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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Mentor Texts That Multitask, Grades K-8*, by Pamela Koutrakos.

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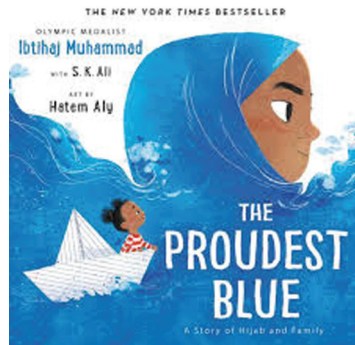
Lesson Set Aligned to the Developing Stage

Featured Text: *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad (2019), With S. K. Ali



Text Pairings

- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi (2001)
- *Sheila Rae, The Brave* by Kevin Henkes (1987)
- *Ling and Ting* (series) by Grace Lin (2010)
- *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds (2004)
- *Exclamation Mark* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (2013)
- *Hair Love*, an animated short film written by Matthew A. Cherry (Cherry et al., 2019) (online resource)



WHAT?

This beautiful and captivating first-day-of-school story follows Faizah and her older sister, Asiya. It highlights the excitement of new milestones, including Asiya's first day of hijab. *The Proudest Blue* spotlights the powerful bond of sisterhood as Asiya teaches Faizah what it means to be proud of who you are and how to rise above the misinformed, hurtful words of others.

WHY?

The storyline is uplifting and inspiring. The writing is poetic and includes a variety of thoughtful choices around language and conventions. The illustrations are colorful and whimsical, and visually storytell alongside the words.

WHEN?

This text fits well with a fiction genre study, a character study, and social justice units. It can also be a mentor text in a narrative writing unit.



Content Connections

- Math: ordinal numbers, number forms (standard, word, and expanded form)
- Personal and Community Wellness: identity affirmation, learning about and celebrating different family and community traditions, friendship, bullying, bystanders, upstanders, advocacy

INVESTIGATING IDEAS THROUGH INQUIRY

THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY BY IBTIHAJ MUHAMMAD (2019)

This inquiry lesson focuses on apostrophes.

Guiding Inquiry: *What is the job of an apostrophe?*

- **Remind** students of previous reading of the text. Look closely at the cover and use this image to recall information about the characters, basic plot, and so on.
- **Discuss** what students already know about apostrophes. Pose the guiding inquiry.
- **Explore** initial ideas. Then, project the text using a document camera.
- **Examine** each page and locate the apostrophes. Use highlighter tape to mark each word and/or list the found words with an apostrophe. Here are the included words with apostrophes: *there's, it's, we're, I'm, C'mon, she's, what's, don't, Asiya's, isn't, can't, kids', won't*, and *I'll*.
- **Ask** the class, "What can we discover/confirm about apostrophes from reading *The Proudest Blue*?" Invite students to use prior knowledge *and* these findings to share and support ideas about the job(s) of an apostrophe.
- **Investigate** shared ideas by using partner discussion to build thinking, test theories, and debate discoveries.

- **Summarize** findings. Sort the found words by "function" of the apostrophe. Ask students to label each group.

Check-Up

- Listen in on partner conversations. Invite partnerships to talk more about the "label" given to each type of apostrophe and generate additional ideas that fit into that group.
- Over the coming days and weeks, continue to identify apostrophes while reading and try on correct use of apostrophes while writing.

What Else?

- Provide time for students to hunt their independent reading books to find other words with apostrophes. Sort found words according to the purpose of the apostrophe. Add found words to the class list.
- Ask students to hunt their own writing for words with apostrophes. Ask them to check to see if an apostrophe was needed and/or properly used. Provide time and support as students confirm proper use and/or fix up (as needed).

What is this? 

Why do we use it?

The Proudest Blue not are is possessive

there's it's kids' Other texts

we're Asiya's won't

she's what's can't

don't

Where will you find & use an apostrophe?

Handwritten examples on sticky notes:

- into Enimagines The World: It's a slight climb to his cluttered apt where he's greeted
- Sandy by the sea: "AND bounded SWASHBUSTLE deck without permission."
- The Arabic quilt: "she doesn't want to be different."
- The Name Jar: "You're the new girl, right?"
- FAWA SINGH: "You know yourself, Fawa, and you know what you're capable of."
- The Arabic quilt: "When it is KANZI's turn, she says bravely..."
- FAWA SINGH: "It's too hard. He's too weak."
- The Name Jar: "The parent Fadi's Falah, Tony's Pizzu, & Dato Dato"

This color-coded chart was created during the inquiry. Third graders then added additional examples in the days that followed this inquiry.

BUILDING VISION VIA MODELED AND GUIDED PRACTICE

THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY BY IBTIHAJ MUHAMMAD (2019)

For this entire cycle of shared reading, use the two-page spread from *The Proudest Blue* that starts, “Recess time is for five cartwheels in a row.”

Session 1: Literal Comprehension (plot sequencing)

- **Reread** the two pages.
- **Model** using think-aloud: *What’s happened so far?* State one or two events. Invite students to signal (thumbs-up or thumbs-down) if they agree or disagree with you.
- **Prompt** students to talk in partnerships: *What happened after this part?*
- **Discuss** a few key events from the story.

Session 2: Word Study (homophones)

- **Reread** the two pages. Review prior knowledge of homophones.
- **Play** “I Spy” to find examples of homophones on these pages (*blue, to, shoes, not*).
- **Discuss** what these words mean, and then have volunteers share how to spell the homophone partner words (*blew, two and too, shoos, knot*). Invite students to share more about the meanings of partner words.
- **Summarize** understanding of these commonly confused words.

Session 3: Word Study (compound words)

- **Reread** the two pages.
- **Discuss** what a compound word is.
- **Identify** the two compound words (*tablecloth, schoolyard*).
- **Collaboratively brainstorm and generate** a list of other compound words.

- **Practice** using some of these words in casual partner conversation.

Session 4: Analysis (thinking critically about takeaways)

- **Reread** the same two pages *and* the next two pages, which begin, “Asiya’s hijab isn’t a tablecloth.”
- **Discuss** Mama’s words: *What do they mean? How are they significant to the story?*
- **Ponder and share** personal takeaways: *What do Mama’s words mean to you?* Welcome and validate student contributions and ideas.

✓ Check-Up

Observe students during partner, small-group, and whole-class conversation. Jot quick notes to remember which highlighted skills and concepts require continued explicit instruction. Use the checklist and record-keeping templates available online at resources.corwin.com/mttm.

? What Else?

You might consider a session of shared reading focused on any of the following:

- Support the work introduced in the inquiry practice, delving further into contractions (*isn’t, don’t, they are*).
- Discuss possessives, including possessive pronouns (*Asiya’s, her, their, yours*).
- Study verb tenses or subject–verb agreement.
- Practice fluent reading, specifically paying attention to and pausing at punctuation.
- Study the author’s craft decision: Why did the author use a fragment (*Only blue*)?

1. We CELEBRATE who we are.
 2. We INCLUDE others.
 3. We "go high." (Mrs. Obama)
- ASIYA...



After session 4, students in this third-grade class continued discussing their personal takeaways. They considered words they would like to share with the characters in the book.

NURTURING AND SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY BY IBTIHAJ MUHAMMAD (2019)

In this lesson, readers are encouraged to look for lasting takeaways in the books they read.

- **Recall** previous conversation around lessons learned in *The Proudest Blue*.
- **State** that when readers finish reading a book, they don't say "that was nice" and pick up the next one; instead, readers take some time to linger on the lesson(s) learned and/or ponder what they will remember.
- **Model** one process for lingering a bit longer on a recent reading experience.
 - Reflect on a recently read text and name a lesson that felt particularly important.
 - Ask yourself, "How could I carry this book with me after today? How might I use this/these lesson(s) in my own life?"
 - Say or jot different ideas.
- **Encourage** students to consider other lessons and/or takeaways. Introduce some of the *Language Levers* to jump-start thinking and conversation.
- **Remind** students not only how to do this work, but also when they would try it and why it is important. Reiterate that readers are always encouraged to consider how a book impacted them and how they could carry a piece of the book with them.
- **Invite** students to try this out whenever they finish a book.

✓ Check-Up

Over the subsequent days and weeks, meet individually with students (or meet with students in small groups). Ask them to share their ideas and/or recent jots about book lessons and takeaways. You might look for the following examples of transfer:

- Students are able to name a lesson or takeaway from a recently read text.
- Students are able to name multiple lessons and takeaways from recently read texts.
- Students share how they were impacted by recent reading.
- Students articulate what they will carry with them as a result of recent reading.
- Students explain *how* they lingered on a text and why this strategy is useful.

Use what you observe during these interactions to provide asset-based feedback.



Language Levers

You may decide to provide prompts to help some students try this work with greater confidence. You might also *co-create* conversational stems with students during this lesson. A few possibilities include:

- *I learned that . . .*
- *I learned to . . .*
- *[Character name] taught me to . . .*
- *[Character name] taught me that . . .*
- *After reading this book, I will start . . . because . . .*
- *After reading this book, I will stop . . . because . . .*
- *I think differently about . . . now.*
- *Something I want to remember from this book is . . .*

Writers Linger on Lessons

What I Took Away	Why It Matters	How I'll Use it
I learned that even when people are unkind, we can ignore them and reject their hurtful words.	Asiya taught me to be strong. She is resilient. We all have hard times, but we can make the choice to face our challenges.	After reading this book, I will remember to think before I speak. I don't want my words to hurt others. I want to always remember that words have more power than we realize. I need to be responsible. Also, when my feelings are hurt by other people's words or actions, I will try not to keep that hurt inside. I will talk to people I trust and share my feelings. This is how I can cope with what I learned.

This example was created by a fourth-grade student during this lesson.

* READERS POUNDER TAKEAWAYS *		
I just finished reading <i>Blended</i> by Sharon M. Draper		
I LEARNED...	I REALIZED...	I PLAN TO...
People often do and say ignorant and hurtful things.	It's confusing! Isabella deals with harsh comments from strangers, classmates, and so-called friends. It's EXHAUSTING!	Be more brave. Step in when someone is RUDE. Be a better friend by speaking up WHEN something happens, NOT afterward or in private.
Families are all different.	My family is only one kind of family. I know this seems silly to realize now but I never thought about this before. I didn't realize what it was like to go back and forth between family members and live in two different places. That's got to be HARD.	Thank my mom for all she does. Also, I want to get to know Kayla's dad better. I only really know her mom and I've only been to her mom's house.

This artifact was created by a fifth-grade student after this lesson.

? What Else?

- Connect to the lessons inherent in the story. Invite students to use those connections to engage in oral storytelling or flashdraft a personal narrative. A possible prompt could be *A Time When You Felt/Learned . . .*
- Building social comprehension is an important aspect of school learning. Sara Ahmed's (2018) *Being the Change* offers

many lesson ideas that help to build social comprehension. You might decide to collaborate as a class to create the identity webs Ahmed describes for the main character(s) in this book. Students could then follow up by creating or adding to their own personal identity webs. The conversation that results may be as powerful as the experience of making the webs themselves.

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