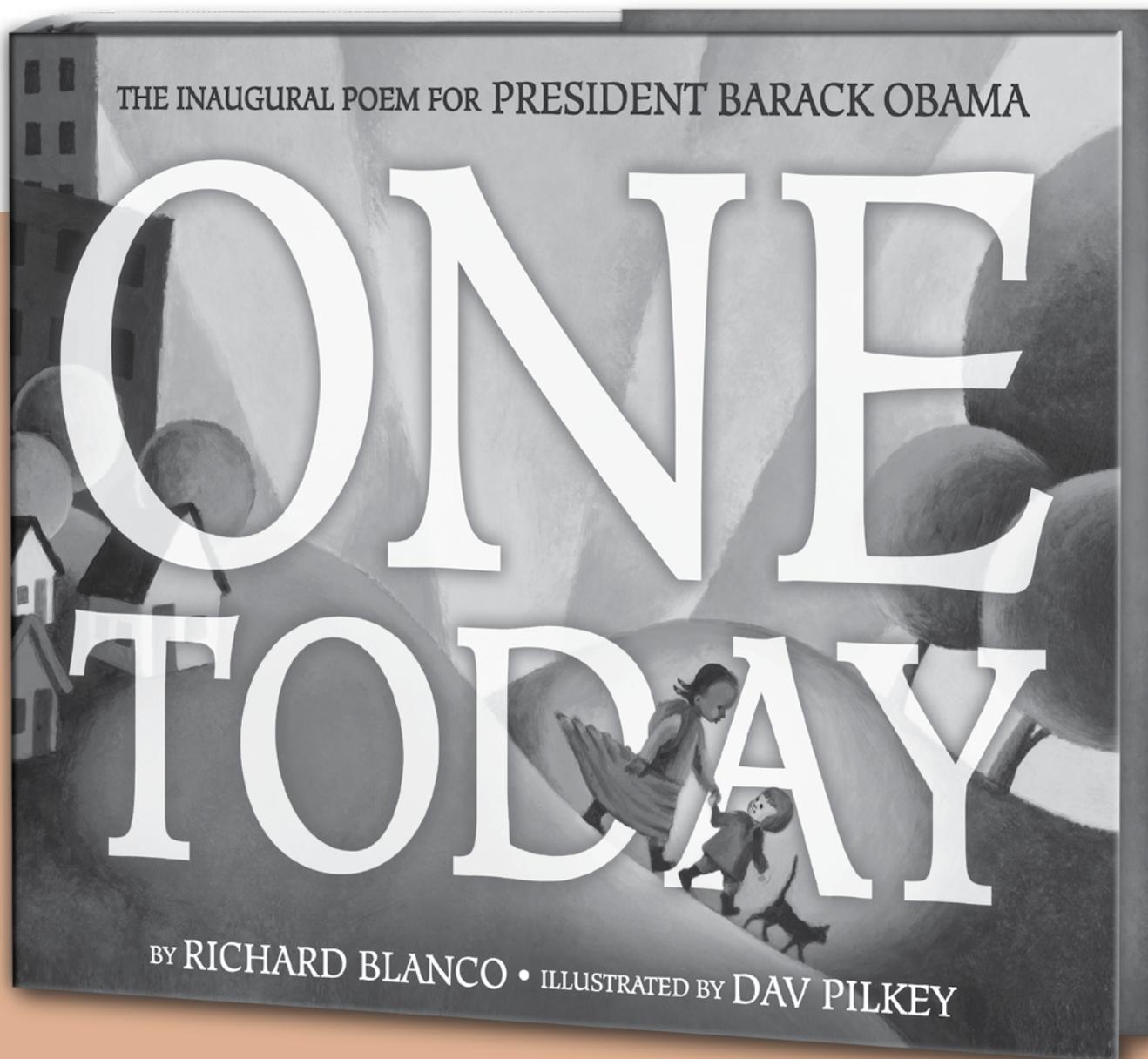


educator's guide

ONE TODAY



Curriculum connections

- ✦ Social Studies
- ✦ Writing
- ✦ Vocabulary
- ✦ Poetry

All ages

BY RICHARD BLANCO
ILLUSTRATED BY DAV PILKEY

BUILDING BACKGROUND

Inauguration Gallery

Help students understand the importance of inaugurations and the inaugural address by creating an inauguration gallery. Choose several inaugural addresses for students to analyze. Then, ask students in small groups to use close reading skills to determine the main idea of the speech and identify a few key points. Each group can choose a different inaugural address to analyze. Integrate social studies by having students include three important facts about the historical context. Ask students to creatively display the facts they learned on chart paper and post these in different locations around the room. Have students rotate around the room to learn about the main points of each inaugural address and how it relates to that period in American history. Discuss as a class how the themes of the speeches are similar and different (for older students) or discuss how the main ideas are similar or different. A source for inaugural addresses that can be used for close reading is:

bartleby.com/124/

Picture Predictions

Using a document camera or multiple copies of the book *One Today*, cover the words and show only the pictures. Ask students to look carefully at the drawings and try to predict what the poem will be about by comparing and contrasting the settings shown in the illustrations. Give students sticky notes and ask them to record evidence from the illustrations to support their conclusions. After all students have had an opportunity to record evidence, place the sticky notes on a large piece of chart paper. Then, arrange the notes with similar ideas together. Looking at all of the evidence, ask students to discuss their predictions. After reading,

revisit the predictions and ask students to discuss how their predictions helped them understand the text. Did the illustrations give them enough information about the setting or did they need the words too? Discuss as a class how the words and illustrations worked together.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Word Pictures

While the illustrations are rich and colorful, the words on the page paint a picture too. Choose several sections of the poem to read aloud to students. Read the sections several times and ask students to sketch or paint what they visualized. Create a class gallery of the pictures and then compare and contrast the pictures, looking for similarities and differences among the students' work, but also looking at the illustrator's version. Which elements were the same? Ask students to discuss why they think certain elements might have been the same. Which details were not the same? Why do they think there might have been differences?

Vocabulary Visualization

The vocabulary in *One Today* does not seem particularly difficult, but the way the words are used may be unfamiliar to some students. Choose several examples from *One Today* and ask students to first consider what they think the word means, then read the example sentence or phrase, and consider what the word means in that context. Some examples include: kindled, charging, crescendoing, teeming, launching, and symphony included in the following phrases:

“kindled over our shores” (p. 8)

“charging across the Rockies” (p. 8)

“crescendoing into our day” (p. 10)

“teeming over highways” (p. 12)

“buses launching down avenues” (p. 23)

“symphony of footsteps” (p. 23)

Small groups may choose one word and present their understanding of the word before reading, the dictionary definition of the word, and an interpretation of the word meaning in the given phrase. Groups may use movement, illustrations, or other examples to explain how their word was used. After groups present, ask students to discuss how the poet’s word choice helped them visualize the actions or scenes.

Anaphora Analysis

A literary device often used in speeches and some poetry is anaphora. This is the repetition of a word or phrase to give emphasis to a point. Ask students to determine which words or phrases are repeated throughout *One Today*. Ask them to analyze other poems or speeches for examples of anaphora.

If students read Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, they will see several examples. Once students understand how anaphora is used as a poetic device, challenge each student to find an example to share with the class. In each short presentation, ask students to share the example and consider its purpose in the poem or speech.

Inferring/Biographical Sketch

There are clues within the text that help tell about the author’s background and culture. Ask students to search through the text for autobiographical clues about the author. Have students record the text-based clues and then make some inferences about the author’s perspective. Then, provide students with biographical information about the author. Discuss how his background and culture contributed to his point of view.

Poetry Form Analysis

Poetry can take many forms. Begin by asking students to brainstorm a list of words that they associate with the word poetry. Then, ask them to work in small groups to come up with a definition of poetry. Share definitions and then decide as a class on a working definition. Next, provide several examples of different kinds of poems, including *One Today*. Ask students to reconsider their class definition of poetry after looking at each example. Did they previously say poems have to rhyme? If so, how did their definition change after reading *One Today*? Write each new definition in a new color of marker, and then observe as a class how the definition changed.

Writing

Five Senses Settings

Poems often use the five senses to help readers evoke emotions and make connections. Begin by having students identify and discuss how Richard Blanco structures the poem to appeal to the five senses. Then, ask students to try writing their own poem using the five senses structure. Have students choose a special place and write about it using the same poetic style as Richard Blanco.

Thematic Poetry Free-Write

One Today celebrates both diversity and unity. Give students the opportunity to explore this theme through poetry. Without guiding the structure or confining students to a specific topic, ask students to write their own poem that illustrates diversity and unity. They can use any poetic structure and anything that helps them convey the theme. Host a poetry reading to showcase students’ creative efforts.

One Moment Narrative

The illustrations in *One Today* depict some everyday scenes of life in America. Encourage students to capture their own everyday experience by taking a picture of something (or bringing in a picture) that represents an important moment. Then, ask students to use narrative writing to describe that experience from their point of view. They should include both description and dialogue, helping their readers feel like they are experiencing that small moment. Connect back to *One Today* by discussing the similarities and differences among the narratives. How do these narratives help create a sense of community?

SOCIAL STUDIES

“I Have a Dream” Connections

The “I Have a Dream” speech by Martin Luther King Jr. is referenced in *One Today*. Provide students with a copy of the speech and ask them to use close reading skills to analyze the speech. Then, ask students to think about why Richard Blanco says, “...the ‘I have a dream’ we keep dreaming.” What does he mean by this? Ask students to use evidence from the text of the “I Have a Dream” speech to support their answer.

Mapping the Poem

Throughout *One Today* a number of major geographic features are mentioned. Give each student a blank map of the United States (or use Google Earth or another online mapping program) and ask students to locate and label the Great Lakes, the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachians, the Sierras, the Mississippi and the Colorado River. After these places specifically mentioned in the poem are labeled, ask students to

closely analyze the poem and determine if there are any other places that could be labeled. For example, the poem mentions deserts. Where are deserts in the United States? Challenge students to label other areas of their map that could correspond to places described in the poem. For each place labeled, encourage students to justify their choice by referring to evidence in the text.

My History

One Today shows America is a land of diversity. Immigrants from every corner of the world help make it what it is today. Help students understand how their cultural and family background contribute to their country or community with this interview project. Ask each student to choose a family member or community member to interview. As a class, develop a set of interview questions that will be used as a guide. The idea is to ask questions that will help students see the diversity in their own community, so the questions may be about languages spoken, countries of origin, countries of family origin, life experiences, etc. The type of questions will depend on the community studied. After students have interviewed someone, ask them to present a short oral presentation about what they learned.

ABCs of America

Create an ABC book featuring the United States of America. Brainstorm as a class at least one topic for each letter of the alphabet that relates to the United States of America. There may be several topics that fit under each letter. Then, have students select one or two topics (that corresponds to each letter) and write a short informational article about that topic. Each informational piece will become a page in a class book. Make sure

every letter is covered (and encourage students to be creative with some of the letters that are more difficult). Once a topic is identified for each letter, and all individual reports are written, bind the pages together to create a class book. Other classrooms may want to “check out” the book and read it to learn all about the United States of America.

ART & MUSIC

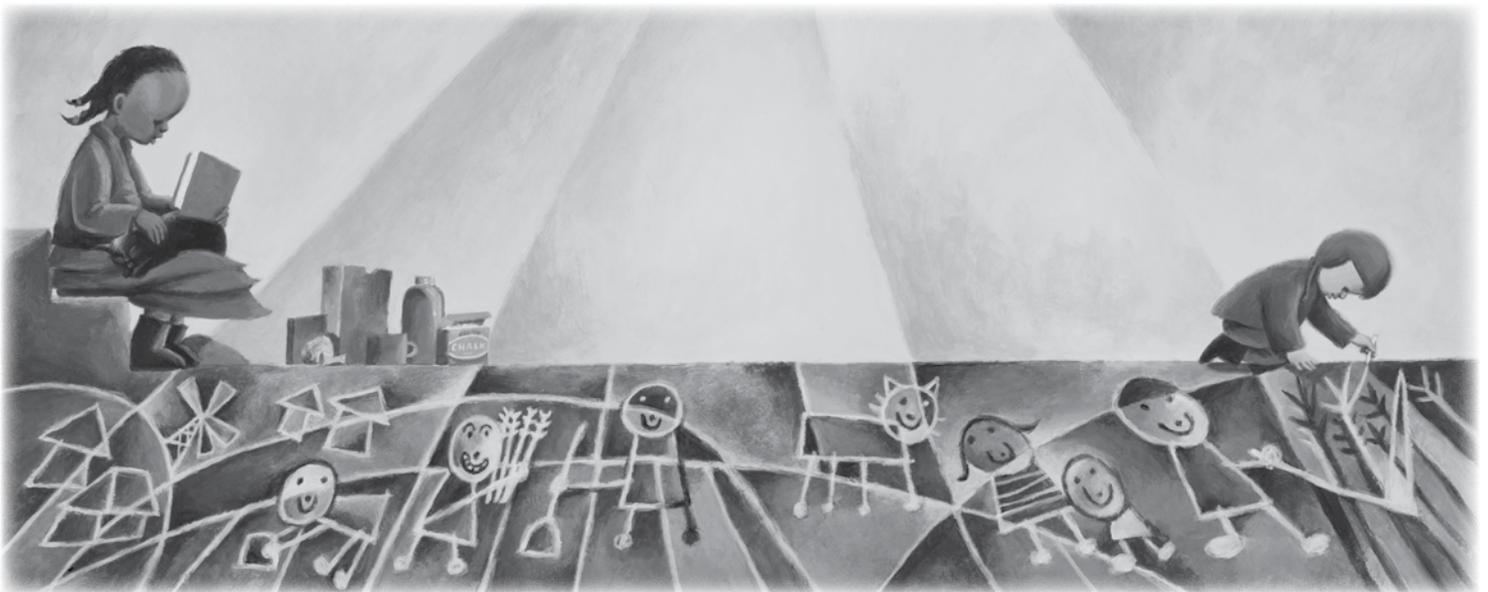
Illustrator Study

Dav Pilkey is a famous illustrator, but students may be surprised to see how his artwork in this book is the same and different from his other books. Gather a selection of Dav Pilkey books (e.g. *The Paperboy*, *Captain Underpants*, etc.) and ask students to compare and contrast the other books with the style in *One Today*. Help students focus their work by asking them to consider color schemes, artistic medium, tone, and theme. What aspects are similar? Which aspects are different? Connect to their own creativity by having students create their own art piece in the style of Dav Pilkey. Students may choose to illustrate their favorite

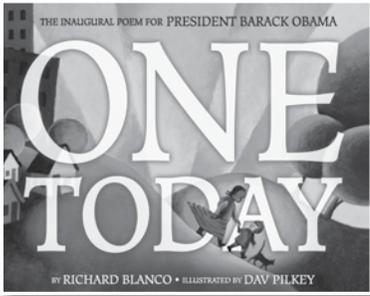
place or an important place in their community using the style found in *One Today*, or they might try drawing it using the style found in some of Dav Pilkey’s other works. Share the finished creations as a class and discuss how the style of their own artwork conveyed the theme.

Musical Poetry

Some poetry is performed and set to music. Ask students to imagine they are a music producer and they have been asked to present this poem musically. Divide the class into small groups and give each group a section of the poem to set to music. They may want to use sound effects, instruments, patriotic songs, or instrumental music. Ask students to carefully consider the tone of the writing, the imagery they hope to convey, and the types of music and sounds that might help them do so. Give groups some time to plan, and then ask groups to present their section of the poem set to music. After all groups present, reflect as a class on how well the musical choices blended together (or not). Were there any that did not? What could be the reason for this?



ABOUT THE BOOK



ONE TODAY

HC 978-0-316-37144-5 • E-book 978-0-316-38812-2
Also available in ebook

One Today, written for and presented at Obama's second term inauguration, celebrates America from dawn to dusk, and from coast to coast. Dav Pilkey brings to life this vision of a bustling, diverse, united nation, where the extraordinary happens every day.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

- ★ "This a book to be read and reread." —*Booklist*
- ★ "When it was read, the poem was instantly acclaimed; Pilkey's visual interpretation fully—and joyfully—honors it." —*Kirkus Reviews*
- ★ "Blanco is a graceful wordsmith, and Pilkey transforms his poem into a story that children can make their own." —*Publishers Weekly*



about the author



Richard Blanco is an award-winning American poet, storyteller, teacher, public speaker, and memoirist. He lives with his partner in Maine. Visit him online at richard-blanco.com

about the illustrator



Dav Pilkey has created many beloved books, including those in the Captain Underpants series and Caldecott Honor award-winning *The Paperboy*. He lives with his wife in the Pacific Northwest. Visit him online at pilkey.com



LittleBrownLibrary.com

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

Guide created by Jennifer McMahon, Education Consultant.