

CHICKEN, PIG, COW AND THE PURPLE PROBLEM

written and illustrated by Ruth Ohi

Genre: Picture book, fiction

Themes: Early Readers, Adventure, Exploration, Friendship, Self-Confidence, Animals

Suitable for: Grade 1 – 2

Summary

This picture book explores the friendship between a toy chicken, pig, and cow. Cow goes on a mission to get rid of her purple spots. Along the way she learns that it's okay to look differently, and that her friends Chicken and Pig love her just the way she is.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

The following activity ideas are only a start. There are many possibilities for helping students construct meaning from text.

Comprehension activities:

- help readers to extend their general knowledge from prior experience
- develop reading strategies for comprehension
- bring relevance to the act of reading
- foster discussion and reflection through response to the text

BEFORE STARTING THE BOOK

Activities to build the context and introduce the topic of the book, and to establish prior knowledge and interest and develop predictions of what the text will be about.

1. Do you think this is a book that tells a story (fiction), or one that gives information (non-fiction)? What clues on the cover can you use to support your ideas?
2. If you explore your backyard or a park near your house, what animals might you see?
3. The title of the story is *Chicken, Pig, Cow and the Purple Problem*. Which character do you think has the "Purple Problem?" How could the color purple be a problem?
4. Have you ever felt embarrassed or sad about your appearance (the way that you look)? What advice would you give someone who was feeling sad about looking differently?

WHILE READING THE BOOK

Activities to check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.

1. On the page where Cow is looking at other cows in a book, the story describes Cow as “not content.” What do you think the word “content” means? What clues from the rest of the page can you use to help you figure out the meaning of the word?
2. Why did Cow want to add brown, grey, and hooves to her appearance?
3. How do Chicken and Pig feel when they wake up to find that Cow is gone?
4. To describe the squirrel, the author uses the words, “big and bunchy.” Close your eyes and say these words. What pictures pop into your head when you say them?
5. Why do Pig and Chicken run away when they realize that the Squirrel is not Cow?
6. Why do Pig and Chicken call Cow “brave?” What actions made her brave?
7. At the end of the story, when Cow gets rid of all the extra stuff she was wearing, she says she “feels much better.” Why do you think she feels better once all of the extra stuff is off?

AFTER READING THE BOOK

Activities to inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this particular text, and stimulate further extensions.

1. What was the setting of the story (where did the story take place)? Was there only one setting, or did the setting change throughout the story?
2. What was the author's message of this story? How do Cow's feelings about her purple spots change in the story?
3. How would the story change if Chicken and Pig had liked all of the stuff Cow added to her appearance?
4. In the story, Cow learns to love her purple spots because they are special even though they make her look differently from other cows.