Discuss communication with students. As a class, list the different ways in which human beings can communicate with one another, e.g. speaking, nonverbal gestures, sign language, writing (emails, letters, text messages), signalling. How do students prefer to communicate? Face to face, via SMS? Why?

The Black Book of Colours uses several different methods to communicate an idea to the reader. Ask students to identify these methods.

Ask students to each collect an object small enough to hold in their hands (they shouldn’t show anyone else their object). Then ask students in pairs to describe their object to their partner (who either has their eyes closed or is blindfolded). Can their partner guess what it is? Without telling them the answer, students then give their object to the blindfolded partner. Has feeling/touching the object helped them to identify what it is?

Being blind may be seen as having a disability, but what ability is shown in The Black Book of Colours? Discuss disabilities with students and how these can be overcome with abilities.

How does The Black Book of Colours help you to imagine the world if you were blind? Ask students to imagine an everyday task that they do – how would being blind affect this task?

List the different colours that are identified in this book. Ask students to find further words and sentences to help describe these.

Ask students to make their own descriptive sentences for different colours. Ask students to read these to each other and identify the colours that they are describing.

Ask students to choose a colour and write down a way in which you would hear, touch, taste or smell that colour.

Ask students to research an ancient form of communication such as hieroglyphs or cave painting. Make a timeline of the different ways in which humans have communicated throughout history. Include the invention of braille on your timeline.

Researching colour. Ask students to research a colour of their choice. They can find out how that colour can be made (through using pigments and dyes), if the colour has significant meaning in society or a particular emotional meaning.

It is very hard for a sighted person to imagine what it is like to be blind. This groundbreaking book endeavours to convey the experience of a person who can only see through his or her sense of touch, taste, smell or hearing. Raised black line drawings on black paper accompany a beautifully written text describing colours through imagery. The text is translated into braille and there is a full braille alphabet at the back of the book.

“Fascinating, challenging and lovely.” Kirkus Reviews


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