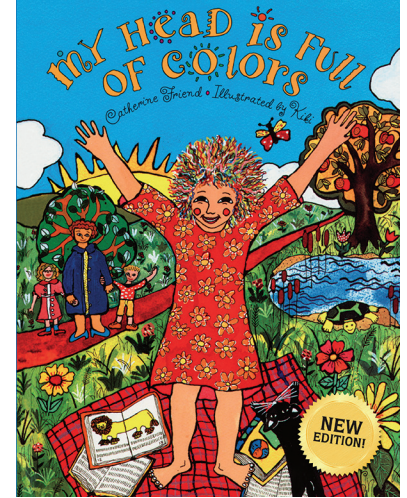


My Head is Full of Colors

Teaching Ideas Guide

BOOK SUMMARY

One morning Maria discovers that her usual brown spiky hair has been transformed by all the colors of the rainbow. Her head is full of colors, and she is able to draw and paint like never before. The next morning Maria awakes to find her head is full of books. They tell her about all sorts of things including amazing facts about spiders. Maria continues waking up to find her head is full of animals and the next day, people. But one day something strange happens when she rises to find her head is full of nothing. She is upset when her head is completely empty... or is it?



QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

Before Reading

1. What happens when you use your imagination?
2. If you woke up to find your head was full of something, what would it be and why?
3. How do we know the difference between fantasy books (fiction) and true books (non-fiction)?

During Reading

1. What adjectives (describing words) have you noticed so far in this story?
2. What character trait would you use to describe Maria's mom (kind, positive, helpful, loving).
3. After Maria finds people in her head, her mom tells her "You certainly have a way with people." What do you think Maria will say to her mom? (*Of course, Mom, my head is full of people.*)

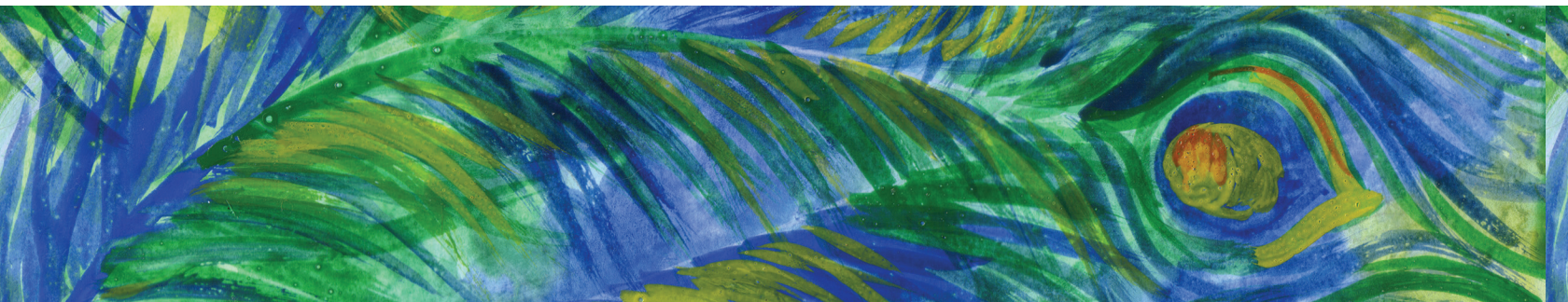
After Reading

1. Why did Maria skip "down the hall with her head held high"?
2. What do you think Maria's mom said when Maria exclaims "Look, Mom, my head is full of me!"
3. If we all woke up with our head full of animals or people, would we all have the same ones? Why or why not?

AWESOME ADJECTIVES

The colors filling Maria's head are vivid and vibrant. Use this descriptive list to launch a lesson on Awesome Adjectives. Check out *Words to Use* words-to-use.com/words/colors-names/ for inspiration and to prepare for a brainstorming session with students. Explain that words used to describe nouns are called "adjectives."

1. Play "guess the color" with students by offering these adjectives to describe colors not mentioned in the story: *charcoal* (black), *snow* (white), *sunrise* (orange), *grape jelly* (purple), *milk chocolate* (brown), and *elephant* (gray).



2. Ask students to think of a color then to turn and talk with a partner giving just a word or phrase that describes their color. Partners will try to guess each other's colors.
3. After students have finished sharing, use colored construction paper labeled with *fire red*, *sky blue*, *emerald green*, *lemon yellow*, and *cotton candy pink*, along with the list of "guess the color" words, to collect student ideas for each color. Hang the posters around the classroom and encourage kids to include descriptive color words in their writing.



SHADES OF MEANING

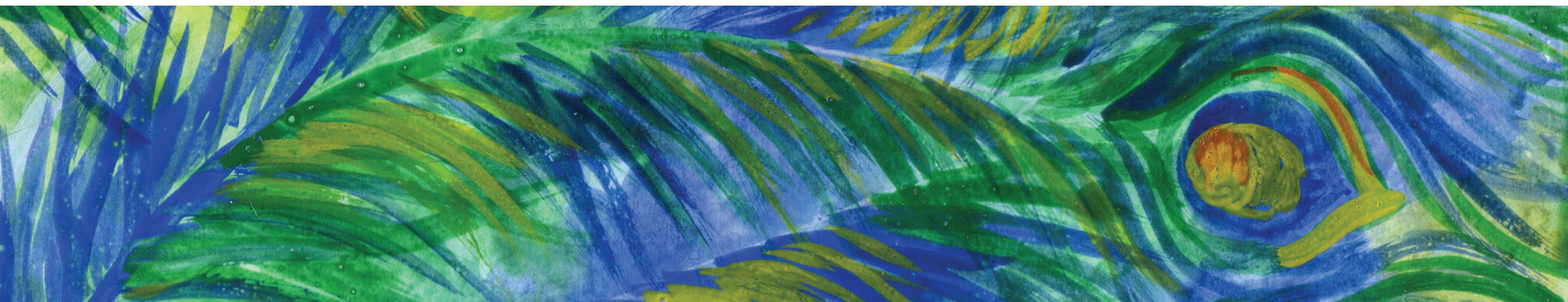
"Shades of meaning" is a phrase that describes slight variations of word meanings.

1. Ask students to recall the different words (*raced*, *scampered*, *dashed*, *scurried*, *shuffled*, *ran*, and *skipped*) that described how Maria moved or went to see her mother.
2. Print each word on a notecard and ask students to help put them in order displaying Maria's movement from slowest to fastest. There is no "correct" way to put the words in order. One way might be: *shuffled*, *skipped*, *scampered*, *scurried*, *dashed*, *ran*, and finally, *raced*.



3. Ask students to decide where they would place additional words on the continuum such as *limped*, *trotted*, *marched*, *zipped*, *zoomed*, *crept*, and *tiptoed*.

Tip: Pick up free paint palettes at a local paint and hardware store, then write the various "shades of meaning" on each color strip. Encourage students to use this list as alternatives for common verbs, such as "went," in their writing.



MUSIC

Share the YouTube video featuring the world premiere of *My Head is Full of Colors* by Opera Parallèle of San Francisco. This artistic presentation is a collaborative educational venture involving school aged children.

<https://youtu.be/6F5eYE4oK5k>

OTHER BOOKS TO EXPLORE, PROMOTING SELF-ESTEEM, IMAGINATION AND INDIVIDUALITY

Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell

Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon

The Dot by Peter Reynolds

Imogene's Antlers by David Small

I Like Myself by Karen Beaumont

Marvelous Me (Inside and Out) by Lisa Bullard

George Shrinks by William Joyce

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Ask students to complete a Venn diagram of the book and opera version of *My Head is Full of Colors* or compare-and-contrast Maria and a character from the suggested book titles, such as Molly Lou, Imogene, or George.

