

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

RAIN!

STORY BY LINDA ASHMAN

PICTURES BY CHRISTIAN ROBINSON

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS, 2013

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The RAIN! reader's guide provides activities that foster literacy in three areas: emotional literacy, visual literacy, and reading literacy. While most of the activities are geared towards classrooms, they can all be modified for homeschool or family environments.

SUMMARY:

One rainy day in the city, an eager little boy exclaims, “Rain!” Across town a grumpy man grumbles, “Rain.” In this endearing picture book, a rainy-day cityscape comes to life in vibrant, cut-paper-style artwork. The boy in his green frog hat splashes in puddles—“Hoppy, hoppy, hoppy!”—while the old man curses the “dang puddles.” Can the boy’s natural exuberance (and perhaps a cookie) cheer up the grouchy gentleman and turn the day around?

PRAISE FOR RAIN!:

“Altogether delightful.” **KIRKUS, STARRED REVIEW**

“Two very different attitudes about the weather go head-to-head in Linda Ashman’s buoyant ‘Rain!'” **NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW**

“Perfect for storytime sharing.” **SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Linda Ashman's children's books have been included on the “Best of the Year” lists of The New York Times, Parenting and Child magazines, New York Public Library, Bank Street College of Education, the IRA/CBC and others. She lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with her husband, son, and their two dogs. For more information, visit www.lindaashman.com.

(Photo credit: Amy Stern Photography, Chapel Hill, NC)



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Christian Robinson is a picture book illustrator and animator. In addition to RAIN!, his books include Harlem's Little Blackbird by Renee Watson, which received an NAACP Image Award nomination. You can visit him online at theheartoffun.com.



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PREREADING:

Introduce the main ideas of the book by asking questions. For example, based on the cover, what do you think this book is about? Discuss the idea of moods. What does it feel like to be in a bad mood? How about a good mood? How do you feel when someone close to you is sad or grumpy? Talk about the word contagious. Although we often use this word when discussing germs and sickness, moods can also be contagious. When someone happy meets someone grumpy, which mood is more powerful?

EMOTIONAL LITERACY:

Young children are just beginning to recognize, label, express, and manage their feelings. They are also learning to identify the feelings of others. Literature can be a wonderful way to encourage children towards this emotional awareness.

MASKS:

Using paper plates, create happy-face and grumpy-face masks. (Templates are included at the end of this guide.) Read RAIN! with your students. Ask the students to recognize the character's feelings and label them by holding up the appropriate mask. At the beginning of the book, the old man is always grumpy, and the child is always happy. In the café, when the man refuses the cookie, the child becomes sad. At the end, the man is happy. Discuss how feelings change, and how our actions can affect how others feel. When someone is sad, what might you do to cheer him up? When you're in a bad mood, what sorts of things make you feel better?

HOPPY, HOPPY, HOPPY!

Often when we are feeling down what we need is some movement or exercise. Using the child in the book as a model, become frogs! Using carpet squares, have students frog-hop (squat) or bunny-hop (two feet standing) across a pretend river from one square to the next. Encourage them to say "Ribbit!" or "Hoppy!" as they go.



SENTENCE STARTERS:

Give the students sentence starters such as: I feel angry (happy, sad, surprised) when... Provide each student with art supplies to create an artistic response. If a student is more advanced, encourage him to use invented spelling to complete the sentence in writing as well.



EMOTIONAL LITERACY (CONTINUED):

PASS IT ON:

This game requires children to mirror another person's facial expressions.

Prep: Create word cards for the following feelings: angry, happy, sad, surprised.

1. Sit in a circle on the floor.
2. Show and read the word cards one at a time. Say, "Can you show me your angry face?" Ask the students to act out each feeling in turn.
3. To start the game, one person begins by turning to the person on her right and making a "feeling face" demonstrating one of the emotions written on the four cards. You may find that an emotion can take over the whole body (crossed arms, happy arms, surprised hands). For class management, you may want to use a carpet square or placemat to define each child's space.
4. The second person should try to copy the first person's feeling face.
5. Ask the class to guess what feeling the child demonstrated. Ask the feeling face originator to confirm.
6. Hold up the word card again and say the word.
7. Repeat the game allowing the next child to pick a feeling face to demonstrate.



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VISUAL LITERACY:

ZOOM:

In the opening spread, the reader sees a city on a rainy day. Point out the two human forms. They are in the windows a few buildings away from each other. Notice that one is in a yellow building and the other is in a dark gray building. Turning the page, the reader zooms in on the scene. The humans become detailed individuals. With the next page turn, we are inside each of their apartments.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST:

Encourage your students to notice the differences in the old man's house and the child's house. Compare the two scenes:

- What do you notice about the two characters?
- What do you notice about the background colors?
- What objects are in each house?

Extend this discussion to other scenes in the book.



CUT PAPER:

The illustrator, Christian Robinson, uses a cut-paper technique. Provide precut paper shapes and encourage students to use them to build their own scenes. You may use one of the following prompts, or allow the students to explore the materials and their own creativity.

- Create a scene showing how you get ready for a rainy day.
- Create a scene of a family visit to a bakery.
- Create a family portrait.

For younger children, provide paper in a variety of multiracial and rainbow colors to create a face. For the face, precut larger shapes (oval, round, heart, rectangular, square). Cut smaller shapes for eyes, eyebrows, noses and mouths. Look at the pages in RAIN! where the grumpy man and the child come face-to-face. Point out how changes to the angle of the eyebrows and shape of the mouth alter the expression of the character.



READING LITERACY:

DIALOGUE:

Introduce the word dialogue to the students. Explain that we use quotation marks to show when someone is saying something. Point out the quotation marks throughout the book. Change the dialogue into lines for a short play and have the students act out the book.

TYPOGRAPHY:

Notice that typography is an important part of the story. Each character has his/her own font and text style. Since the entire book is told through dialogue, this helps the adult reader use voices, intonation, and expression to make for a dramatic and satisfying read aloud.

OPPOSITES:

Discuss the idea of opposites. Ask students to look for some examples in the book, things like wet/dry, young/old, happy/sad, rainy/sunny, bright/dark, etc. What other opposites—unrelated to the story—can they come up with?

WEATHER WORDS BULLETIN BOARD:

Brainstorm weather words with your students. First pull words from RAIN!, such as galoshes, overcoat, frog, pollywog, and puddle. Then ask students for words related to other categories of weather: precipitation (snow, sleet), clothing (mittens, earmuffs), gear (shovel, sled), etc. Create a bulletin board with these words, and use them to create a class poem or story.

SCIENCE EXTENSION:

Create a weather calendar for the bulletin board (activity above). Appoint one student weather watcher to report on the weather each day at circle time. Introduce thermometer skills or rain water gauge reading. Pick cities from around the country or globe with which to compare your own weather. Ask students to consider the best clothing and activity choices for each type of weather you encounter. You may want to go further by looking at housing styles in cold versus hot climates.



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REPRODUCIBLE ACTIVITY:

MEMORY OR OPPOSITES:

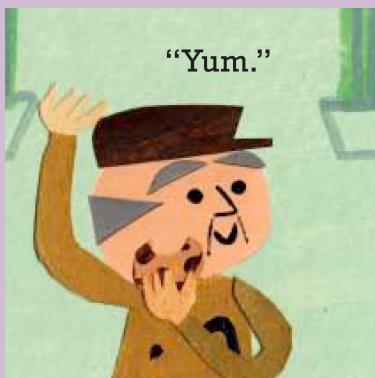
Copy and cut out the cards below. Arrange the cards in an array – face down. Have the students turn over two cards, one at a time, to find the matching card. TIP: Make the cards more durable by gluing them onto cardstock and/or laminating them.



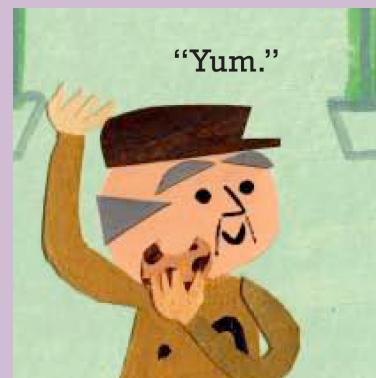
GRUMPY



GRUMPY



HAPPY



HAPPY



EXCITED



EXCITED





SHARING



SHARING



SURPRISED



SURPRISED



SAD



SAD



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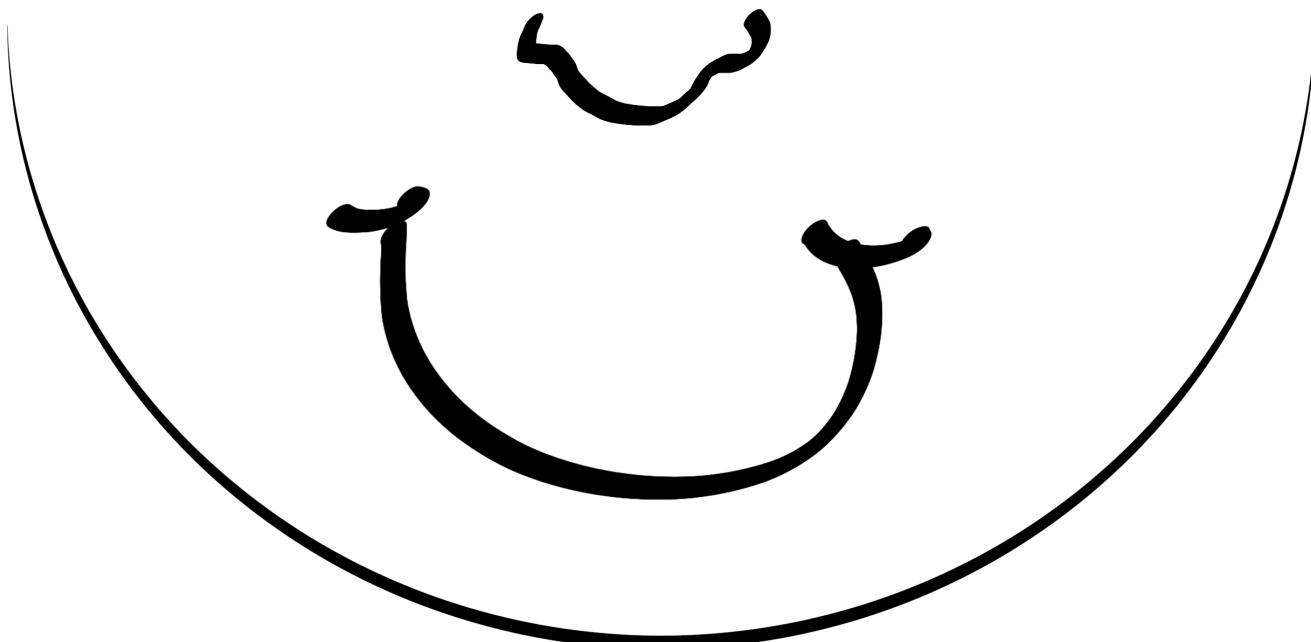
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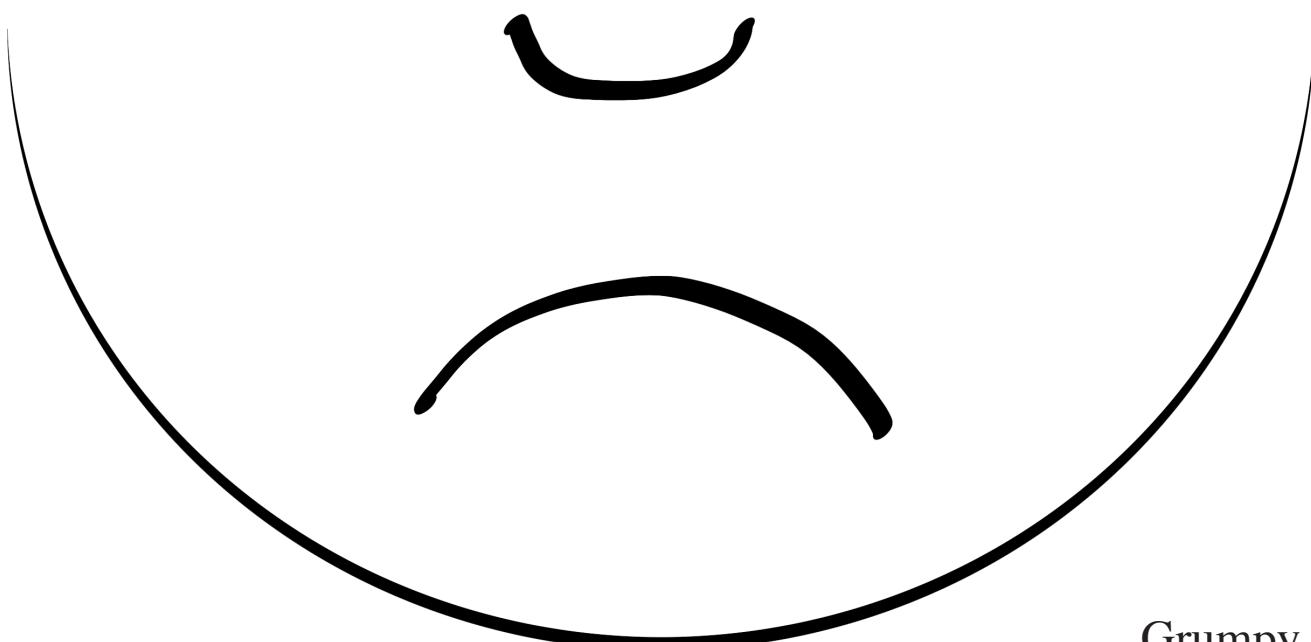
MASK TEMPLATES:

DIRECTIONS:

Cut out and glue the faces onto half paper plates. Alternatively, you could copy directly onto cardstock and cut out the half masks. Follow activity directions on page 2.



Happy



Grumpy



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