

10 Things Every Teacher Should Know

About Teaching With

Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day

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Unchained Spirit Enterprises

1) The first thing you should know is that your students are going to LOVE the artwork in this book. Two students from New Jersey and 30 students from the Harlem School of the Arts created the artwork in *Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day*. Children's art is captivating to children, and the minute students are captivated by a book's illustrations is your first teachable moment. Take a picture walk with them through this book and discuss what they see happening. You can use this pictorial exploration to write key words and phrases from the book that you can teach your students to recognize and read. Students are deeply attracted to color and images and heavily influenced by them. They are going to want to learn to read this book, just because of the vibrant, colorful images alone.

2) The second thing you should know about *Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day* is that one of the most powerful educational tools embedded in this book is its many sets of rhyming words, such as: know, snow, pain, rain, together, weather, jail, bail, wail, move, groove, pay, say, day, speech, teach, see, be, free, knee, tree, brave, grave, knowledge, college, blind, unkind, mind, cope, hope, cold, bold, laws, flaws, slow, below, alive, strive, survived, trouble, rubble, money, honey, parades, shade, sweet, feet, and dove, love.

We know that children love rhymes because they're fun. But research tells us that rhyme builds memory, vocabulary, and confidence faster than any other reading technique. Confidence is crucial in helping beginning readers see themselves as fluent, successful readers.

The thing I love most about rhymes is what Author Jim Trelease said. He said rhymes are so powerful because they are comfortable, predictable, and are the closest things to a mother's heartbeat. Children love rhymes because they sound like the sound they've known since their days in the womb. And that's why they're going to love *Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day* and the rhyming lessons you teach using it.

3) The third thing you should know is that you can teach your students tons of English language skills using this book alone. No matter their ages or grades. Unlike some children's books that are written for a certain age group or reading level, *Kara Finds Sunshine* gives you a variety of sentence lengths and styles. Declarative, Imperative, Interrogative, Exclamatory, Complete, Compound, and Complex Sentences can be found in this book. Not to mention compound words, onomatopoeia (words that are sounds), and all sorts of grammar conventions. Explain the different types of sentences or words, and send your students on a hunt. To make it even more interesting, group them into teams, and enjoy!

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4) You can begin or extend your students' social studies and current events education with this book. You can use the book to teach the about the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Civil Rights movement, Native Americans, events that occurred during the Vietnam War, World War II and the Holocaust, discrimination against people of color and people with disabilities. You can discuss America's history as it relates to African Americans, Latinos, and Asians and their experiences in social justice in the U.S. and other places around the world.

5) You also can enhance your students' understanding of Phonics: *Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day* contains many examples of long vowels, short vowels, silent e, long i, vowel and consonant blends. Moreover, there are four very common vowel pairs in this book. They are: **ow**, as in down and drowned; and **ou**, as in sound and ground; **ee**, as in sweet and feet, and **ai** as in pain and rain. The phonics lessons are nearly unlimited with this book.

6) You can teach and enhance your students' understanding of Proper Nouns – Proper Nouns, in general, are like common nouns. They identify people, places, things, events, qualities and ideas. Proper Nouns could be considered Super Nouns because they have the power to **name** things. Names make things unique and powerful. Help your students understand that their names are Proper Nouns. The name of the city or town they reside in is a Proper Noun. Each student and his hometown are unique. They are the only ones that exist and that gives them power.

Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day contains Proper Nouns names, such as Harriet Tubman, Helen Keller, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King, and places such as, Alabama, New Orleans, Mississippi, Louisiana, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Send students on a Proper Noun hunt to see if they can identify at least one Proper Noun on each page OR find a common noun that they can turn into a Proper Noun.

7) You can play games, such as Rhyming "BINGO," with vocabulary from this book. Write me for a list of the entire set of rhyming words, plus a blank card that can be filled in like a BINGO Card and you'll be on your way to helping boost your students' vocabulary and comprehension.

8) You can help students jumpstart their dramatic skills using *Kara Finds Sunshine*. This book is nothing short of an emotional roller-coaster ride, with characters that experience highs, lows, joy, pain, and excitement. Give your students a license to be dramatic – and help them improve their literacy skills -- by having them role-play thrilling characters from this book.

9) You can continue to build your students' comprehension skills using this book. When children can explain or answer questions about what they read or what's being read to them, that's a good signal that they comprehend the story. *Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day* contains lots of fascinating situations, events, and figures, which make it easy to check students' comprehension.

10) Finally, you can use your students' desires to create art to help them enhance their reading and writing skills. Encourage them to illustrate and write a short essay on what brings them sunshine, or tell a short story about how they learned to heal from pain and find sunshine.