cut out their cards.

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Ask your students how they're feeling about the first day of school. A little bit nervous? Excited? Thrilled?
- Discuss the concept of shades of meaning and show them the feeling cards. Explain that using precise and nuanced words can help them express their feelings to others.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)

- Model the exercise during whole group instruction by picking one of the worksheets and completing it on the board. Explain your thought process as you define and compare words, and show students how to use a dictionary to find the definition of an unfamiliar word. Welcome students' input about word order.

Independent Working Time (10 minutes)

- Split students into small groups (could be 5 groups for the 5 remaining worksheets).
- Tell students to work together to arrange the feeling cards in order from weakest to strongest, just like your example.
- Emphasize that the differences between some of these feeling words might be subtle or subjective. It is OK for students to have different interpretations of words. Encourage them to share their interpretations and decide on a ranking that best represents the majority opinion. They will get a chance to discuss their differences of opinion when they present.
- If they don't know the meaning of a word, tell them to consult the dictionary.

Show and Tell (20-30 minutes)

- Ask the groups to share their final worksheet. Each group should:
 - Explain how they came up with this ranking, including how they defined each word and how they compared them.
 - Discuss any differences of opinion their group had.
- Ask the rest of the class if they would change the order of any of the words, and why.

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Take it A Step Further: Writing Exercise (10 minutes)

- Display all the worksheets for students to see. Tell them to pick the word that best describes their current feelings, and write a paragraph explaining why.
- Assign students a home learning activity using VocabularySpellingCity's Paragraph Writing. Ask students to write a paragraph expressing their first-day-of-school feelings using one or more of the feeling words discussed in class. Have students share their writing with their family to promote an open discussion at home about feelings.

Take it A Step Further: Vocabulary Retention (10+ minutes)

- Use the "Shades of Feelings" word lists on VocabularySpellingCity to review vocabulary words throughout the week. Pair the words with our learning games and activities for spelling and vocabulary practice.
- For more information and lesson ideas on teaching shades of meaning, visit our shades of meaning resource page:
<https://www.spellingcity.com/shades-of-meaning.html>

Variations

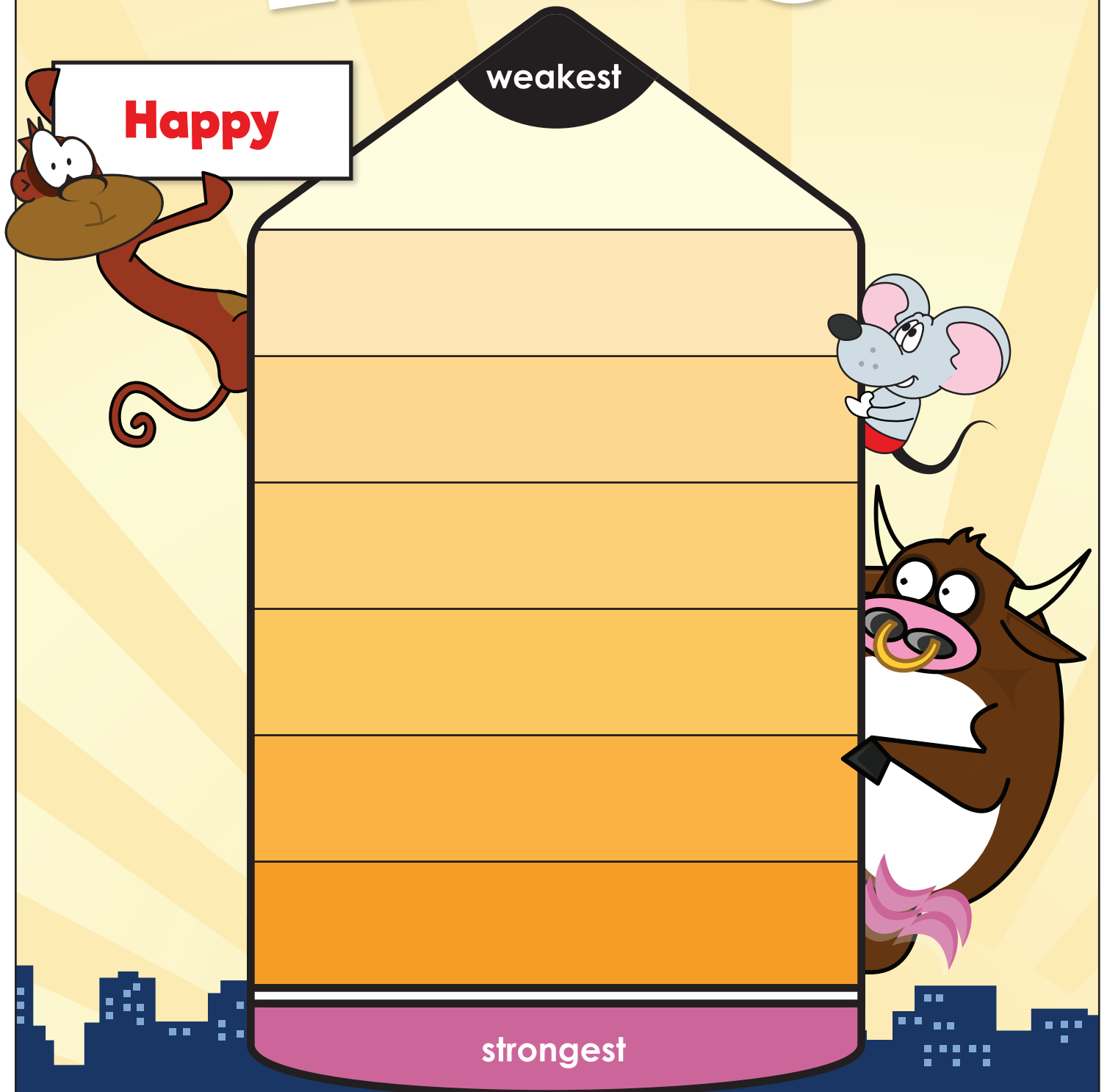
- Provide every group with the same feelings word card (for example every group receives the "Happy" card). Compare and contrast how each group ordered the words, from weakest to strongest emotion.
- Ask students to individually complete a feelings word card as bell work.
- Throughout the week, have students complete one feeling card each day as an ongoing team building exercise.
- Use during literacy centers to reinforce the concept of shades of meaning.

Answer Key

In order from weakest to strongest emotion, our ranking would be:

- Happy: Pleased, cheerful, jubilant, elated, ecstatic, exuberant
- Excited: Optimistic, eager, animated, enthusiastic, psyched, thrilled
- Calm: Unbothered, nonchalant, composed, serene, breezy, carefree
- Shy: Timid, skittish, reticent, bashful, wary, fearful
- Nervous: Hesitant, uneasy, apprehensive, worried, agitated, tense
- Scared: Startled, anxious, fearful, shaken, panicked, terrified

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Happy



Jubilant



Pleased



Ecstatic



Cheerful



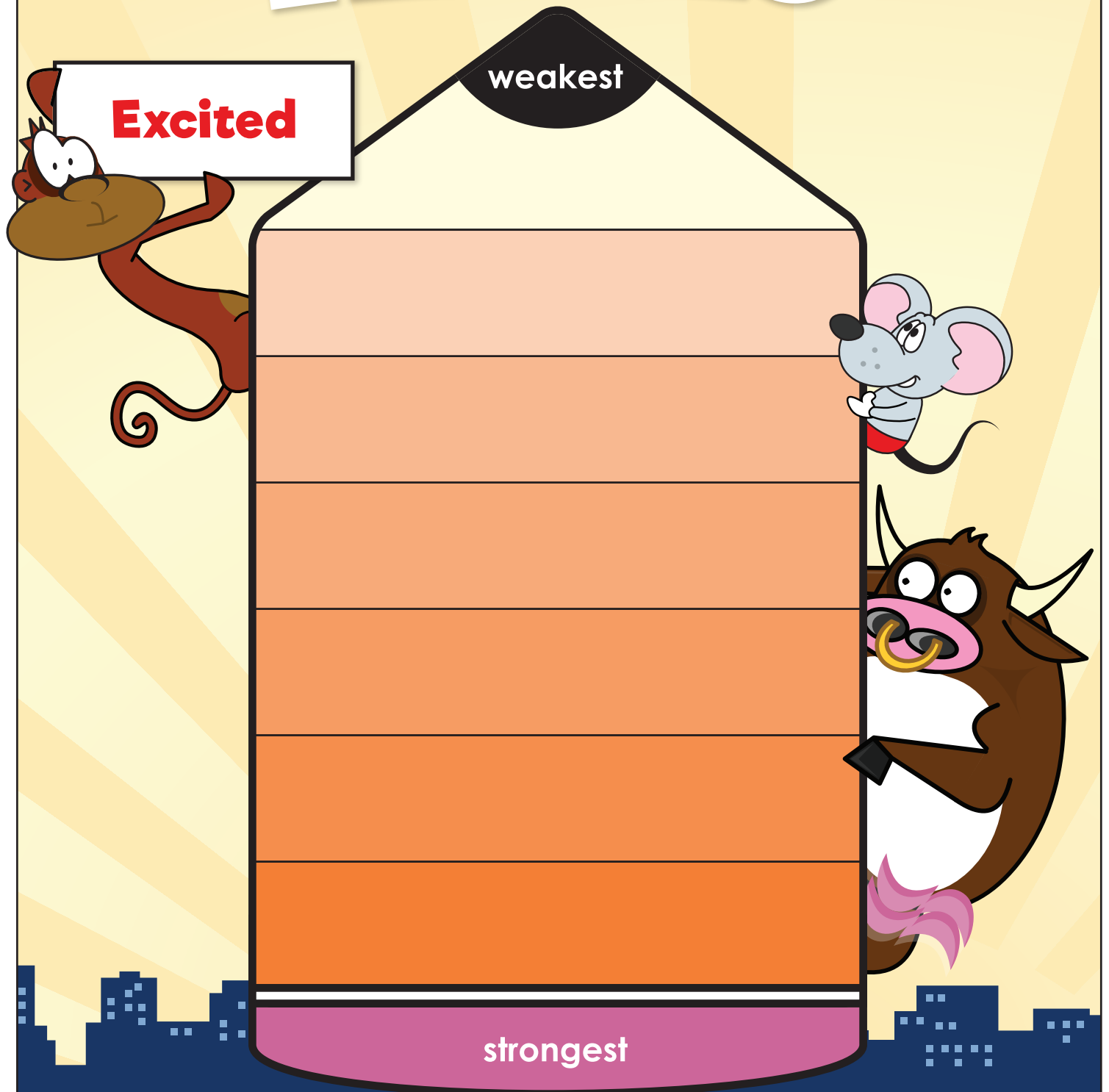
Exuberant



Elated



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Excited

weakest

strongest

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Excited



Animated



Thrilled



Enthusiastic



Eager



Optimistic



Psyched



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Calm



Nonchalant



Unbothered



Breezy



Carefree



Composed



Serene

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Shy



Timid



Bashful



Fearful



Skittish



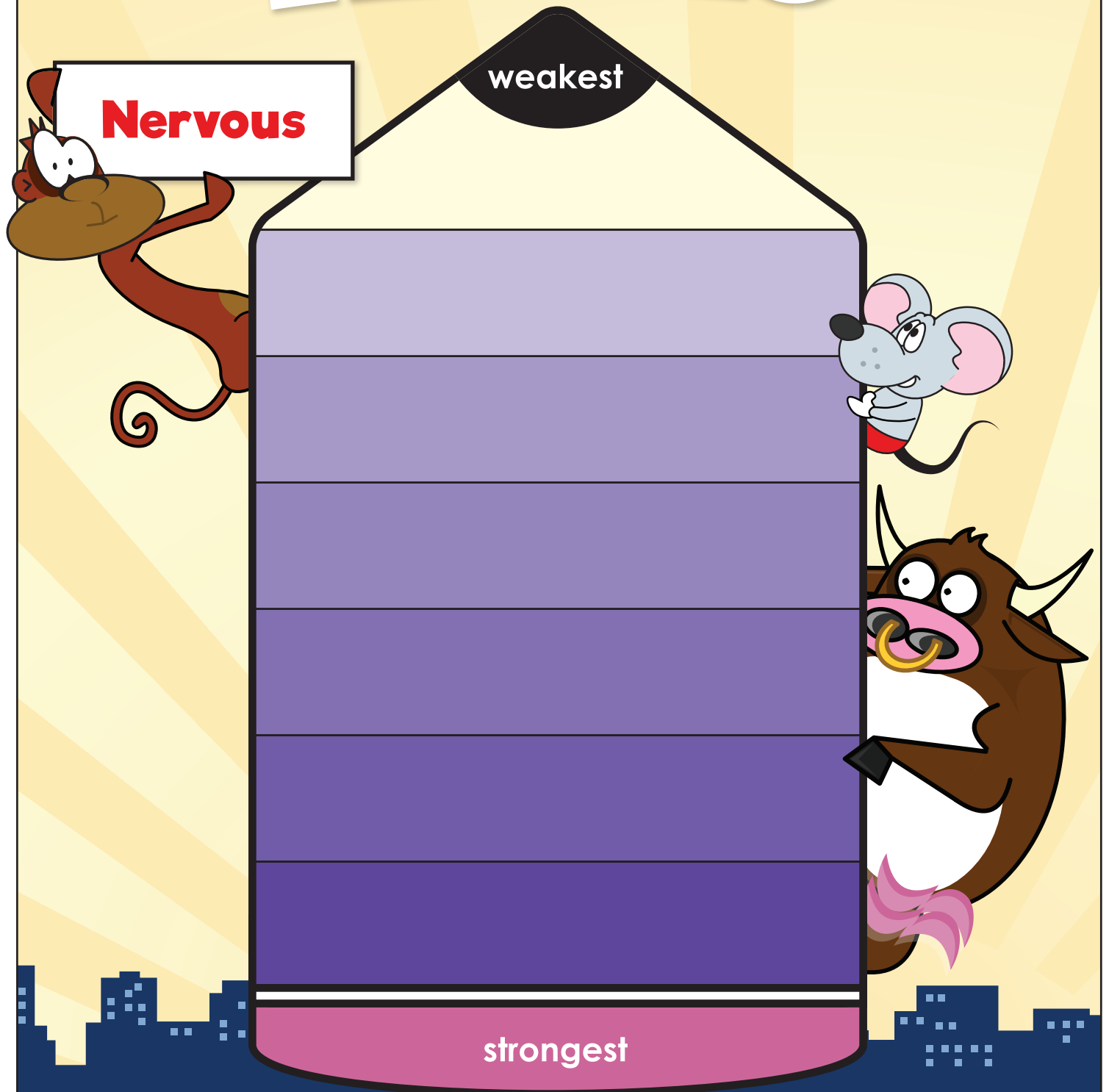
Wary



Reticent



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Nervous

weakest

strongest

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Nervous



Tense



Worried



Apprehensive



Agitated



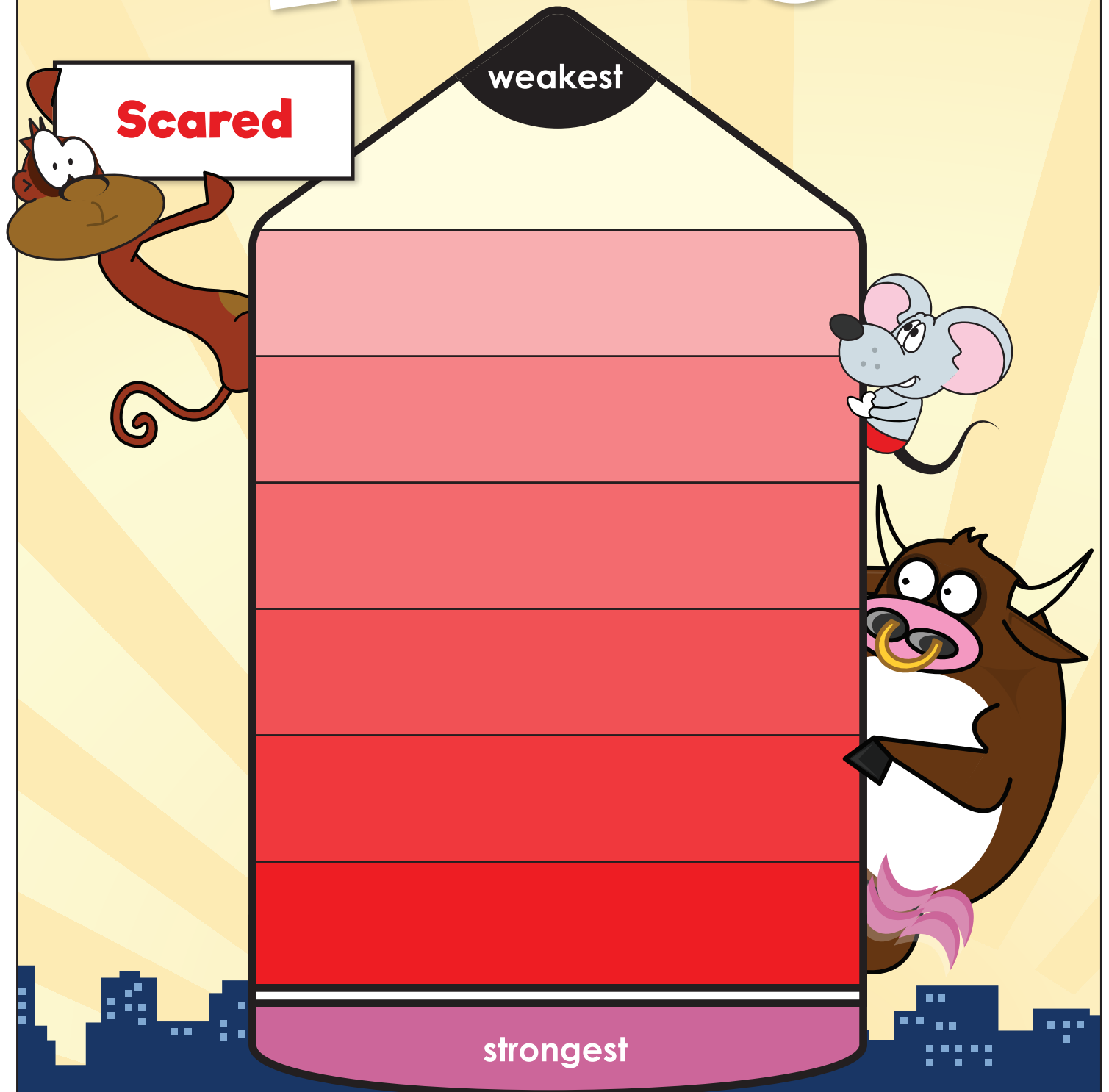
Hesitant



Uneasy



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Scared



Panicked



Startled



Terrified



Shaken



Fearful



Anxious

