

# Little Blue and Little Yellow: A Story for Pippo and Other Children

(ASTOR-HONOR, 1959)

## This Book's Message or Theme

- ☀ Friends come in all colors.
- ☀ Friends can affect each other's lives.

## About the Book

In this, the first of Leo Lionni's picture books, two round blobs of color share friendship and frolic in their neighborhood. Named for their hue, Little Blue and Little Yellow embrace one day and find that their colors combine to make green. Although they do not stay green, they are forever changed by knowing that friends rub off on friends, and color proves no boundary.

## Before You Read

### Predicting the Story Critical Thinking

Hold up *Little Blue and Little Yellow* (as Leo Lionni refers to this book) so children can see the cover art. Then read the title aloud, and ask them to guess what the story might be about. Write their guesses on chart paper, and turn it into a graph by asking children to tell which prediction they agree with most. Make tally marks beside each prediction to show how many children chose it. After you read the story, invite children to tell which predictions were closest to the story line.

Our Guesses	<i>Little Blue and Little Yellow:</i> What Might This Story Be About?
a sun and a cloud	
different colors	
little things	
balloons	

## After You Read

### Talk About the Story

Reading ♦ Language Arts

Through discussion, bring out points of interest in the story. Questions you might ask include:

- ☀ What did Little Blue and Little Yellow do for fun in their neighborhood?
- ☀ How did Little Blue and Little Yellow become green?
- ☀ What happened when Little Blue went home green instead of blue?
- ☀ How did Little Blue and Little Yellow feel when their parents didn't recognize them? Why did they feel that way?
- ☀ When did Little Blue's mama and papa find out what caused Little Blue to turn green?
- ☀ How did the families feel in the end? Why did they feel that way?

**NOTE:** Children may point out that Little Blue disobeyed his mama by going outside when she told him to stay home. If this comes up, take time to discuss the importance of following rules and never leaving home without a parent or guardian's permission.

### Mixing Colors

Art

In the story, the artist combined blue and yellow to make green. Review and expand this color concept by letting children explore and combine colors in the following activities.

**Mix Paint** Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with a paper plate on which you have placed one blob each of red, blue, and yellow paint. Let children combine colors to make different-colored circles on a separate sheet of paper. To demonstrate the process, first dip a brush in red paint and move a blob of red to an empty space on the plate. Then add to it a blob of blue paint and mix until the new blob turns purple. Other colors children might make include orange (red and yellow), green (blue and yellow), brown (green, yellow, and red), and turquoise (green and blue).

**Make Paint-Blot Art** Give each student one sheet of 8 1/2- by 11-inch paper. Show them how to do the following: Fold the paper in half as if making a card. Open the paper flat and drop blobs of paint on the inside fold or on either side of the fold. Fold the paper again and press gently along the outside. Open the paper to reveal the paint blot. Then ask children to write or dictate a sentence or two that gives the paint blot a name and tells a story about it.



### Let's Talk About It

Critical Thinking

When Little Blue and Little Yellow became close, their colors combined to make a new color. Each friend had an effect on the other and changed him. Ask children to tell about times when someone they know has changed them in some way. For example, a parent might show the importance of being patient with others. A teacher who demonstrates kindness may prompt children to imitate kind, thoughtful acts. Be sure to advise children that not all influences are positive ones. Include in your discussion examples in which someone can actually be a harmful influence, such as a person who encourages children to litter, or to treat others roughly.



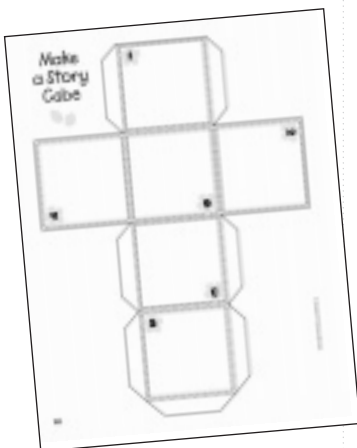
## Head Off on a Word Hunt!

Language Arts

Help children look through the story and find phrases that tell *where*, such as

- ☀ at home
- ☀ across the street
- ☀ in school
- ☀ around a corner
- ☀ in the park
- ☀ through a tunnel

Provide drawing paper and crayons. Ask children to draw a picture showing Little Blue and Little Yellow playing together in a location that the author did not include in the book, such as “in a sandbox,” “over a fence,” or “up a tree.” Have children write a sentence using the location to describe their picture.



## Make a Tissue Paper Collage

Help children combine shapes and colors in an intriguing collage. Ask children to cut tissue paper into shapes such as squares, circles, and triangles. Provide each student or pair of children with liquid glue or liquid starch in a small cup. Have children dip a paintbrush into the glue or starch and paint a thin layer of it on a paper plate. Let children press individual pieces of tissue paper onto the wet plate. Instruct children to paint another thin layer of glue or starch over the tissue. Have children add another layer of tissue, overlapping colors for effect. Dry completely, punch holes for hanging, and display.



## Make a Map

Geography

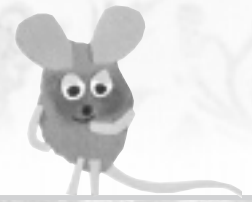
Reread *Little Blue and Little Yellow*. Ask children to tell what Little Blue saw in his neighborhood (houses, a school, a store, a park, a tunnel, and a mountain). As a class, work together to create a map of Little Blue’s neighborhood, drawing Little Blue’s house across from Little Yellow’s (as specified in the story) and placing other landmarks anywhere children choose to. Older children who are familiar with maps may want to work independently or in small groups. Children might also want to draw and name Little Blue’s friends and/or design a home or bedroom for Little Blue. Let children practice using their maps, directing classmates to start at a specific location and “go to the playground” or “go to Little Blue’s house.”

## Make a Story Cube

Language Arts

Photocopy page 20 for each student. Have students glue the page to lightweight cardboard, then cut out the pattern. With the story cube laid flat so the number 1 is right side up in the top left corner, have children:

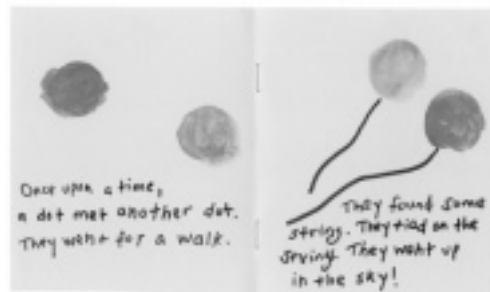
1. Draw a picture in box 1 to show what happened first in the story.
2. Draw a picture in box 2 to show what happened next.
3. Flip the cube around so box 3 is right side up in the top left corner. Draw a picture in the third box.
4. Continue in this manner to complete boxes 4, 5, and 6. The sixth box should show how the story ended.
5. Fold the pattern on the dotted lines to form a cube and secure the sides with glue or tape.



**NOTE:** Children may find it helpful to list the six events they plan to feature before drawing them. Encourage them to do this on a separate sheet of paper. If children have never made a story cube before, you may need to walk them through the process and complete the story cube as a class. Children may also enjoy using the cubes to retell the story to classmates or bringing the cubes home to share with family members.

## Make a Paint-Blot Book Language Arts ♦ Art

Invite children to create artwork in the style of Leo Lionni by making paint blots on paper and writing a story based on them. Provide children with paper, paintbrushes, and paint. Have them paint one or more blots on a page. Using the blots as characters, children can write a story.



## Colors at Play Critical Thinking ♦ Art

Challenge children to think of other games Little Blue and his friends might play besides Hide-and-Seek and Ring-a-Ring-O'Roses. Use paint blots or crayons to draw the activity, modeling the art after Lionni's.

### Books With a Similar Message or Theme

Hamanaka, Sheila. *All the Colors of the Earth* (William Morrow & Company, 1994). Children come in all colors, and they greet life with gusto in this poetic celebration of ethnic diversity.

Henkes, Kevin. *Jessica* (Greenwillow, 1989). Ruthie and her imaginary friend Jessica are inseparable until Ruthie meets a real girl named Jessica on the first day of school.

Walsh, Ellen Stoll. *Mouse Paint* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). Three mice discover red, blue, and yellow paint—with colorful results!

## Share a Poem

Language Arts

### Yellow

Green is go,  
and red is stop,  
and yellow is peaches  
with cream on top.

Earth is brown,  
and blue is sky;  
yellow looks well  
on a butterfly.

Clouds are white,  
black, pink, or mocha;  
yellow's a dish of  
tapioca.

—David McCord

Share the poem with children. Then copy it onto chart paper or a chalkboard, drawing a blank line in place of each color named. Have children read through the poem and write any colors they wish in place of the others. Ask them to draw a picture to go with the new poem.

# Make a Story Cube

