



## The Black Book of Colours

Menena Cottin • Rosana Faría



### Synopsis

#### **The Black Book of Colours**

By Menena Cottin &  
Rosana Faría  
ISBN: 9781406322187  
ARRP: \$19.95  
NZRRP: \$24.99  
No. of Pages: 24

#### **Learning Areas:**

English  
- Language  
- Communication  
Art  
- Colour  
- Texture  
Health/PDHPE  
- Disability/Ability

#### **Themes:**

Language  
Communication  
Disability/Ability  
Sight/Seeing  
Colours  
Braille  
Touch  
Alphabet

#### **Age Range:**

All

#### **Genre:**

Picture Book  
Braille

#### **Questions for:**

Primary / Secondary

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*

Winner of the prestigious **Bologna Ragazzi "New Horizons"** prize in 2007.

### Author / Illus. Focus

Menena Cottin is a graphic designer and illustrator from Caracas, Venezuela. Rosana Faría was also born in Caracas. She studied graphic design at the Neumann Design Institute and now works as a children's book illustrator and graphic designer.

### Questions & Activities:

- 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.
- Make your 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 make their own braille alphabet flashcards. Put the braille letter on one side of the card and the visual representation of the letter on the other. Ask students to create words and spell colours with their cards.
- Ask students to write a review of *The Black Book of Colours*, focussing on how this book helps them to "see" from someone else's perspective.
- Who was Louis Braille? Ask students to research Louis Braille and present a report on him. Include such information as: *when he was born; where he was born; when he died; how and when he invented braille.*
- 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.