



## Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



Text:

***My Many Colored Days*** by Dr. Seuss

Grade/Subject

Early ES / ELA



Ideas, Values:

Acceptance, Moods & Feelings, Multiple Feelings, Representation & Symbolism



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Discuss how stories can help us see something new or in a new way. Explain that this is a story about feeling in a bunch of different ways. Ask students to think about the different emotions they felt yesterday or today. Discuss and write the words on the board. Use symbols and colors as possible (happy face=happy; red=fast, energy...). Ask students to tell their elbow partner what two feelings seem to go together and explain why.



Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and ask participants to anticipate what they expect this reading to be like. Read the story the first time aloud. (Having the illustrations is of benefit, but not essential; the book is readily available in most libraries.) Label the stanzas as applicable (1-14). (Note that, depending on the developmental stage of the group, the text may be transcribed from the book, multiple copies of the book may be used, or the book may be copied with graphics for one-time use, arranged on a wall or in a circle within the group.)

## Background Information:

Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel; March 2, 1904 – September 24, 1991) was an American writer, poet, and cartoonist. Seuss published 46 children's books, often characterized by imaginative characters, rhyme, and frequent use of anapestic meter.

*My Many Colored Days* was published posthumously in 1996 by Alfred A. Knopf, after Seuss's death in 1991. It features paintings by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. A rhyming story, it describes each day in terms of a particular color which is in turn associated with a specific emotion. Based on a 2007 online poll, the National Education Association (NEA) named the book one of its "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children".

## Vocabulary:

As the story is read with students, tell them you're going to pick three words to come back to, to see if students have an idea of what those words mean. They should be listening for what those words might be, but they can't blurt them out: *groan*, *howl*, *growl*

Ask students to recall where those words are found in the story, and to use context clues to explain what they mean. Students may even choose to act out the words.

## Analytical Read:

Have students draw out two of the days and the colors that go with those days as illustrated in the story. If time permits, display these *before* seminar.



## Pre-Seminar Process

-  Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.
-  Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.
-  Have participants set a Personal Goal.
-  Agree on a Group Goal.

## Seminar Questions

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*Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):*

- ❖ In 1 or 2 words (the facilitator may need to model) tell us what you think the book is about. (round robin response)

*Core (Analyze textual details.):*

- ❖ What kinds of feelings are in the book?
- ❖ What animals go with what colors in the book? Explain why you think the author might have put those together.
- ❖ What actions go with what feelings in the book?
- ❖ What part of the story is easiest for you to understand? Why?
- ❖ Do feelings go together or stay separate in the book? How is that the same and different from real life?

*Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):*

- ❖ What color and/or animal best describe a feeling you recently felt? Why did you choose that animal and/or color?

## Post-Seminar Process

- ★ Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.
- ★ Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.
- ★ Note reminders for next seminar.





## Post-Seminar Content



### Transition to Writing:

Have students think back to the *Launch Activity*. Introduce the idea of representation—that sometimes symbols (an animal can be a symbol) or colors can represent something. If it has yet to emerge, ask students to name three feelings and three symbols (animal or not) and colors that they think go with those feelings. Students can try this first on their own, or with a partner, and then share whole group. You can even designate feeling centers, where students share their ideas on representation for “happy,” “sad,” “angry,” etc.



### Writing Task:

Get ready to share your thinking with your classmates!

“When it comes to feelings, people seem to be many different colors. What do we mean by colors?”

After our reading and discussion about *My Many Colored Days*, write/explain your answer to the question. Give two examples from the text that help show the reader your thinking, explaining what “colors” means in this question and in this story. (Informational or Explanatory/Define)



### Brainstorm:

Go back to the *Launch* and to their drawings that helped illustrate the text. What examples help them best show their thinking—that kids are many different “colors?” And what does *colors* mean in this context?



### Structure the Writing:

(This may be more of a *tell* than an actual *write*, depending on the class. It can also be executed as a whole-class writing assignment.)

Depending on age and developmental appropriateness, it may serve students best to use a four-sectioned paper:

- 1) the question and their answer.
- 2) an example that best shows this from the text
- 3) another example that shows this from the text
- 4) What does color mean in this text?

### *First Draft:*

Consider having students verbalize the four parts to the story before, during, or immediately following the writing, as appropriate. Have them use the prompts from the *Structuring the Writing* section explicitly.

### *Collaborative Revision:*

Depending on student ability, it is likely this is done in collaboration with the *First Draft* step as students refine their thinking in order to extend the 4 prompts/sections above.

### *Edit:*

Students should read their written piece to an elbow partner, or read jointly if their thinking was transcribed by another student or adult. They should read/hear what they thought aloud. Students should ask themselves after they read/hear their thinking: “Is that what I meant?” Is there anything I can change so people know what I mean?”

### *Publish:*

Under the title or heading “Different Days, Different Moods,” students should have their thinking published in the halls, classroom, etc. Before or after final publishing, students are encouraged to draw their own symbols, using color, as a way to increase the understanding of representation and symbolism used within literature.

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***My Many Colored Days*** by Dr. Seuss

Some days are yellow.  
Some are blue.  
On different days I'm different too.

You'd be surprised how many ways  
I change on Different Colored Days.

On Bright Red Days how good it feels  
to be a horse and kick my heels!

On other days I'm other things.  
On Bright Blue Days I flap my wings.

Some days, of course, feel sort of Brown.  
Then I feel slow and low, low down.

Then comes a Yellow Day and Wheeee!  
I am a busy, buzzy bee.

Gray Day....Everything is gray.  
I watch. But nothing moves today.

Then all of a sudden I'm a circus seal!  
On my Orange Days that's how I feel.

Green Days. Deep deep in the sea.  
Cool and quiet fish. That's me.

On Purple Days I'm sad. I groan.  
I drag my tail. I walk alone.

But when my days are Happy Pink  
it's great to jump and just not think.

Then come my Black Days. MAD. And loud.  
I howl. I growl at every cloud.

Then comes a Mixed-Up Day. And WHAM!  
I don't know who or what I am!

But it all turns out all right, you see.  
And I go back to being...me.