

Why Snow Is White: A Story for Holi

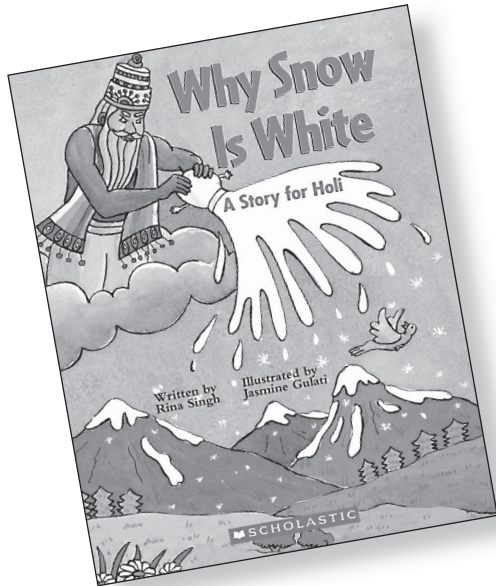
Written by Rina Singh

Illustrated by Jasmine Gulati

Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Realistic/Fantasy Story

Guided Reading Level: O

Summary: Suraj loves to hear his mother's stories. In this book, Suraj's mother tells a story about the god of colours and how he decided to colour the world.



Text Features

- ▶ pronunciation guide
- ▶ a note from the author and illustrator

Visual Literacy

- ▶ italicized words

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations are highly supportive of text
- ▶ pronunciation guide

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ ellipses
- ▶ dash
- ▶ hyphen
- ▶ vocabulary: *gukkia, gulal, Holi, papdi, Suraj, easel, sketching, festival, celebration, knowledge*

First Session (pages 2-7)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ using a range of word-solving strategies to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ using the pronunciation guide to discover how to pronounce unfamiliar vocabulary

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze and understand facts
- ▶ make inferences based on the text and illustrations
- ▶ use the pronunciation guide to discover how to pronounce unfamiliar vocabulary
- ▶ use a range of word-solving strategies to work out unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ discussing with a partner
- ▶ listening to others



BEFORE READING

**Making connections:
text to self/analyzing**

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Say, *Today, we’re going to read a story about a special holiday in India. This holiday is all about colours. Before we open the book, close your eyes and when I name a colour I want you to think of two things—an example from nature that is that colour and how the colour makes you feel.* Begin with the colour red and record students’ suggestions. This chart will be referred to later.

Colour	Example from nature	How the colour makes you feel
red	apple	angry

Text features

Show the front cover of the book and read the title. Ask, *What do you notice about the title?* (two titles on the cover) Say, *Some authors use two titles on their books. The first is called the main title; the second one is the subtitle.* Ask, *Why do you think the author used a main title and a subtitle for her book?* (The main title captures the reader’s interest. The subtitle tells the reader what the book is about.)

Text features/visual literacy

Overcoming Text Challenges

Open the book to the inside front cover. Read “A Note from the Author” and “About the Illustrator.” Ask, *Why do you think these notes were included? How will it help you as you read the book?* Direct students’ attention to the “How to say it” box on the inside back cover and say, *When we read the story, the author has provided us with a few hints to help us as we read. There are some words that appear in italics. These may be words that you do not know. The purpose of this page is to show you how to say these words.* Encourage students to read these words aloud.

Print concepts

Ask students to turn to page 2, noting the hyphen in *snow-covered*. Say, *This is another way of writing a compound word. You will notice other compound words in the story.*

**Visual literacy/language
predictability**

Have students turn to page 4 and look at the italicized word *gulal*. Have a volunteer read it, referring to the “How to say it” box, if necessary. Then continue, saying, *Sometimes, there are clues in the story to help you understand the meaning of a word. Sometimes you have to think about how the words, the story, and the picture help you figure out the tricky words.* Write the word *gulal* on the board or chart paper. Say, *Gulal is a word we don’t know the meaning of. The author uses a dash to tell us what this unusual word means.* Discuss the meaning with the class.

Inferring

Remind students that visualizing is making pictures in their minds and inferring is interpreting what the author has written. Say, *You’re going to use your ability to visualize and infer to understand some unusual phrases in this story. Turn to page 6 and you’ll see the phrase “a crazy celebration of colours.”*

Read the sentence before and after that phrase. Can you visualize what the author means by “a crazy celebration of colours?” Discuss possibilities with the class.

Print concepts

Draw attention to the ellipses on page 6 (three dots after a word indicates a pause in reading). Read aloud the second-last paragraph, pausing when you reach the ellipses.

Teaching Tip: You may wish to explain the reference to a god mentioned in the story, keeping in mind the various beliefs represented in your classroom.

Setting a Purpose

Analyzing

Tell students that as they read to the end of page 6, they are to look for information about a celebration in India called Holi.

ESL Note: Provide ESL students with graphic organizers, using the 5W-and-1H format (*who, what, when, where, why, and how*) to ensure comprehension of the celebration in India called Holi. ESL students can have a more concrete guide to refer to when talking to the class about Holi.



DURING READING

Ask students to read the text independently, thinking about the purpose for their reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *What did you find out so far about Holi? Was there anything that surprised you?*

Note students’ successful use of reading strategies and any difficulties they encounter.

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to reread the story, then share with a partner how they figured out the words *easel* (p. 2) and *drench* (p. 4), and the phrase “a riot of colour” (p. 5).



AFTER READING

Analyzing

Once the group has finished reading this short section, discuss what they learned about Holi.

Inferring

Ask, *Why was Suraj’s mom sad at the beginning of the story? Why did she tell Suraj the story?*

Predicting

Discuss the last section on page 6 with students: “*Do you know why snow is white, Suraj?*” *Suraj shook his head. “No, but I think you’re about to tell me,” he said.* Ask students, *What do you think the rest of the story is going to be about?*

Have students explain their reasoning. As a group, read page 7 silently and check if students' predictions still make sense.

Language predictability

Discuss the meaning of the unusual words and phrases in this section and how students figured them out.

ESL Note: Be sure to explicitly point out and discuss with ESL students the meaning of the unusual words and phrases in this section, such as *studio*, *easel*, *drench*, *outlines*, and “a riot of colour.” You may also wish to have ESL students focus on and then share strategies used to figure these words out.

Second Session (pages 8-24)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ synthesizing

Working with Words

- ▶ using a range of word-solving strategies to determine unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text and illustrations to find facts
- ▶ synthesize: summarize the main parts of the story
- ▶ use a range of word-solving strategies to work out unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ discussing with a partner
- ▶ dramatic retelling



BEFORE READING

Predicting

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Say, *Let's see if your predictions are correct.* Do a picture walk through the rest of the book and point out how the sections reflect different colours.

Making connections: text to self/analyzing

Review the purpose for reading in the first session—to find information about the Indian celebration Holi.

Refer to the chart you made in the last lesson. Say, *Now we are going to do a jigsaw reading of the book.* Assign each student a page or pages to read that corresponds to a colour. Ask students to gather information about their assigned page(s) and then report on the information to the rest of the class. Assign pages in clusters according to colour: page 9 (blue), pages 10–11 (yellow), page 12 (green), pages 13–14 (white), pages 16–18 (red), and page 19 (black).

ESL Note: To ensure comprehension, be selective in matching ESL students with a partner for the jigsaw reading. Should the dynamics of your class allow, choose academically strong students of the same linguistic background where possible. You may wish to have ESL students record their info in their notebook for future sharing.

**Visual literacy/infering/
language predictability**

Overcoming Text Challenges

Say, *Turn to page 10 and find the word suraj. How does the dash help you figure out what suraj means?* Discuss its meaning with the class. Then say, *Now turn to page 22. It says, “her face broke into a smile.” Do you think her face really broke? What do you think this really means?*

Say, *As you read, you’ll come across several words and phrases that may seem difficult to understand. It’s important that you understand what these words and phrases mean. Don’t skip over the tricky parts. Use your visualizing skills and inferring skills to help you figure them out. We’ll discuss them after we’ve finished reading.*

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Say, *Now read your assigned page or pages and gather information about what you read and be prepared to report on the information to the rest of the group.*



DURING READING

Tell each student to read pages 8–24 independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts to help students problem-solve as they read. For example, *What were the god’s reasons for painting items in nature the colours he did?*

Note students’ successful use of strategies and any difficulties they encounter.

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to go back and reread, then share with a partner the information they gathered.



AFTER READING

Synthesizing/analyzing

When students have finished reading, discuss what happened in the story. Ask each student to orally report on the information about their assigned section. Remind the others to listen carefully because questions will be asked later.

After the reports are finished, ask students questions about what they learned. For example, ask, *How does the information we collected compare to the chart we made in the previous lesson? What do you notice that is similar? What is different?*

Word solving and building

Revisit any challenging words students encountered and discuss the strategies they used to figure out the words. Point out positive reading strategies you observed during the lesson. For example, say, *I noticed when Katie came to the*

word suraj on page 10, she looked to the rest of the sentence to find the word's meaning. Then she turned to the inside back cover of the book to learn how to pronounce suraj. That's what good readers do.

Teaching Tip: Choose 2 or 3 of the most useful words (e.g., *jostled* and *hurled*) and post them in the classroom. Ask students to use these words in their daily conversations. Whenever they use the word, they may put a check mark beside it.

Synthesizing

Ask, *How did Suraj's mother feel at the beginning of the story? How did she feel at the end of the story? What caused her mood to change?*

Inferring

Direct students to page 21. Say, *At the bottom of the page, it says that Suraj "picked up a few things." Now that you've read the story, what do you think he picked up? Now have students turn to page 24. Say, Think about what you have just read. Why did Suraj decide to colour his sky blue?*

Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the book independently or with a partner.

Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

Synthesizing

My Story of Holi

Distribute copies of the "My Story of Holi" BLM. Have students choose a colour not mentioned in this story and extend the story of Holi. Review the task with students. Talk about each frame in the BLM. Explain that they are to:

- ▶ Choose a colour.
- ▶ Think of something in nature that is that colour.
- ▶ Think of how that colour makes them feel.
- ▶ Think of reasons the god decided to use this colour.
- ▶ Think of a conversation between the god of colour and the colour itself.

Retelling

Have students read over their completed BLMs until they are comfortable telling the class their story orally. These stories can be told in a storytellers' circle.

Finding Word Endings

Hand out copies of the "Word Endings" BLM and have students go through the text and write all the words that end with "-ed" in the appropriate column. Ask students to highlight "-ed" endings, identify and write the root word next to the past tense form, and discuss the changes.

Word solving and building

My Story of Holi

Name: _____

My colour is .

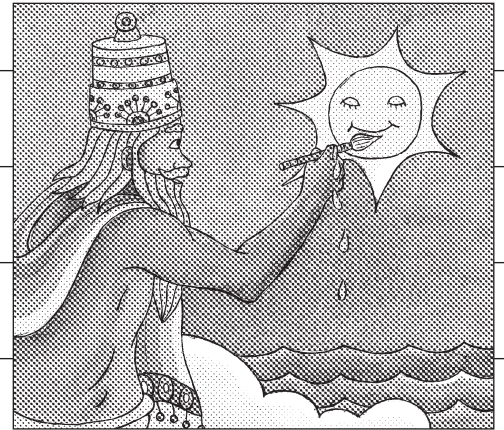
A _____ is .

_____ makes me feel .

The god of colour decided my colour would be good for a

because

The god of colour said:



My colour said:

