

CONCEPT MAP OF UNIT

In this unit, we will learn about skin tones, ethnic origins, and how we learn to respect one another for the beauty within us. We start out our unit learning about colors generally, which will lead to a discussion of cultural diversity and learning and appreciating more about our origin stories.

TOPIC

We are more than the colors of the rainbow; we are beautiful

TEACHER

GRADE

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to read a text for multiple purposes.

Students will be able to talk about cultural origin, race, and skin tone with appreciation for self and one another.

Students will be able to craft questions to interview their families about their origin stories.

RESOURCES

Chart paper

Graphic with a gender-neutral figures

Crayons that are designed to help color skin tones. A set for each table

Suggested origin sheet to parents

VOCABULARY

ancestors

origin

cultural tradition

PROCEDURES

1. Ask the students what they saw in the world that had their favorite colors.
2. Introduce the book, *Daddy, Why am I brown?* by sharing who the author is and that the book takes what we learn about colors and helps us to apply it to us as people. We are going to learn about why we all have different skin tones and how this relates to where our people come from, how this diversity is beautiful and important.
3. Tell the students that you plan to read the book three times. The first time, you just want them to enjoy the book and being read to. The second time, you want them to listen for meaning. What it means to them. The third time, you want them to read it for questions they might ask the author about the book and questions they have for each other to discuss.
4. Read the book. Remind the students before you read each time what the purpose of their listening should be.
5. After reading the book aloud, ask the students, what questions they have to discuss. **Note for teachers: Talk to students about being kind with their words. They should not use food to describe color and should be careful not to make comparisons that could lead**

to Black and Brown kids being compared to dirt, poop, or other stigmatizing examples.) Here is a resource for teachers <https://writingwithcolor.tumblr.com>

6. Most likely this will emerge from the students, but here are some questions you might ask them: “What have you learned about human skin tones? What is different about color when it relates to human beings? Where do people who have darker skin tones generally live or come from? Where do people who have lighter skin tones generally live or come from? and it could be a very very long time ago that their ancestors came from this place. Can you think about your own family? Where does your family come from? How are skin tones different across your family?”
7. Give out the graphic organizer to the students with gender neutral figures. On the page, ask the students to circle the identifier for the person (grandparent, parent, cousin, aunt/uncle, etc) and then try to use their crayons to match their skin tones (these crayons are special, meant to help with skin tones). For each person they named, write one thing that you love about that person. Write underneath that one thing that is kind of annoying. **Teacher note: I encourage you to use different pages from a coloring book like *Girls Are Not Chicks* or *Gork and Friends* or *Girls will be Boys will be Girls* or *Super-Soft Superheroes*. You can of course create your own for your context. You can also use a resource like this from [Teachers Pay Teachers](#).**
8. After the students have had had time to draw, ask them “Was there anyone that you could only think of one amazing thing or one annoying thing? Try a little harder to find two.”
9. Discuss with the students. What realizations can we make from this activity? [Coloring skin tones is difficult. Genetics is really interesting. It is amazing what makes us up. Human beings are complex and beautiful. etc]
10. Homework: Ask your parents about where your families come from. Look at some of the pictures that your family has. If there is a specific country or a region, go online together and look for pictures of people from that region or country. Learn a little bit about the cultures there. Are there cultural traditions that you still do in your family? Share out in circle time for Lesson 4. Bring in one picture and prepare to talk about it. You can also draw a picture.
11. Before class ends, ask the students to brainstorm together what kinds of questions they might ask of their parents. They can try those questions out on you.
12. **Teacher to parents: Consider including a sheet with suggestions for parents. (e.g., if they don't know countries then maybe regions like West Africa, South East Asia, South America, etc...), and nudging parents to talk about where their families came from prior to European colonization (noting that Indigenous folks are from areas around North or South America).**

REFLECTIONS

Letter example to parents

Dear Guardians/Parents,

Your children read the story, *Daddy, Why am I brown?* today, which is prompting them to ask questions about family origins. We practiced together some questions that they might ask. Understandably, you yourself might not know a lot about where your family comes from. If you don't know specific countries, for example, you might try identifying a region like West Africa, South East Asia, South America or using technology to look up people from a

REFLECTIONS

region. You might find some surprises in cultural traditions that you still preserve. You could also tell stories about you grew up and your parents. I truly hope that you are able to share some aspect of wonder with your child.