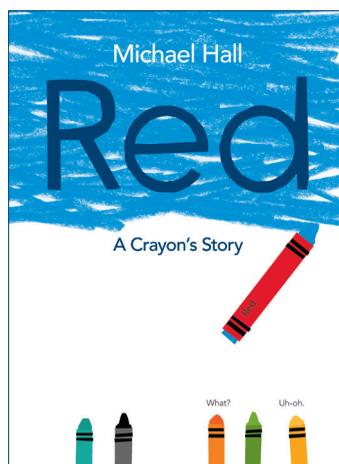


ABOUT THE BOOK



Red has a bright red label but he is, in fact, blue. His teacher tries to help him be red (let's draw strawberries!), his mother tries to help him be red by sending him out on a playdate with a yellow classmate (go draw a nice orange!), and the scissors try to help him be red by snipping his label so that he has room to breathe. But Red is miserable. He just can't be red, no matter how hard he tries! Finally, a brand-new friend offers a brand-new perspective, and Red discovers what readers have known all along. He's blue! Funny, insightful, layered, and colorful, this new picture book by Michael Hall is about being true to your inner self and following your own path.

ABOUT MICHAEL HALL

Michael Hall is an award-winning designer whose work has been widely recognized for its simple and engaging approach. He studied biochemistry and psychology at the University of Michigan and worked in biomedical research for several years before becoming a designer. He is the creator of the *New York Times*–bestselling *My Heart Is like a Zoo* and the acclaimed *Perfect Square*, *Cat Tale*, and *It's an Orange Aardvark!* He is also the creative director of the Hall Kelley design firm. He lives with his family in St. Paul, Minnesota. You can reach him online at www.michaelhallstudio.com.



Photo by Debra Kelley

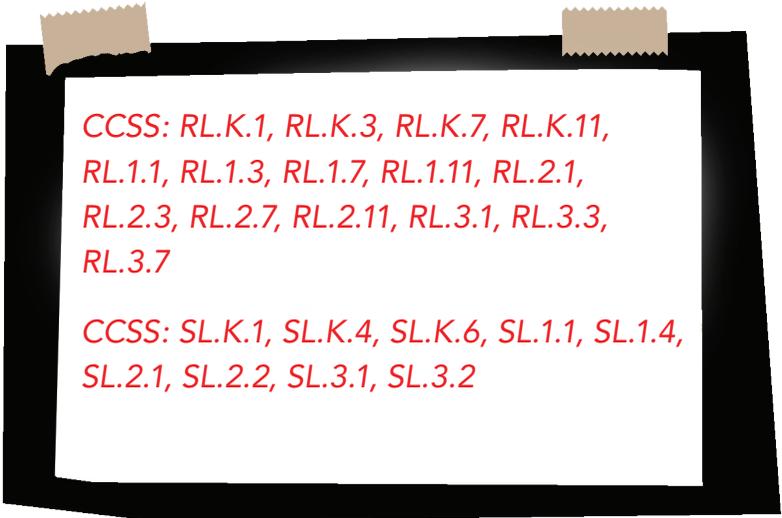
BEFORE READING

Take out a box of crayons and hold up one crayon. Ask the children what color crayon you are holding. How do they know it is that color? What would they draw with that particular color? Do this with several different crayons. Then begin reading the story.



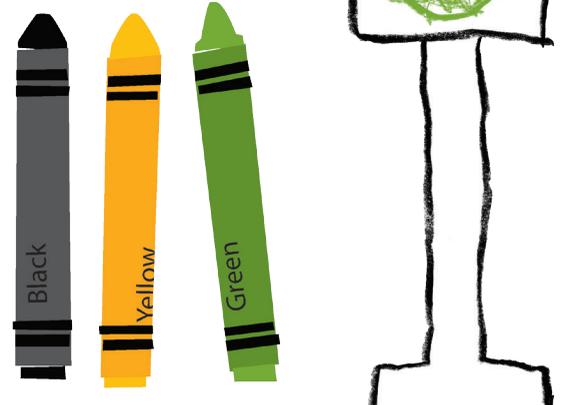
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- Read the first page of the story (“He was red”) and ask children what they notice.
 - Why did everyone expect Red to draw red things? Does it surprise you that no one noticed what he was really like?
 - Pause after the page on which yellow and red try to make an orange that shows up green instead. Ask children why this happened.
 - On the next page, Red’s grandparents speak. Ask children why they think Hall portrayed the grandparents as small silver and gray crayons.
 - Pause after reading the opinions under “Everyone seemed to have something to say.” Do you agree with everyone’s comments? Why or why not?
 - Read the pages about art supplies. How do you think the different art supplies can/should help Red?
 - After reading “One day, he met a new friend,” ask children how Berry is different from everyone else.
 - What does Berry help the others understand? Why is this so important?
 - Until he meets Berry, Red cannot be himself because everyone believes he is different than he actually is. Do you make judgments about people based on their appearances? Do people make assumptions about you?



CCSS: RL.K.1, RL.K.3, RL.K.7, RL.K.11, RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.7, RL.1.11, RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.7, RL.2.11, RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.7

CCSS: SL.K.1, SL.K.4, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.4, SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.3.1, SL.3.2





GROUP ACTIVITIES

- **Creative Colors.** Make a color chart listing different shades of each color. For example, under “red,” you can also write “scarlet” and “vermilion”; under “green,” you can include “olive” and “jade”; and under “purple,” you can write “violet” and “magenta.” Children will likely learn some new color words. Then ask children to write a story or a poem in which they use some of the color words listed on the chart. For younger kids, list the names of basic colors and have kids make drawings using each of the colors on the chart. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11, SL.K.1, SL.K.5, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.5, SL.2.1, SL.3.1*
- **Color Concentration.** Using the list of colors from the above activity, have the group create a color concentration (or memory) game. Assign pairs of children a color and give them two index cards; one partner writes the name of the color on his/her card, while the other draws the color on his/her card. When the cards are ready, mix them together into a deck and have kids place them face down in rows of 5 or 6 cards. If there are more than 24 cards, you might split the cards in half and play two separate games. To play, children take turns flipping over cards, trying to find matches (the color and the name of the color). If the cards match, the child keeps the cards. If the cards don’t match, the child turns them back over. All players must “concentrate” to remember where the cards are. At the end of the game, the person with the most matches wins. For younger children, the group leader can prepare the cards for the game using basic colors. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11, SL.K.6*
- **Fruitful Fun.** Divide the group into small teams and assign each team a color. Have each team create a poster depicting fruits and vegetables of that color. Children might need to do some research to complete this task. They should label each item on their poster. Display the posters and have the group choose their favorite fruits and vegetables from each poster. As an extension, ask the children and their families to cut and prepare at home one fruit or vegetable to bring, so that the group can make a fruit salad and/or vegetable salad. For younger children, bring in fruits or vegetables (or use photographs) and have kids sort the items by color. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11*
- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.** Have children use the internet to research how to recycle crayons. If you have access to an oven, gather the necessary materials (ovenproof molds, old crayons) and recycle the crayons to make new multicolored, shaped crayons. Then have children create an art project using the new recycled crayons. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11*
- **Somewhere Over the Rainbow.** Have children choose one color from the rainbow and list as many things as they can of that color. Then ask them to design a crayon drawing of a world that contains things of only that color. Children should also write a narrative about living in this world. What would it be like? How would you live? What would you have in that world, and what would you need that you didn’t already have? How could you solve those problems with the items you have? Younger kids can simply choose or be assigned one color with which to create their picture. *CCSS: W.K.3, W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.11*



GROUP ACTIVITIES

- **Getting to Know You.** Pair children and have them prepare to interview each other. Children should write down questions to ask their partners, aiming to learn something about their partners that they may not have known before. After the interviews, during which they should record the answers, each child should write an article describing his/her partner. These articles can be collated into a class newspaper. Younger children can complete this activity by taking turns asking and answering questions, and then they can share with the entire group something new that they learned about their partner. *CCSS: W.K.2, W.K.8, W.K.11, W.1.2, W.1.8, W.1.11, W.2.2, W.2.8, W.2.11, W.3.2, W.3.11, SL.K.1, SL.K.3, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, SL.2.1, SL.2.3, SL.3.1, SL.3.3*
- **Be Who You Are.** Even though everyone thought Red would excel at drawing red things, he was actually best at drawing blue things. Ask kids to think about their own abilities and talents. What are they able to do well? What are their unique talents? What do they want to learn to do better? Have kids turn and talk with a partner. Then have them write a narrative about their strengths and interests. Younger children can draw a picture that shows them demonstrating their ability or talent. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11, SL.K.1, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.1.5, SL.2.1, SL.3.1*
- **What's My Group?** Reread the spread that begins "All the art supplies wanted to help." Have children name the supplies they see (tape, crayons, scissors, pencil) and suggest other items that belong in the category of art supplies (e.g., paint, markers, glitter, glue). Then say or write a list of items (e.g., plane, car, bus, boat) and ask kids to name the category to which all these items belong (transportation). Then you or the children can come up with more groups of items for the class to categorize. For younger kids, use concrete objects for this activity. *CCSS: SL.K.1, SL.K.6, SL.1.1, SL.2.1, SL.3.1*
- **Mix and Match.** Reread the pages "His mother thought he needed to mix with other colors" and "But they made a big greenish one." Then provide children with primary-colored finger paints (red, blue, and yellow) and large glossy paper. Have kids create pictures or designs by mixing paints and creating new colors as they work. Older children can write about their paintings when they are completed. *CCSS: W.K.11, W.1.11, W.2.11, W.3.11*



Guide created by Sue Ornstein, a first-grade teacher in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York.

