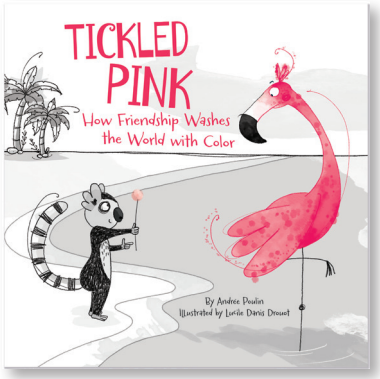
READING GUIDE

Tickled Pink

Andrée Poulin
illus. Lucile Danis Drouot



Story Summary

Filippo can't help that he's pink. He's a flamingo, after all. But Zac the zebra and Poncho the panda aren't having it. They only want to play with fellow black-and-white animals. Filippo is sure he'll never be content without Zac and Poncho's friendship. But what would the world be without pink? There would be no roses, no sunsets, no strawberry ice cream. With a little love and encouragement along the way, Filippo sets out to find the value of pink—and of himself.

Links:
Unicef—"On Pink Shirt Day, It's Not Just About Wearing Pink":
https://www.unicef.ca/en/blog/pink-shirt-day-its-not-just-about-wearing-pink

Pair this book with:
French Toast by Kari-Lynn Winters, illus. François Thisdale
Lili Macaroni by Nicole Testa, illus. Annie Boulanger

Andrée Poulin is the award-winning author of more than thirty books for children. *The Biggest Poutine in the World* won the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award, and *Two Boys and a Secret* was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award for illustrated books. Formerly a journalist, she now enjoys spending much of her time giving workshops for young people in schools and libraries. Andrée lives in Gatineau, Québec.

Lucile Danis Drouot is an illustrator and designer with a lifelong passion for children's literature. Her works include *Claire Comme du Lait*, an exploration of emotional health. Lucile lives in Montreal, Québec.

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Themes
Acceptance, Diversity, Friendship

BISAC Codes
JUV039140 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Self-Esteem & Self-Reliance
JUV039050 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Emotions & Feelings
JUV039230 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Bullying
JUV002040 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Birds

Reading Level
Lexile Measure: AD570L | Fountas & Pinnell: K

Curriculum Connections
Word choice—alliteration; Visual arts—painting; Character education—diversity, friendship, global citizenship, respect for all

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This Guide Contains:

Activity	Main Subject Area	Specific Skills and Topics
Read-Aloud	Comprehension Word Choice	• Activate prior knowledge • Infer, predict, make connections • Alliteration
A Celebration of Color	Character Education Visual Arts	• Acceptance, diversity, friendship • 2-dimensional painting; mixing tints and shades
Painting Pink	Visual Arts	• Painting; tints and shades
Pink Shirt Day	Character Education Social Studies	• Global citizenship • Respect for all

The Read-Aloud

Two important themes emerge from the reading of *Tickled Pink*. First, that no one should be excluded on the basis of color. And second, that we need not accept the notion that "pink is for girls." It's the perfect book with which to launch a unit on anti-bullying.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g. activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand texts
- identify some elements of style, including word choice (e.g. alliteration)

You Will Need

- *Tickled Pink: How Friendship Washes the World with Color*

How To:

Before Reading

Explain that the book is called *Tickled Pink* and ask if students know what the expression means. Help them understand the idiom, especially students who are young or are just learning English. Read the subtitle, show the cover, and ask, "What do you see?" If someone notices that the lemur is giving the flamingo a flower, ask, "Why would someone do that?" As you open the endpapers, comment, "Wow, that is really pink!"

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During Reading

First spread: Read the first sentence and ensure students understand the idiom "two peas in a pod." Read the rest of the sentences and invite students to infer how the words of the zebra and panda are likely to make the flamingo feel. Ensure students understand the word "flushes."

Second spread: Read, pause, and allow a comment or two.

Third spread: After reading, briefly discuss the idea that exclusion is a form of bullying. Perhaps begin with a question like, "Is it okay to leave someone out of a game for no good reason?"

Fourth spread: After reading, wonder aloud, "I wonder what his idea could be?" and invite suggestions.

Fifth spread: Read through. Point to the lemur. "I wonder what's up with this character?"

Sixth spread: Invite students to take a close look at Filippo. "What is he trying to do? What do you think about that?" After reading, ask, "What do you think about Poncho's logic? Does that make sense? What's really going on here?"

Seventh spread: After reading, repeat Flavia's statement, "Pink is for everyone." Write the sentence on the board. Encourage students to read it with you. Some may not believe it, but they may move closer to acceptance after repeated exposure to the idea. At a later time, you may wish to explore with your class exactly how and when pink came to be seen as a "girl's color." (Hint: It has only been since after WWII.)

Eighth spread: Read through.

Ninth spread: After reading, ask, "What is Ludo doing?" (being a supportive friend, no longer a bystander). This takes courage.

Tenth spread: Read through.

Eleventh spread: After reading, invite students to predict what Ludo's idea might be.

Twelfth spread: After students have studied the illustration for a moment, invite someone to articulate what the two new friends are doing. Do students think this is a good idea?

Thirteenth spread: Read through.

Fourteenth spread: After reading, pause to let students take in the scene. (If you decide to do the Pink Shirt Day activity below, this will be a good page to come back to when explaining how so many people were willing to get on board with the first Pink Shirt Day.)

Fifteenth spread: After reading, invite students to infer how Ludo feels as well. Briefly discuss the satisfaction that comes from standing up for someone.

After Reading

Ask, "Why do you think Andreé Poulin wrote this book?" Do students think things like this actually happen? Are people ever excluded or teased because of their color? Read and discuss a book about such an occurrence, such as *French Toast* by Kari-Lynn Winters.

At a later time, read the book again, with students acting as detectives. Their mission: to discover all the alliterations Poulin has included. Why might she have done that?

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Activity 1: A Celebration of Color

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- respect and accept diversity
- work toward eliminating race-based bias
- develop a positive sense of self
- create a two-dimensional work of art that expresses ideas inspired by personal experience

You Will Need

- *Tickled Pink: How Friendship Washes the World with Color*
- *French Toast* by Kari-Lynn winters; *Lili Macaroni* by Nicole Testa
- a two-sided easel with trough for paint jars
- small plastic containers, like the ones individual portions of yogurt come in
- ten squeeze bottles such as ones designed for condiments, available at dollar stores
- tempera paint in white, brown, black, red, yellow, and blue.
- art paper
- a photograph of someone whose skin tone is noticeably different from your own
- small (1/4") paint brushes

How To:

1. Turn to the fourteenth spread (soccer game) and invite students to identify different body coverings (e.g. fur, feathers, scales, skin, shell) and colorings they see on the characters. This would tie in nicely to a science unit on animal characteristics. Ask students what body covering humans have. Point out that, just like these characters, humans come in a wide variety of skin color and hair color.
2. Read some similarly themed books in which the characters are people. For example, in *French Toast* by Kari-Lynn Winters, a young girl is teased because of her skin color. In *Lili Macaroni* by Nicole Testa, a girl is teased because of her hair color and other physical characteristics.
3. Students will paint a self-portrait that celebrates their unique skin and hair color. Ideally, they will use a dedicated painting center with an easel. A dedicated table will also work. One or two students will work at the center at a time. It is possible to do this as a whole-class activity for older students, but you would need to provide each student with all the colors listed above, and a small tray on which to mix them at their desk.
4. Fill two squeeze bottles with brown tempera paint and two with white. Half-fill the remaining squeeze bottles with the other colors.
5. Model the process to the class before opening the paint-mixing center to them. Bring one squeeze bottle of each color to the demonstration area.
6. Make a pencil drawing of a person standing (or, if you plan to use the soccer game display described below, demonstrate a running figure, as in this tutorial:
   https://www.how-to-draw-funny-cartoons.com/cartoon-running.html
   Tell students you are drawing a picture of yourself. Think aloud as you model how to make arms, legs, and neck so that they can be colored in (not a stick figure). Outline hair and clothing on your picture. Write your name on it and remind students to do the same when they make their picture.

7. Show how to mix the paint (practice in advance). For most skin tones, you will begin with either brown or white. It is easier to darken the paint than to lighten it. For a light skin tone, begin by putting about a tablespoon of white paint into a yogurt cup. Squeeze in a bit of brown paint and stir using the paint brush or a spoon. Continue doing this until the paint is dark enough. Adjust the tone of the paint by adding a small amount of yellow or red. If it is already too orange, add a tiny amount of blue. For a dark skin tone, begin with a tablespoon of brown paint. Add white or black until the required lightness or darkness is achieved, then adjust the tone with red, yellow, or blue.
8. Paint in all the exposed skin in your picture. Leave white spaces where the eyes will go. Set it aside to dry. You will paint the features, hair, and clothing at another time.
9. Make a second drawing to represent a person whose skin color is quite different from your own. Using a photograph to guide you, repeat steps 5 and 6. This will give students whose skin color is quite different from yours the same amount of useful instruction as those whose skin is more similar to yours.
10. Once all students have made their drawings and painted in the skin areas, replace the paints in the paint center with colors that could be used for features, hair, and clothing and allow students to complete their pictures (You may want to demonstrate how to mix different hair colors, or just pre-mix and provide colors to match the diversity in your class). If you plan to celebrate Pink Shirt Day (below), suggest the students paint the shirt in their portrait pink.
11. Have students cut out their (dried) pictures. They will need to rewrite their names on the backs of the cut-outs before handing them in. For younger children, the teacher can do the cutting.
12. Create a bulletin-board display around the themes of diversity, acceptance, and friendship, perhaps arranging the portraits on a soccer field as on the fourteenth spread of *Tickled Pink*, adding nets and a soccer ball.

Activity 2: Painting in Pink

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- create two-dimensional works of art that express feelings and ideas inspired by personal experiences
- use the principles of design (in this case color) to create art works on a theme or topic

You Will Need

- *Tickled Pink: How Friendship Washes the World with Color*
- internet access
- photos
- photocopier or printer
- pink tempera paint
- paintbrushes in two sizes: very small and large
- white art paper
- black crayons

How To:

1. *Tints and shades (Optional Introduction to Pink):* Provide students with the opportunity to experiment with adding different amounts of white (tints) or black (shades) to red tempera paint and using these tints and shades to paint a graphic design (drawn first in pencil) or a word they have printed in bubble letters (such as their name or a word of inspiration).

2. *Color Splash:* A common photography effect is to create a black and white photo with a single splash of color, often pink (much like the illustrations in *Tickled Pink*). Typing "black and white photos with splash of pink" into an internet browser yields many photos which illustrate this concept. Judiciously select one or two gender-neutral photos in this genre to show your students the idea (e.g. a dog with a pink tongue, a balcony with a pot of pink flowers) or create your own. Invite students to bring in a favorite photo, or invite them to wear a white t-shirt to school and take an individual photo of each student. Use a photocopier to create a black and white print of each photo on regular (non-shiny) paper. Provide students with pink tempera paint and very small paintbrushes with which to create a splash of pink on their photos (on the t-shirt in the photo if that option was used). There are also apps students may use to do this activity digitally.
3. *Color Wash:* Have students draw pictures that illustrate friendship using black crayon on white paper. Remind them of the subtitle of *Tickled Pink: How Friendship Washes the World with Color*. Tell them they will now wash their pictures with pink to illustrate that idea. Provide them with diluted pink tempera paint and large brushes. Experiment first on your own to get the right amount of dilution. [*Hint:* Powdered tempera mixed with water gives the best crayon resist effect. Modern liquid temperas seem formulated to provide excellent coverage, which isn't really what we are going for here. However, diluted liquid tempera will still work because pink is a light color and the black crayon will show through even if it doesn't resist the paint. If mixing your own pink using red and white, start with white and gradually add small amounts of red until the desired tint is achieved.] Guide students to cover their entire paper with pink.

Activity 3: Pink Shirt Day

In 2007, two male high school students in Nova Scotia, Canada convinced a large number of fellow students to wear pink in support of another student who had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt. Read the story here: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/bullied-student-tickled-pink-by-school-mates-t-shirt-campaign-1.682221

That province then declared the second Thursday of September "Stand Up Against Bullying Day." The event inspired Anti-Bullying Day, often called "Pink Shirt Day," which is now celebrated around the globe either on the last Wednesday of February or on the UN's official day, May 4. There is a related, but different, International Day of Pink in the second week of April. According to UNICEF Canada's website, there is mounting evidence that a major cause of bullying is the impact of widening income and social inequality. They offer this message about Pink Shirt Day:

> As we approach National [Anti-] Bullying Day, also known as Pink Shirt Day or Day of Pink, it is vital to keep spreading awareness—and kindness—to prevent bullying and create a safe environment for all our kids. So please, wear pink. But let's also act pink:

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- Start a non-judgmental conversation with a child in your life. Ask them how they deal with mean acts online and in the community. Ask them how they spread kindness. Ask them if they need some help.
- Ask your elected representatives what is next in their plans to deal with wide income inequality in Canada—such as increasing family income benefits.
- Model kindness in your relationships with others—especially where there are power differences.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- promote and practice kindness and acceptance
- explore issues related to personal and societal rights and responsibilities
- demonstrate self-respect, as well as respect and empathy for others

You Will Need

- a collection of books related to anti-bullying
- collaboration among school staff

How To:

1. Research Anti-Bullying Day, Pink Shirt Day and/or Day of Pink.
2. Meet with colleagues to decide how and when your school will participate.
3. Organize a collection of anti-bullying books, including, of course *Tickled Pink*. Place this collection where all teachers can access it and borrow books to read to their classes. You might also include *Lili Macaroni* by Nicole Testa, *Don't Laugh at Giraffe* by Rebecca Bender, *French Toast* by Kari-Lynn Winters, and *Morris Mickelwhite and the Tangerine Dress* by Christine Baldacchino. Lists of other appropriate inclusions are available online by searching "anti-bullying picture books."
4. After reading *Tickled Pink* to your class at least once, explain to your students the idea behind Pink Shirt Day and announce the date.
5. Over the next week or so, read at least one new anti-bullying book to your class each day and discuss.
6. Have students make posters and/or P.A. announcements to advertise the upcoming day.
7. Send home reminders the night before. Be sensitive to families who may not have any pink clothing at their house. Provide pink armbands for students to wear if they wish, if they did not have any pink clothing.
8. On Pink Shirt Day, encourage all staff to take many photos. Use some of these afterward to celebrate your school's participation by creating a bulletin board display or a post for the school website.

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