

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: Blue Happiness

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**Writer-in-Residence:** Jennifer Quartararo

**Grade Level:** 5th-12th

**Model Works Used:** My Private Property by Mary Ruefle

**Literary Learning objective(s):** Students will be able to think about the connection between emotion and color more critically and use it to strengthen the imagery in their writing.

**Themes:** Imagery, metaphor.

**MDE/SEL Standards:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

**Materials Needed:** Paper, pencil/pen, computer.

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### Opening Activity

Welcome!

As a warm up, watch this short video that offers up a very brief mindfulness activity to help you get ready for today's writing lesson! This activity will help you to feel more centered and ready to write!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZME0JKiweL4&feature=emb\\_rel\\_end](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZME0JKiweL4&feature=emb_rel_end)

### Pre-Discussion

Take a minute to think about your favorite color or colors.

What are they? What things do you have that are this color? What do you see around you that is your favorite color right now? What other colors do you see around you? How do you feel when you wear or see your favorite color?

Have you ever noticed how certain colors might impact your mood? Maybe you have a red shirt that makes you feel powerful, or an orange sweater that makes you feel warm. Colors can have a very strong impact on us, and using color in your writing can help to add depth and strength to your poems and other writing.

For today's lesson we're going to think about our own connections to color so we can use color more confidently in our writing.

### Model Poem Discussion

Read through these two passages from Mary Ruefle about what blue happiness and gray happiness look and feel like:

“Blue happiness is sweetness cut into strips with scissors and then into little pieces by a knife, it is the happiness of reverie and nostalgia: it may be, for example, the memory of a happiness that is now only a memory, it has receded into a niche that cannot be dusted for it is beyond your reach; distinct and dusty, blue happiness lies in your inability to dust it, it is as unreachable as the sky, it is a fact reflecting the sadness of all facts. Blue happiness is that which you wish to forget, but cannot.”

“Gray happiness is the happiness of paper clips and rubber bands, of rain and squirrels and chewing gum, ointments and movie theaters. Gray happiness is the most common of all happiness, it is the happiness of sand in the desert and sand on the beach, the happiness of keys in a pocket, cans on a shelf, hair in a comb, dry-cleaning, and raisins. Grey happiness is beautiful, but not to be confused with the beauty of blue happiness, which is irreplaceable. Sad to say, gray happiness is replaceable, it can be replaced daily, it is the sadness of a melting snowman in a snowstorm.”

If you're feeling brave read these passages aloud, it really helps!

After reading through these two passages, what stood out to you? On a separate piece of paper mark or highlight the words and sentences that most resonated or stood out to you. How did each passage make you feel?

### Prewriting

On a piece of a paper list out each of these colors and give each color a feeling or emotion.

Make these emotions personal to you, not what you think they have to represent to anyone else! Maybe to you black is a color of happiness, and maybe yellow is a color of frustration. There are no wrong answers!

Red  
Purple

Blue  
Green  
Yellow  
Orange  
Black  
White

### Writing Prompt

Using the two excerpts from Mary Ruefle as a model, now write a poem that focuses on color.

Questions to Consider While Writing:

What color makes you happiest? Can you remember a very specific memory of happiness connected to that color? What if your happiness was a place? Would it be dry like the desert? Would it be a lake at the top of a mountain on a sunny day? Would it be a forest covered in moss in the fall? An empty grocery store with bright, fluorescent lighting and endless rows of cereal? The rocky coast of the ocean on a day the waves are fierce? Look back at how specific Mary Ruefle is when she writes about these colors!

### Share / Reflect

Were you able to finish a poem? How did it feel to write about color? Is there someone you could read your poem aloud to? If not, read it aloud to yourself! After reading aloud think of one other way you might like to share your poem, maybe you could email it or text it or post it online!

### Supplemental Materials

*Video with a mindfulness activity:*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZME0JKiweL4&feature=emb\\_rel\\_end](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZME0JKiweL4&feature=emb_rel_end)

Check/Highlight all that apply

- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- A step of the writing process

**Planning & Reflection Strategy**

New device, concept or theme

**Social-Emotional Learning**

**Self-Management**

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

**Responsible-Decision Making**

**Self-Awareness**