



Reading and Activity Guide 2026:

# NEIGHBORHOOD ADVENTURES

\*La versión de este guía en español está disponible en la página [Lesson Plans and Activities](#) del Zimmerli.

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# Zimmerli Mobile

*Bringing art to you*

This initiative aims to foster a deeper appreciation for art, literacy, and culture in our young readers and artists by bringing the experience of art directly into classrooms and community spaces in and beyond New Brunswick.

[Learn more about Zimmerli Mobile.](#)

## Visit the Zimmerli Art Museum

Located at 71 Hamilton Street, the museum and associated programs are FREE and open to the public. Come and enjoy our newest exhibition, *Allan Rohan Crite: Neighborhood*, on view until July 31, 2026. Visit us online to explore all our other offerings at [www.zimmerli.rutgers.edu](http://www.zimmerli.rutgers.edu).



ACCESS  
FOR ALL

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# Neighborhood Adventures

In our neighborhood, we go on lots of adventures! Where do these adventures take place, and who do we share them with?

Inspired by *Allan Rohan Crite: Neighborhood*, this book and art kit will guide you through an imaginative adventure to learn more about your neighborhoods and what makes them special.

## Read, Explore, Create

This toolkit features reading guides for our highlighted books about neighborhoods.

- *Saturday*, written and illustrated by Oge Mora
- *My Colors, My World / Mis colores, mi mundo*, written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez
- *Something, Someday*, written by Amanda Gorman and illustrated by Christian Robinson

## Glossary

Terms such as “neighborhood,” “community,” and “family” are central to the stories below. Take some time to think and discuss what they mean to you.

We have also provided our definitions:

- **Neighborhood** - a small part of a town or city where people live and spend time with each other. People in a neighborhood often know each other, help each other, and play together.
  - “Neighborhood” is not just about the buildings, it’s about the people who live there too!
- **Community** - people who live in the same area and/or people who enjoy the same things, like to play the same games, or listen to the same music
- **Family** - a group of people who are connected by the love and care that they have for each other like a caregiver, sibling, cousin, or friend

## Visual Thinking Strategies

The Zimmerli Mobile initiative uses Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to engage young readers when reading stories. You may choose to [learn more about VTS here](#), but know that the three core questions are:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

### **VTS in Action!**

Zimmerli Mobile's Graduate Fellow, Hanna, uses VTS in the image on the right to engage students during a reading of *Saturday*!



# Saturday

Written and illustrated by Oge Mora

*On the warm and tender Saturday, Ava's mother works six days a week, but on Saturdays they spend the day together. Those days together are special and splendid, as they say. But one Saturday there are complications: storytime is canceled, a car splashes water on their new hairdos, and the park is too noisy. Worst of all, they barely caught the bus to the puppet show but left the tickets at home. Yet, they know the special and splendid thing is to spend the day together, even if they have to stop and take a deep breath sometimes.*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Oge Mora is a collage artist and storyteller. Her picture book *Thank You, Omu!* was a Caldecott Honor, Corretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award winner, and Ezra Jack Keats Book Award recipient. Her second book, *Saturday*, won the 2020 Boston Globe Horn Book Picture Book Award. Mora's artwork has been applauded by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Boston Globe*. She is a fan of all things colorful, patterned, or collaged, and enjoys creating warm stories that celebrate people coming together. You can visit Oge at [her website](#) or follow her on Instagram @oge\_mora.

## THEMES

Spending time with family and loved ones, traditions, neighborhood/community, comfort in routines and schedules, dealing with disappointment

## READ

### Before:

To build anticipation, you can begin by looking at the front cover together.

- What are some of the things we can see on the cover?
- What do we think the story will be about?
- What do we think is going to happen?

Reading the title, you can ask, what is “Saturday”? For those who have already learned about the days of the week, this can serve as a knowledge check.

*Alternatively*, take a picture walk! Starting with the cover, go page-by-page with the students asking them what they see and what they think is happening/will happen based on the pictures. Afterwards go back to the beginning and read the story together! Were their guesses correct?

### **During:**

Ava and her mom’s Saturday is not going according to plan, and Ava is feeling very overwhelmed. To calm down, Ava and her mom close their eyes, take a deep breath, and exhale.

- Have children try out the breathing exercises and talk about how such an exercise can help regulate their emotions when they’re feeling down. We have some resources in the next section if you need ideas!

### **After:**

Recall: Ask the child(ren) to list the places Ava and her mother visited together.

You can also ask: What do you like to do on weekends? Who do you spend your weekends with?

## EXPLORE

Breathing exercises can be a powerful tool for emotional regulation, to reduce anxiety, and to practice mindfulness.

- **Why do breathing exercises work?** Breathing techniques promote relaxation by activating the body’s parasympathetic nervous system that is responsible for the body’s ‘rest-and-digest’ response that helps to calm the body.

### → **Try it out! Use one or all of the following:**

- ◆ The [starfish breathing exercise](#) is a type of ‘shape breathing technique’. The shape is not the essential part of this exercise but if it helps your child(ren) draw it out! The most important aspect is being able to trace the outline of the shape while following the breath cycle (breathe-in, breathe-out).
- ◆ [Alligator breathing](#) is a form of yoga breathing, also known as *pranayama*, which focuses on the intentional and controlled regulation

of breath. Animal breathing is a fun way to combine imaginative play and breathing techniques making it enjoyable for kids!

- ◆ Belly breathing is done by contracting the diaphragm. Air enters the lungs, the chest does not rise, but pushes the belly outwards! Belly breathing relieves pressure on the chest and neck, slows the body down, and shifts the body to a 'rest and digest' state. Try the [Belly breathing exercise with Rosita from Sesame Street!](#)

## CREATE

At the end of the story, Ava and her mom discover that the true joy of Saturday lies with spending time together. So they go home and host their own puppet show!

You and your young artists can create your own puppets with materials that can be easily found.

**Check out the [Plainfield Library's website](#) for materials and instructions!**

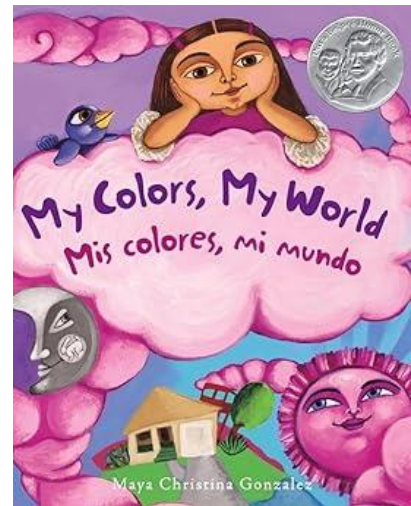


# My Colors, My World

Written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez

*Maya longs to find brilliant, beautiful colors in her world. But when the wind blows, desert sand covers everything and turns her whole neighborhood the color of dust. With the help of a feathered friend, Maya searches high and low to find the colors in her world.*

*As they follow Maya's search for all the colors of the rainbow, young readers will be inspired to look around and ask themselves, where can I find the colors in my world?*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Maya Christina Gonzalez is an award-winning children's book artist, author, activist, publisher, and progressive educator. She has created artwork for nearly a dozen children's books, though this is the first time she has both written and illustrated. Maya believes that children's books can be used as an agent of change and healing, both personally and culturally. Maya lives and paints in San Francisco, California but you can visit her at [her website](#) or Instagram @mzmayagonzalez.

## THEMES

Colors, home, neighborhood, family

## READ

### Before:

Look at the front cover. What are some of the things we can see?

Next, take a look at the title. Based on our observations, what do we think the book will be about? What are some of the colors we might see in Maya's world?

### During:

There are some terms that may be unfamiliar to our young learners. We hope the following are helpful as you read through the book:

- **Desert** - a very dry place where there are not a lot of plants or water

- **Pollen** - a yellow powder that comes from plants, flowers, and trees. The powder travels in the wind and can cause some people to have allergies and sneeze

**After:**

We've learned that Maya's favorite color is pink! What is your favorite color? Where do you see this color in the book?

What are some of the colors we saw in Maya's world? Where did we see them? What are some of the colors we see in *your* world?

## EXPLORE

The **emotional color wheel or feelings wheel** is a tool that helps individuals identify and articulate their emotions using colors to represent different emotional states.<sup>1</sup>



There are 6 **primary emotions**: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, trust, and surprise. These are broad, but fundamental emotions that serve as the basis for all other emotions.

*Being able to name your emotions is how you can tame it! You don't have to fix the emotion—just hold space for it!*

## CREATE

Think of a place that is important in your world—maybe your house, your room, the playground, your classroom. Using coloring materials (markers, paint, crayons, etc.) draw one or more of your favorite places with the colors that make up that world!



<sup>1</sup> Ackerman, C.E. (2026, February 10). *The Emotion Wheel: Exploring a Compass for Feelings*. Positive Psychology. <https://positivepsychology.com/emotion-wheel/>

# Something, Someday

Written by Amanda Gorman

Illustrated by Christian Robinson

*Sometimes the world feels broken. And problems seem too big to fix. But somehow, we all have the power to make a difference. With a little faith, and maybe the help of a friend, together we can find beauty and create change.*

*With intimate and inspiring text and powerfully stunning illustration, Something, Someday reveals how even the smallest gesture can have a lasting impact.*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amanda Gorman is the youngest presidential inaugural poet in U.S. history, an activist, model, and author. Born and raised in Los Angeles, she began writing at only a few years of age. Now her world has been featured in countless media outlets, and she is a committed advocate for the environment, racial equality, and gender justice. Amanda was appointed the first-ever National Youth Poet Laureate by Urban World in 2017 and is the youngest board member of 826 National, the largest youth writing network in the U.S. You can visit Amanda at [her website](#) or on Instagram @amandacgorman.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Christian Robinson is an award-winning illustrator, author, animator, and designer based in Oakland, California. He began drawing as a way to make space for himself and create the world he wanted to see. In 2016, Christian received a Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor for his art in *Last Stop of Market Street* by Matt de la Peña. He is the author and illustrator of the picture books *Another* and *You Matter*, and he has illustrated many more. You can visit Christian at [The Art of Fun](#) or on Instagram @theartoffun.

## THEMES

Caring for one's neighborhood/community, cooperation, environment, problem-solving, hope

## READ

### Before:

Look at the front cover together. What do you see?

Flip to the back cover and do the same. Based on these, what do we think will happen in the book?

### During:

Take a look at the boy's face. What emotion do you think he is feeling? What makes you say that?

- Repeat this exercise as the book progresses and notice together how the boy's emotions change.

There are words whose meanings are hard to put into words, especially for young children, but we have included a few examples below:

- **Problem** - something that is hard to understand or solve
- **Confusion/confused** - a feeling that you get when you can't understand something
- **Hope** - a feeling that something can and will happen


### After:

What happened in the story? Flip to specific parts of the story as they are pointed out.

What was the main problem? How did the community overcome their problems?

- You can revisit the front and back covers to explore the progression of the story. In the beginning there was garbage everywhere, but in the end the children came together to create a beautiful garden with flowers, plants, vegetables, and butterflies!

## EXPLORE

- Listen to the author, Amanda Gorman, read *Something, Someday* (6 minutes):  
 [#BNStorytime: Amanda Gorman reads Something, Someday](#)

- Listen to Christian Robinson talk about his work (2 minutes):  
▶ An illustrator explains the art of making pictures speak to children
- Listen to Christian Robinson read and talk about his book *You Matter* (9 minutes): ▶ You Matter | Read Along with Christian Robinson! | PBS KIDS

## CREATE

*Something, Someday* shows us that when we work together we can create something beautiful. Working together, you can create your own community garden to celebrate and uplift your everyday spaces!

### Materials:

- Foam or construction paper sheets cut in strips, triangles, and circles
- Paper/Cardstock for the background
- Optional: Glue (if foam sheets are not self-adhesive)



# Our Neighborhood Adventures Don't Have to End Here!

Thank you for joining us on our adventures! We hope you had a great time and got to learn about and create some amazing things.

If you and your young artist(s) would like to share any completed projects with us, we'd love to see them! Upload your photos and give us your feedback here:

<https://forms.gle/MS2by6GrNPv4vMRb7>.



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