

LESSON PLAN

A NEW GREEN DAY

by Antoinette Portis

Author & Illustrator of Sibert Honor Book *Hey, Water!*

★ “The power of Portis’s poems, and the surprise each page turn allows, lets readers experience **familiar moments with awakened senses**, offering them nothing less than a **new world filled with fresh experiences.**” —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

ABOUT THE BOOK

If you listen, nature speaks. Explore nature through evocative riddles and bold imagery that take the reader from day to night and back again in this perfect read-aloud.

On each spread, children will solve riddles about the familiar animals, plants, and the weather that one child encounters outdoors throughout a whole day. Active readers will delight in the clever language and striking illustrations.

Interest level: K–4

NGSS: K-LS1-From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes, 1-LS3-Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits



NEAL PORTER BOOKS • 9780823444885 • Ages 3–7

BEFORE READING

1. Look at the title and cover illustration.
 2. Discuss and predict what the story will be about.
 3. What time of year do you think it is? (spring, summer?)
- **Do not show the book before reading with the class since it will spoil the riddles.

MINI LESSON—FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE VS. LITERAL MEANINGS

- Figurative language is the use of words in an imaginative and unusual way.
- Figurative language uses comparisons.
- Figurative language makes stories interesting.

Discuss the example below:

Figurative meaning—“It is raining like cats and dogs.” / Literal meaning—“It is raining hard.”



Let's Practice: Who am I?

- I am man's best friend. (a dog)
- I am words all dressed up instead of ordinary statements. (figurative language)
- I become a mile wide when you are happy. (a smile)

Now try! Brainstorm with the class. Write down examples of figurative language.

IDENTIFY DIFFERENT KINDS OF WRITING STYLES

Discuss different books you have read as a class and include examples of different writing styles. Some books have a beginning, a middle, and an end, while others do not. Think about journal entries, prose, poetry, rhyming poetry, wordless books, question-and-answer books, alphabet books, etc. Brainstorm examples together and chart responses.

INTRODUCE THE BOOK

The book we are going to read/listen to is *A New Green Day*, written and illustrated by Antoinette Portis. *A New Green Day* is written as a series of riddles that connect to a common theme. Let's think about the writing style as we read/listen to the story. I will give you time to figure out each riddle as I read. Do not call out the answers.

DURING READING

1. Read the book to the group uninterrupted, pausing after each riddle.
2. Discuss the style of writing.
3. How does the author use figurative language?
4. What is the point of view or voice? How does it change throughout the story?
5. How do the illustrations help you?
6. What is the main idea of the story?
7. What time of year is it? Find examples.
8. What do the following words mean? (*invitation, chorus, thrum, engine*) Predict the meanings using context clues. Check inferred meanings in the dictionary.
9. Discuss the themes of summer and "our natural world."
10. Break the group up into pairs. Have the students buddy-read the book to find the descriptive clues that author Antoinette Portis uses to help the reader solve the riddle. An example is "Sunlight"—the word "warm" is a clue for sunlight because the sun warms you up.
11. Have each group fill out the worksheet on page 4 as they read.

AFTER READING

- Write a narrative called *A New Green Day*, based on the book by Antoinette Portis.
- Analyze the impact of specific word choices on the meaning and tone in the story.
- How is the theme reflected through the plot development?
- How does the structure of the book contribute to the meaning?
- Create a main idea and details chart based on the story.
- Write a glossary for the book using the true, literal definitions of the "voices" in the story. (words included in worksheet on page 4)
- What does summer mean to you? Create a new riddle that could be included in this book.
- Draw a picture on the back. Share as a class.

Guide written by Marla Conn, MS, Ed., reading/literacy specialist and educational consultant.



ABOUT THE CREATOR

Photo Credit: Sasha Portis



Antoinette Portis is the author of *A New Green Day* and many inventive books for children, including the Sibert Honor book *Hey Water!*, which received starred reviews from *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*. Other titles include *Not a Box*, a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book and a Geisel Honor Book, and the ALA Notable Books *Wait and Now*. A recipient of the Prestigious Sendak Fellowship, she lives in Southern California. Visit her at antoinetteportis.com.



Illustration © 2020 by Antoinette Portis from *A New Green Day*



Name _____

Write the clues in the column next to the "voice" from the story, *A New Green Day*.

Sunlight	
Snail	
Leaf	
Inchworm	
Tadpole	
Pebble	
Cloud	
Rain	
Lightning	
Thunder	
Mud	
Shadow	
Night	
Cricket	

