



Title: Red Sings From Treetops

Author: Joyce Kilmer

Illustrator: Pamela Zagarenski

Themes: Seasons

Hear the book read aloud here: [Red Sings from Treetops](#)

This story is rich in descriptive language and imagery that many students, especially second language learners, will not fully grasp. It is not necessary to flesh out the meaning of everything, but rather to focus on the beauty of the language use.

★ 3rd Grade Common Core Reading Standard ★

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language/

I. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES (PREP QUESTIONS)

- Direct students' attention to the special seal on the cover. Tell them this book was awarded the Caldecott Medal which is an honor for the outstanding quality of the illustrations.
- Ask students what they know about seasons. Discuss seasonal changes that they may know but we do not experience here in San Diego. Ask students to share characteristics of the different seasons, including colors.
- Tell students this is a poetry book with a lot of very descriptive and figurative language about the different colors of the seasons. It is a celebration of colors through a year of seasons. Tell them to listen carefully for the different and beautiful ways colors are described.
- Before opening the book with students, tell them that the author chose to use a special type of **figurative language** in the title. It is called **personification** (*where human attributes are applied to unusual objects*). Ask students what word in the title is an example of this (*sings*). Tell them there will be more examples throughout.

II. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

DURING READING

- P. 1: Read; have students identify the **simile** (a comparison of two things using **like** or **as**) in the first stanza and what is being compared (*singing note/cherry*). Ask students to infer what the **red** is in the first stanza, and how they know (*birds: singing, on treetops*). Ask students what the **red** is on the road after the rain using context clues (*detailed illustration is too small for whole-group to see; worms: squirms, after rain, etc.*).
- P. 2: Read; ask students what the **green** is in the first description and how they know (*new plant growth*) and what word is an example of **personification** (*shy*). Reread the last sentence and ask students what they notice (the author's description that in spring, even the rain *tastes green*).
- P. 3: Read; point out the *goldfinches* and the *pansies* as you read. Discuss the examples of personification (**yellow** *shouts*; **yellow** and **purple** *hold hands*; they *beam*/smile; *friends*).

- P. 4: Read; discuss the examples of **white**. Point out the use of the *verb*: **white sounds** like...). Ask students which of these weather characteristics are ones we might experience during spring in San Diego.
- P. 5: Read; discuss the **personification** regarding **blue** (*hides*).
- P. 6: Read; have students infer what *in secret places* means (nests hidden in trees).
- P. 7: Read; have students infer what the **white** is in drinks (ice) and what the **yellow** examples are using context and picture clues (sun, corn, popcorn because it melts everything it touches). Discuss the personification (**yellow can touch**).
- P. 8: Read; have students determine the examples of **red** (hummingbirds; ladybugs). Discuss the **personification of red** in the last sentence (*whispers*).
- P. 9: Read; tell students there is an example of **metaphor** in the first sentence, a type of **figurative language** that compares two things by saying that something **is** something else. Have them determine what two things are being compared (*green is queen*). Ask students what other type of **figurative language** is included, and why (**personification** since a queen is a human role).
- P. 10: Read; have students determine the examples of **personification** (*humming, snoozing, dancing*).
- P. 14: Read; have students identify more examples of **personification** (*tired, sighs with relief*). Have students infer what it means that **green** is tired; time for **brown** to take over, and why.
- P. 17: Read; have students infer what **yellow** is (*bus*) and why, using context clues for evidence.
- P. 23: Read; have students determine examples of **personification** (*breathes, smiles*).
- P. 24: Read; have students determine examples of **personification** (*whispers, traces its wet finger*).
- P. 25: Read; have students decided the meaning of *tree bones*, and why.
- P. 26: Read; determine examples of **personification** (*hold hands, sisters, gone home*).
- P. 28: Read; ask students what they notice (text is an example of a **circle story**, ending as it began on p. 1).

III. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

POST READING

- Ask students which season's description they liked best, and why. Have them share examples of the descriptive language about their favorite season's description.

IV. SMALL GROUPS

- The students will enjoy focusing on the many beautiful details in each illustration. For example, on p. 2, ask students what's written on the tree trunks (*spring*)? The wheel (*circle*)? Ask students how such attention to detail and color might have affected the illustrations for the award. Why?
- Have students notice things in the illustrations that are unusual, hidden, or do not belong. Some details to note: p. 1 (wheels under the feet); p. 4 (window in sky); p. 8 (season written on scarf); pp. 20-21 (big wheels under feet, whales in sky, words on ground); p. 22 (season on scarf); p. 25 (paper airplanes); p. 26 (trees have doors, windows); etc.