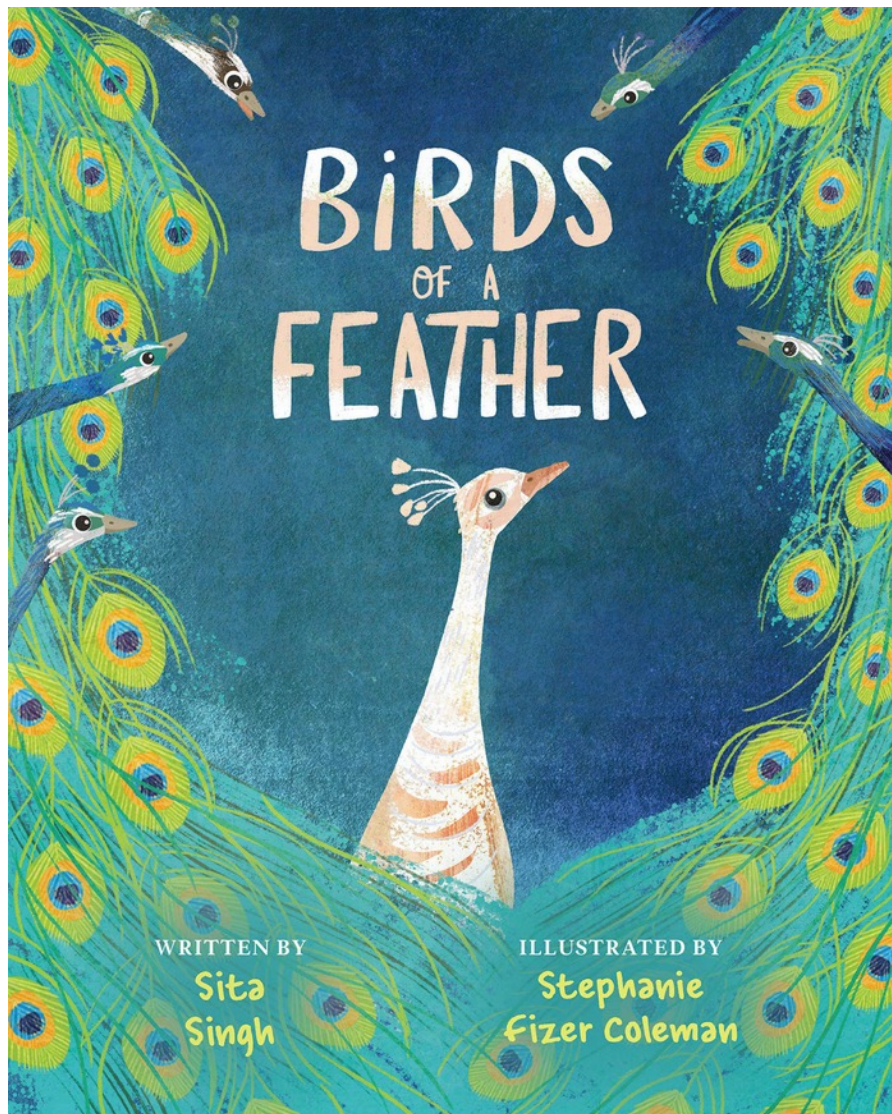


Birds of a Feather

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written by Sita Singh and illustrated by Stephanie Fizer Coleman



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Sita Singh, Author

Sita Singh was born and raised in India. She watched peacocks all through her childhood, as they regularly perched on rooftops and in backyards. The story of Mo came from these happy memories, and she is proud to share this tale that introduces readers to a national symbol of the country of her birth. She lives in South Florida, with her husband and three children. You can visit Sita online at singhsita.com. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @sitawrites.

Stephanie Fizer Coleman, Illustrator

Stephanie thrives on creating beautiful, textural illustrations of her furry and feathered friends. Having grown up in a rural area, she is inspired by nature in all its grandeur. She is the illustrator of *Ninita's Big World* and lives in West Virginia with her husband and two dogs. You can visit Stephanie online at stephfc.com and follow her on Instagram @stephfizercoleman.

Marcie Colleen Curriculum Writer

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and an MA in Educational Theater from NYU. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children's books, Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Birds of a Feather* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Birds of a Feather* into their curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in English Language Arts.



Title: Birds of a Feather

Author: Sita Singh

Illustrator: Stephanie Fizer Coleman

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Differences are gorgeously illustrated in a heartwarming picture book about a colorless peacock who learns to love himself in a jungle full of color.

Mo has always felt a little different. While all the other peacocks grew bright, bold, beautiful feathers in rich greens and vibrant blues, Mo's feathers grew in a snowy white. And even though Mo's friends try to include him in their playtime, Mo doesn't like to be reminded that he's different from his friends. But when a storm threatens to ruin the group's annual celebration, Mo must learn to stand tall, strut his stuff, and shake his brilliantly glowing tail feathers--in a way only he can--to help his friends and set things right.

From debut author Sita Singh, and brought to life by Stephanie Fizer Coleman, comes a story about finding strength in the things that make us different, and beauty in all its forms.

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Table of Contents

English Language Arts (ELA)

Reading Comprehension	4
Who is Mo? Character Study	6
Critical Thinking	7
Writing Activities	
More Than Just My Feathers ~ Point of View	
Speaking and Listening Activities	
Talking About Feelings	
Mime/Charades	8
Mirroring	
Drama	
Sounds of the Rain Dance	

Math

Word Problems	9
A Peacock Feather Scavenger Hunt	10

Science

Peacock Research Project	
Non-Verbal Communication	11
Colors, Leucism, or Albino?	
Ready, Set, Dance!	12

Social Studies

Inclusion, Exclusion, and Building Empathy	
What Makes a Good Friend?	13
Finding Commonalities/Uniqueness	
Proud to Be Me	14

Crossword Puzzle	15
-------------------------	----

Word Search	16
--------------------	----

Coloring Page	17
----------------------	----

English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Birds of a Feather*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

- Look at the cover illustration. Describe what you see.
- How many peacocks do you see?
- How would you describe the bird at the center of the cover?
- How do you think the center bird and the others feel about each other? What makes you think that?
- Mimic what the center bird is doing. How does it make you feel?
- Look at the illustration on the back cover. Describe what you see.
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the front and back cover illustrations?

Now read or listen to the book. Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about using the chart below.

- Describe, in your own words, what Mo and his friends are like when they are first born.
- What is different about Mo?
- At first, Mo is ok with being different. But what changes his thoughts about himself?
- How do the others treat Mo and his differences?



Who is Mo? ~ Character Study

How a character acts and what a character says can tell readers a lot about who the character is.

Read *Birds of a Feather* paying close attention to the character of Mo. Scene by scene, record your thoughts, in a chart like the one below.

What he does	Why do you think he does what he does?	How would you describe him?	What might he say?
Example: Mo loves to roost, hunt, and screech.	He is a peachick and that is what he and his friends do.	Active, curious, fun-loving	"I love roosting, hunting, and screeching with everyone else!"

After gathering information regarding Mo's character, use the scenarios below to write a new scene for *Birds of a Feather*. What would Mo do and say in one of the following situations?

- The Annual Dance in the Rain is coming up again.
- There are new peachicks and one looks like Mo.
- There is a peacock fashion show.



Critical Thinking

In fiction stories, a character usually changes in some way. Do you think Mo changed in the story? How? (*analyzing, inferring, giving support to an idea*)

How would the story be different if Mo had not felt badly about how he was different? (*predicting, cause and effect*)

What do you think is the message of this story? (*empathy, kindness, friendship, it's ok to be different*)

Writing Activities

More Than Just my Feathers ~ Point of View

Either as a class or individually, explore each scene in *Birds of a Feather* from the point of view of one of the other peacocks. What are they thinking and doing in each illustration? How do they feel? What would they say to Mo?

Advanced classes will be able to write *Birds of a Feather* from another peacock's point of view. However, classes can also create captions and thought-bubbles.

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *Birds of a Feather* to life in your classroom and have fun with speaking and listening skills!

Talking About Feelings

Mo experiences many different feelings throughout the story. Look through the book, page by page, and ask how Mo might be feeling at each particular moment. Keep track on a list of each emotion named.

Once the list is finished, have children choose one and make a sentence about that feeling.

Just like Mo, we all feel various feelings at different times. It is ok to feel happy or sad or angry.

Ask children to share a time when they felt the same emotions as Mo.

"Today I feel excited because we have pizza for lunch."

"Last week I felt lonely because my brother went away."

"Yesterday I felt worried because I lost my jacket."

Mime/Charades

Mime a feeling with gestures and facial expressions. Then have others try to guess that feeling. For a variation, have children draw the feeling from a “hat”—a basket/box/bag.

Mirroring

Have students stand in pairs. One person will be the actor. The other will be the mirror. The actor will make different movements slowly; the mirror must try to do the exact same movements at the same time as the actor—just like a mirror. Then switch places. Discuss the experience. Then change partners. Was the experience the same? different? How?

Drama

Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read *Birds of a Feather*.

Sounds of the Rain Dance

Create the sounds of a thunderstorm, from beginning to end:

Snap fingers.

Pound floor. (Thunder rumbling.)

Clap hands together in an irregular cadence.

Slap hands on legs. (Flick light switches on and off or turn flashlights on and off to represent lightning.)

Stomp feet.

Slap your hands on your legs and stomp your feet. (Height of the storm.)

Stomp feet.

Slap hands on legs. (Flick lights or flashlights less frequently.)

Clap hands together in an irregular cadence. (A little softer now.)

Pound floor, a few times.

Snap fingers. (Quietly and slowly.)

Open palms. (Be still.)

Now, do the exact same thing, only substitute motions with onomatopoeia. (CRASH, BANG, FLASH, WHOOSH, etc.)

Additional Activity: Choose a different type of weather. For example: A sunny day with birds chirping, a mower vrooming, kids in a pool laughing and splashing.

Additional Activity: Play Soundscape Charades by performing 3 sounds and letting the class guess the weather.

Math

Word Problems

For younger students, the use of pictures or props can be helpful in figuring out word problems. Note to teachers: Use the word problems below as inspiration to write your own, based on the illustrations in Birds of a Feather or any other book of study.

The "One spring morning" illustration:

- 1) How many peachicks do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 6 peachicks.

Draw 2 more peachicks.

How many peachicks are there now?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if three peachicks hid behind the tree? How many peachicks would you see?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

The "He glows like the snow" illustration:

- 2) How many frogs do you see?

On a piece of paper, draw 2 frogs.

Draw 3 more frogs.

How many frogs do you have?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

What if 4 frogs hopped away? How many frogs would be left?

Write the equation: $\underline{\quad} - \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

A Peacock Feather Scavenger Hunt

This scavenger hunt will help students sharpen observational and counting skills.

- Create several copies of the paper cut-outs of peacock feathers.
- Number each different feather from 1-5. You should have several of each number.
- Create one all-white feather, like Mo's.
- Hide these cut-outs around the room.
- Ask students to find a set of feathers numbered 1-5. If a student sees a number they already have they must leave it for another student to find.
- The first student to find a 1-5 feather sequence or the student who first finds Mo's feather wins.
- Additional activity: This same game can be played with a set pattern of colors or pictures to teach sequencing.

Science

Peacock Research Project

How much do you know about peacocks? It's time to research them. Information to be gathered might include:



What's the difference between a peacock, peahen, and peafowl?

What are the babies called?

Are there different kinds of peacocks?

What is a group of peacocks called?

Where do peacocks live?

How do peacocks show how they feel?

Draw a picture of a peacock.

Write 3 words that describe a peacock.

Write 3 interesting facts you discover.

Students may use the Internet or the library to complete their research. Once their research is done, students can create a poster and present their findings to the class.

Non-Verbal Communication

Take a close look at all of the illustrations of the peacocks throughout *Birds of a Feather*. How are the peacocks feeling in each one of the scenes?

Without words, how do real peacocks show how they are feeling?

Ask students that have pets to describe how they know their pet is sad, scared, happy, having to go to the bathroom, etc.

Discuss the ways that animals communicate how they are feeling non-verbally. Some examples of how animals communicate:

- Giraffes press their necks together when they are attracted to each other.
- Elephants show affection by entwining their trunks.
- Gorillas stick out their tongues to show anger.
- Kangaroos thump their hind legs to warn of danger.
- White-tailed Deer alert others to danger by flicking their tail.
- Dogs wag their tails when they are happy.

Check out “Male Peacocks, Not Just a Pretty Display” Science Illustrated <https://scienceillustrated.com.au/blog/nature/male-peacocks-not-just-a-pretty-display/> or conduct your own additional research.

Colors, Leucism, or Albino?

Some animals are covered in different colors. They have full pigment in their skin, hair, eyes, or feathers.

Some animals are leucistic. They have a partial loss of pigmentation, resulting in white or patchily colored skin, hair or feathers. However, the pigment cells in the eyes are not affected. Sometimes the animal is mostly white with pink eyes and feet.

Other animals are albino. They have a complete absence of melanin, which is what gives skin, hair, feathers and eyes their color.

Look closely at the character of Mo. Is Mo leucistic or albino? How can you tell?

Lead your students through a discussion of which animals fit into these three categories. Do an image search on the internet for examples of each and create an informational poster about the differences.

Ready, Set, Dance!

You can tell how far away a storm is by counting the number of seconds between the time lightning strikes and thunder is heard. It takes five seconds for the sound of thunder to go one mile.

- Simulate lightning by flashing the lights on and off to represent lightning.
- Count to five slowly. (One Mississippi, Two Mississippi, etc.)
- Yell, "Boom!" or crash cymbals together to represent thunder.
- Explain that this indicates the storm is one mile away.
- Ask students to figure out how many seconds would indicate that the storm is 2, 3, or 4 miles away.
- Create follow-up word problems to reinforce the concept. For example: If there were 25 seconds between lightning and thunder, how far away is the storm?

Social Studies

Inclusion, Exclusion, and Building Empathy

Do you think Mo should be ashamed that he is different?

Look at the situation from Mo's perspective. How would you feel being different?

What are the many ways that Mo's friends tried to make him feel included? Can you think of other ways to help Mo?

- Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in like Mo?
- What makes you feel better?
- How did Mo's friends encourage him?
- How is Mo different from his friends?
- What makes you different from your friends or classmates?
- What makes you the same as your friends or classmates?
- Do you ever treat people differently because they look or act different than you? Why?
- Have you been treated differently because you look different than other people? Was this treatment positive or negative?
- How do you want to be treated by your classmates, friends and family?

- How should we act towards others?
- In what situations is it necessary to treat others differently than the way you want to be treated? (*others sometimes have different preferences than you*)
- Who do you think Mo's friends are?
- What makes a good friend?
- What do you look for in a friend?
- What kinds of things do you do for your friends?
- Are you only kind to your friends?
- Do you help others even when they are not your friends?
- Provide an example of when you helped someone you didn't know. Did this make you feel good?
- How do you expect others to respond when you complete an act of kindness for them?
- What obligation do you have to help others?

What Makes a Good Friend?

Discuss what makes a good friend. Draw upon examples from their own friendships and create a list describing what makes a good friend.

Example: Good friends...

- Are reliable.
- Do kind things for one another and use kind language.
- Help out when a friend is sad or has a problem.
- Like to spend time together.
- Have fun with one another.

Look closely at *Birds of a Feather*. Which animals act like friends to Mo? How?

As a class, create an action plan on how to be a good friend.

Finding Commonalities/Uniqueness

Mo is different from the other peacocks – he is snowy white. He wants to be like the other peacocks. Although is a different color than his friends, Mo and his friends are alike in a lot of ways.

Finding what you have in common with other people is a good way to start a meaningful relationship. Here is a way to learn what you have in common with your classmates, while also celebrating what makes each of you unique.

Materials: A pen and two pieces of paper.

- This activity can be done as a whole class or in pairs.
- On one sheet of paper, you will have ten minutes to come up with a list of things in common. Completely obvious answers such as “we both have hair” or “we are both in _____ class” are not allowed!
- After ten minutes, switch to the other paper. You now have ten minutes to come up with a list of things that are unique to only one person.
- Share both lists with the class when finished.

Proud to Be Me

Peacocks are thought to be proud of their beauty and to strut around showing off. But there are more things about us to be proud about than just what we look like. Just like Mo, we have a lot to be proud of.

The Project:

- Have each student lay down on a large piece of paper while someone traces their body with a pencil.
- Once the student has the silhouette of their body, write words that describe what they look like on the outside.
- On the inside of the outline they can write what makes them proud: the things that make them special. Examples can be likes and dislikes, what they want to be when they grow up, what makes them smile, etc.
- Finished silhouettes can be displayed with the title “Proud to Be Me.”

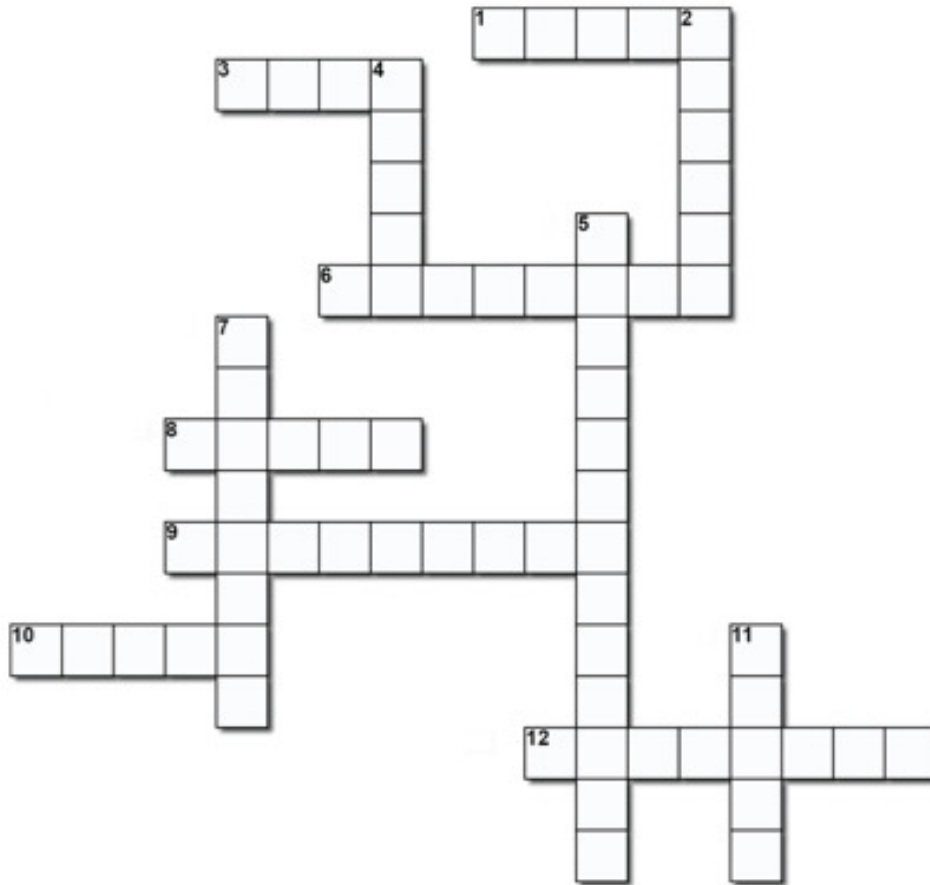




BIRDS OF A FEATHER



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. What are the feathers on a peacock's head called?
3. What bright and brilliant thing did Mo suddenly notice on the stormy night?
6. What is a baby peacock called?
8. What did Mo's crest feel like when he lit up the ground?
9. What jungle does Mo and his friends live in?
10. The peacocks are preparing for The Annual _____ in The Rain.
12. Mo belonged to a great group of _____.

Down

2. What is Mo's call to the sky?
4. What color are Mo's feathers?
5. What is Mo's favorite game?
7. What did the peacocks eat besides ticks?
11. Birds of a feather _____ together.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER



WORD SEARCH

F R I E N D S N H A X F F P M
E S B R H T W T I U R L T B G
A M J A E L A O N M H A P E I
T Z J I O Q B O L D X U E A W
H L M N L Z A J O I Q N A U N
E D D W S J I W V F S T C T J
R L L B Y U F X F F M Q H I H
S W A Y Y S M I L E W P I F S
X X D R C T G B U R U L C U C
S C L W E R Y R T E X U K L B
C F M D U U V I T N T M X L V
O H A Y B T O G E T H E R I B
L I N S V A N H R P C R E S T
O P D M W I Z T D V D A N C E
R A C W B L U M L D G R O O M

BOLD
COLOR
DIFFERENT
FLUTTER
PEACHICK
STRUT
TOGETHER

BRIGHT
CREST
FEATHERS
FRIENDS
PLUME
SWAY

BEAUTIFUL
DANCE
FLAUNT
GROOM
RAIN
TAIL



BIRDS OF A FEATHER



COLORING SHEET



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