



Story Summary

When young Petronilla cries “Wash on” instead of “wash off,” colors start transferring mysteriously between the little girl and everything she touches.

Color chaos spreads around the world, but the delighted Petronilla

refuses to undo her mischief. Only the disappearance of her beloved dog convinces her to finally say “Wash off” and return everything to *almost* normal.

Michèle Marineau is an award-winning writer and translator of books for young people. She studied medicine, art history, and translation at the Université de Montréal and worked as a freelance editor for several years. Her first novel, *Cassiopée ou l'été polonaise*, won the Governor General's Award for French-Language Children's Literature in 1988; her other prestigious awards include the Governor General's Literary Award, the Prix Alvine Bélisle, and the Prix 12/17 Brive-Montréal. Michèle lives in Montreal.

Manon Gauthier is a graphic artist who made the leap to picture book illustration in 2006. After her first book was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature, she dedicated herself entirely to illustration, and to giving presentations and art workshops in schools across Quebec. A flexible artist, Manon works in many media, including gouache, pencils, and paper collage. She lives in Montreal.

Additional Resources

Pair this book with:

Purple, Green and Yellow by Robert Munsch (for study of humor and/or color)

Good Morning, Grumple by Victoria Allenby, or other books illustrated by Manon Gauthier, including:

All the World a Poem by Gilles Tibo, and

Elliot by Julie Pearson (for art study of Gauthier's mixed-media collage)

Online Videos:

Chameleons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQggDnScsvI> (The video's content gets progressively more complex over time. Choose how far to watch based on your students' level of comprehension).

Picture Book Ages 4–7 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-018-5 | Pages: 40

Themes

Color, humor, family, responsibility

BISAC Codes

JUV019000 JUVENILE FICTION / Humorous Stories

JUV051000 JUVENILE FICTION / Imagination & Play

JUV013000 JUVENILE FICTION / Family / General

FOUNTAS & PINNELL

Guided Reading Level: N | Grade Level Equivalent: 3 | Interest Level by Grade: K–5

Curriculum Connections

Visual Arts:

- The Principles of Design—color, line, repetition
- Art Technique—mixed-media collage

Character Education:

- Responsibility

Language:

- Comprehension Skills: predicting, inferring, text-to-text connections
- Elements of Style: word choice (alternatives to “said”)

Before Reading

Discuss:

- Read the title. Wash On? What could that mean?

During Reading

Discuss:

- Page 8: What do you think might happen?
- Page 19: What do you think might make Petronilla say “Wash off?”

After Reading

Discuss:

- Page 40: Why do you think they changed the dog’s name to Chameleon? (If children don’t know what chameleons are, watch a video showing them change colors—suggestion above. Note that the myth that chameleons change color for perfect camouflage has recently been debunked.)

Activities

- Read other books illustrated by Manon Gauthier (e.g. *Good Morning, Grumple*). Take a good look at the illustrator’s style and have children create mixed-media collages. Provide different types of papers, including magazines, newspapers, and scrapbooking paper, and different types of pencils, markers, and crayons for them to choose from.
- Try a variety of printmaking activities, in which color is “transferred from one object to another.” 1) Place trays of liquid tempera paint at a table, along with found objects such as spools, corks, potatoes cut in half, sponges. Children can dip each object in the paint and use them to create patterns or pictures on paper. 2) Children can finger-paint directly on a tabletop or sheet of plastic. Besides fingers, they can use craft sticks and toothpicks for different types of lines. They then lay a sheet of paper on top and rub firmly with their hand. When they peel back the paper, their painting will be transferred onto it. You can do this with regular finger paint, or with shaving cream to which a few drops of different colors

have been added.

- Have a discussion about personal and group responsibility, for example taking responsibility for, and fixing, mistakes that we have made, including environmental messes.
- Launch a thematic study of humor.
- Reading: Elements of Style: Listen for all the different ways to say “said” and make an anchor chart for the classroom.
- Talk about opposites. Call out a word (on) and the children call out the opposite (off). Other suitable pairs for young children: in/out, big/small, hot/cold, long/short, high/low, fast/slow, empty/full, hard/soft, dark/light, before/after, smooth/rough, more/less. Retell familiar stories in a funny way by using opposites (e.g. The story of the three pigs might feature the little good wolf).

