

ACTIVITIES FOR *THE RED PENCIL*

READING/WRITING

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – identify various types, the meanings and the effects

EXPLORE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NARRATION AND TEXT. Examine and discuss the free verse format. Compare and contrast it to traditional prose. Choose a page to rewrite in traditional prose form. Try taking a page from another favorite book and boiling it down to free verse. Discuss the effects of each format.

WRITING

WRITE POETRY! A wonderful resource for writing poetry is Nancie Atwell's *Naming the World*. Use poems in *The Red Pencil* as mentor text.

Some pages that lend themselves easily to this are:

- 78-81 and 250-251 – family and self portraits
- 191 – Write about how you might help someone get through a difficult time, lots of figurative language in this.
- 227-228 – Consider one of the letters in your initials. How would you describe the letter to connect it with you and your strengths? (This is especially a great choice for English language learners whose first language has a different alphabet.)
- 232 – Choose and describe a favorite letter.
- 21, 146, 209 – Consider playing with form in your own writing or creating a concrete poem

PERSONAL RESPONSE:

- In our daily lives, we never consider the value that one little pencil might have. Think about the little things you take for granted. Choose one item to write about.
- Amira uses art to help her get through difficulties. What do you do that helps you through tough times?

ART

Choose one of the poems without an illustration and create your own art to go with it. Or use another art form to pair with one of the poems or your own writing.

RESEARCH

Use the Author's Note in the back to get you started.

Some topics to consider:

- Literacy rates and girls' access to education in different parts of the world. What effects will educating girls have – personally and in communities?
- Displacement of people due to current conflicts in the world, number of refugees, consequences
- Refugee camps – generate a list of questions and investigate.
- Interview someone from the community who has been a refugee.
- Legends, traditions and beliefs about the moon in different cultures