

SKY COLOR

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By Peter H. Reynolds

Themes: Creativity, Nature, Art, Problem Solving, School

Ages: 4 - 9; Grades: Pre-K - 4

Running Time: 6 minutes

SUMMARY

Marisol is an accomplished artist. She has a gallery of her work and also shares her art with the world. So when Marisol learns that her class will be painting a mural, she is ecstatic. She participates eagerly in the brainstorming and planning and volunteers to paint the sky. As she prepares to do what she does best, Marisol can't find any blue paint and finds herself stumped. That night, as Marisol observes the world around her, she discovers a sky color of her own. This movie will encourage children and adults alike to see beyond the "ordinary" and draw inspiration from the natural world.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe the natural world and create artistic representations of what they see.
- Students will compare their own solutions to a problem with the solution that the character found in the movie.
- Students will write about a time that they found a solution to a problem.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Give students packs of crayons and ask them to draw an outdoor scene of their choice. After they have finished, have them share their drawings with each other. Then, hang the drawings around the room and guide students through a "gallery walk". Have them answer the following questions:

- What do you notice about the drawings? Colors? Topics? Shapes?
- What things are the same or similar about most of the drawings?
- What differences do you notice between the drawings?
- Is there any drawing that you particularly like? What do you like about it?
- Is there any drawing that has an element (color, topic, shape, design) that you didn't expect?

After students have had time to view the art and reflect on the questions, invite them to share their observations. Tell them that they will

be watching a movie about a girl who is an artist. Encourage them to watch and listen for how she sees the world and how she depicts it in her art.

Follow up on the previous activity by giving students the same directions for drawing, but this time, removing one or two colors from their choices (blue, green, brown, etc). As students grapple with this challenge and ask for the missing colors, encourage them to brainstorm and try some solutions. Give them the opportunity to share the solutions that they came up with and the resulting drawings. Make a list of the solutions that students generated. Encourage students to watch and listen for the solution that Marisol comes up with in the movie to the same problem. Revisit the students' list after viewing the movie to compare and contrast their solutions with Marisol's.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Explain the terms 'compare' and 'contrast.' Ask students to review the ways that they solved the problem of missing colors in the **Before Viewing Activity**. Then lead a discussion on comparing and contrasting their solutions with Marisol's solution in the movie. If appropriate, use a Venn diagram or 3-column table to record their ideas. Guiding questions:

- Were any of our solutions the same or similar to what Marisol did? In what ways?
- How did Marisol find her solution? How did we find or think of our solutions?
- What ideas did we have that Marisol didn't?
- Which solution or solutions do you like the best? Why?

Use time throughout a week, or longer, to go outside at different times of the day and to different environments (playground, park, city street, farm, etc). Provide students with "artist's notebooks" (handmade or purchased, blank paper, hard backing) and colors to draw what they see. Encourage the children to use creative license to interpret what they see in non-traditional ways. After each outing, display the students' work around the room so that they can see how their classmates depicted the scene. Encourage students to observe the similarities and differences between their work and their classmates' work.

Links to content areas could include:

Social Studies:

- Rural vs. Urban environments
- Farm life
- Neighborhoods

Science:

- Weather
- Seasonal observations
- Time-of-day observations
- Plant and animal life observations

English Language Arts:

- Labeling drawings (emergent writers)
- Describing drawings/observations in sentences (developing and proficient writers)

Math:

- Shapes in the natural world
- Angles
- Parallel and intersecting lines

Using Sky Color as a mentor text, have students write about a time that they found a solution to a problem. Review or introduce personal narrative writing. Go through the steps of the writing process together (brainstorming, planning/organizing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing) and model each part as you write your own story. Start by having students generate a list of times that they solved a problem in their lives, and give them guidelines for choosing the strongest topic. Then plan out the story using a graphic organizer. Model using the organizer to draft the story, emphasizing that narratives have a beginning, middle and end, and that the main character (the student) solves a problem. Give students guidelines and time to revise, edit, and publish their stories. Invite parents and other classes to a "Book Release Party," where students have the opportunity to read their work aloud to an audience. Keep the stories in the classroom library for students to check out and read independently.

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