



Classroom Guide for
Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/
Marisol McDonald no combina
Written by Monica Brown
Illustrated by Sara Palacios

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grades 2–3

Interest Level: Grades K–3

Guided Reading Level: L

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 2.8/.5

Lexile™ Level: AD580

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

Individuality/Non-conformity, Self-expression/Self-esteem, Childhood Experiences, Friendship, Birthday Celebrations, Family, Multiracial Children, Cultural Diversity, Bilingual Stories, Latino Interest

Synopsis

Marisol McDonald has orange-red hair and nut-brown skin. Polka dots and stripes are one of her favorite clothing combinations to wear. She prefers peanut butter and jelly burritos in her lunch box. To Marisol, these seemingly mismatched things make perfect sense together.

Other people are confused by Marisol and try to get her to conform. Her teacher doesn't approve of the way Marisol signs her name. Her friends don't want to play a combination of soccer and pirates. And Marisol's drawings are always *different*.

One day Marisol's friends present a challenge: "[Y]ou couldn't match if you wanted to!" So the next day Marisol takes up the challenge and tries to conform. She wears clothes that are all the same color. She plays only pirates at recess, but she misses playing soccer too. And it's boring making an ordinary drawing in art class.

Marisol realizes that she has to be true to herself. The next day she puts on a favorite mismatched outfit and declares "My name is Marisol McDonald and I don't match because . . . I don't want to!" And when she finally gets a long-promised puppy, he is a perfect fit. He has one floppy ear and one pointy ear, one blue eye and one brown eye, and Marisol has the perfect name for him—Kitty!

Try as they might, no one can put biracial, Peruvian-Scottish-American Marisol into a box and make her match everyone and everything else. And that's just fine with her.

Background

(from the Author's Note on the last page of the book)

I wrote this book because, like more than six million Americans, I'm multiracial. I'm the daughter of a South American mother and a North American father, and my childhood was spent in a close community of cousins, *tíos* (uncles), and *tías* (aunts).

Like Marisol McDonald, my cousins and I are mixed—indigenous Peruvian and Spanish mixed with Scottish and Italian and Jewish, not to mention Nicaraguan, Mexican, Chilean and African. One thing most of us do share are freckles. According to one of my *tíos*, the family freckles came from the time my *abuelita* (grandma) was stirring a big pan of chocolate on the stove—my *tío* reached for it and it splattered everywhere, leaving chocolate sprinkles on everyone's faces and toes!

People sometimes ask us, "What are you?" and sometimes even say that we "don't match." But we know better. Our mothers told us that we are Americans, yes, but also citizens of the world. My life (and I'll bet yours too) is bound up with the history of many peoples, and like Marisol McDonald, I open my arms wide and embrace them all.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What kinds of clothes do you like to wear? How do you decide if one thing you put on goes with something else you put on?
2. What are some of the things we can tell about a person from the way he or she chooses to dress?
3. What games and sports do you like to play? Have you ever tried to combine more than one of them? What might happen if you did?
4. How can you decide on a good name for a pet? What do you think you should consider when choosing a name?
5. What do you know about realistic fiction stories? What kinds of things happen in realistic fiction? What are some things that do not happen in realistic fiction?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

Display the book and read the title aloud. Ask students what they think the title means. Then ask them to predict what the story might be about. Who do you think the characters might be? Where do you think the story might take place? What do you think might happen in the story? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: endpapers with drawings on them, title page, English and Spanish text, illustrations, and author's note on the last page.

Ask students if they think this book will be fiction or nonfiction. What makes them think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give that helped them decide?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out who Marisol McDonald is and what it means when the title says she “doesn’t match.” Have students also read to determine why the story is written in more than one language.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, 4)

For English readers, the book contains some words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students’ prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Then ask students to write their own meanings and sentences for each word. If students also know synonyms for any of the vocabulary, have them list the synonyms as well.

goal	clash	polka dots	burritos	<i>perrito</i>	<i>por favor</i>
<i>quizás</i>	cursive	soccer	scrunches	creative	unique
bilingual	Peruvian	Scottish	marvelous	<i>abuelita</i>	Peru
bravo	smushed	caramel	mismatched		

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance close reading and comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content.

Encourage students to refer to passages and illustrations in the book and **to cite evidence from the text and/or illustrations to support their responses.**

Literal Comprehension

1. The narrator is the character who tells us the story. Who is the narrator in this story? How do you know? (Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 6)
2. Who is Tato? Why does he think that Marisol doesn’t match? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer. (Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1 & 3)
3. Marisol and her brother have different opinions on how Marisol dresses. What does Marisol think about the different clothing items she wears together? What does her brother think? (Reading Standards, Literature, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 9)
4. Who are the members of Marisol’s family? (Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1)
5. Which one of Marisol’s parents is from Peru? Which parent is from Scotland? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer. (Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, 1 & 3)
6. Besides mismatching her clothes, what else does Marisol do that other people think clashes? Use examples from the text to support your answer. (Reading Standards, Literature, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, 7)
7. What challenge does Ollie put to Marisol? How does she react? (Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1–3)
8. What puppy does Marisol pick? How is the puppy similar to Marisol? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer. (Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1–3)

Extension/Higher Level Thinking
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1. How does Marisol feel about being “mismatched” at the beginning of the story? In the middle of the story? At the end? How do her feelings change? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer. *(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 4)*
2. What kind of person is Marisol? How would you describe her? Think about what she says and what she does. Think about her bedroom and her artwork. Look for clues from both the author and the illustrator. *(Reading Standards, Literature, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7 & Craft and Structure, Strand 4)*
3. Why do you think the story is told in both English and Spanish? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer. *(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 5)*
4. Think about the way the English text and Spanish text are laid out in the book. Why do you think the text is presented this way? Are there places where Spanish and English words are used together? Why do you think the author chose to do that? *(Reading Standards, Literature, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, 10)*
5. How does Marisol feel about Ollie’s challenge? How does she feel and act over the course of the day? How is her mood different from the beginning of the story? How do you know? What clues do the author and illustrator give you? *(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft and Structure, Strand 4)*
6. What does Ms. Apple value about Marisol? How do you think Ms. Apple’s note makes Marisol feel? How do you know? *(Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3)*
7. What is clever about the name Marisol chooses for her puppy? Why does she choose that name? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer. *(Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3)*
8. What is the moral of the story? What do you think the author, Monica Brown, wants readers to learn from Marisol’s story? *(Reading Standards, Literature, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 2)*
9. How might the story be different if it was narrated by Marisol’s brother? Her mother? Her father? One of her friends? What makes you think so? *(Reading Standards, Literature, Craft & Structure, Strand 5)*

Literature Circles

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3 & Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

The **Questioner** might use questions similar to the ones in the Discussion Question section of this guide.

The **Passage Locator** might look for lines in the story that help explain new vocabulary words.

The **Illustrator** might create a mismatched drawing like Marisol makes in art class.

The **Connector** might find other stories that feature characters who are biracial or bilingual.

The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of the group’s reading and discussion points for each meeting.

The **Investigator** might look for information about Peru and Scotland.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: GETTING STARTED WITH LITERATURE CIRCLES by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), LITERATURE CIRCLES: VOICE AND CHOICE IN BOOK CLUBS AND READING GROUPS by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and LITERATURE CIRCLES RESOURCE GUIDE by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

(Reading Standards, Informational Text, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, & Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7–9)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work, if they wish to.

1. Who is your favorite character in the story? Who would you most like to be friends with? What did you think about Marisol's teacher? Her parents? Her friends? Use passages from the story to help explain your feelings about each character.
2. Which parts of the story did you connect with the most? Why? Which parts did you have a hard time connecting with? Why? Cite parts of the text to support your answer.
3. Think about how the story ends. What if that wasn't the end of the story? What do you think might happen next? Write a new episode or adventure for Marisol, picking up from where the story ends. Be sure to include details from the story in your new adventure.
4. Reread the Author's Note on the last page of the book. How are Marisol McDonald and Monica Brown alike? How are they different? How did Monica Brown bring her own experiences to the story? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
5. Have students write a book recommendation for this story explaining why they would or would not recommend this book to other students.

ELL Teaching Activities

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners.

1. Assign ELL students to read the story aloud with strong English readers/speakers.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they admire about a character or central figure in the story.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7, "Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.") Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

Social Studies/Writing

1. Marisol's ancestors come from Scotland and Peru, Have students find these two countries on a globe or world map. Then ask students to work in small groups to find out more about life in each country. A good place to start is the [National Geographic](#)

[Kids](#) website. Note: for information about Scotland, students need to choose the United Kingdom from the country list.

2. Ask students to interview family members to determine their own heritage, and encourage students to think about how their heritage is reflected in their daily lives. How does it affect the language(s) they speak? The foods they eat? The holidays they celebrate? and so on. Have students write a short essay about what they found out and how their family background makes them special and unique.

Language Arts

1. There are some Spanish words used in the English text and some English words used in the Spanish text to show that Marisol is comfortable using and mixing both languages. Let student volunteers who are from bilingual or multilingual homes share examples of the way their families mix and combine languages. Students may also be interested in learning some of these words from another language to incorporate into their own usage.
2. Discuss the vocabulary words *coordinate* and *clash* and have students come up with their own definitions. Then encourage them to look for items in the classroom that they think coordinate or clash. Ask them to present their findings to the class and tell why they think the items they chose coordinate or clash.

Math

Have students study Marisol's clothing in the illustrations and look for patterns in the designs. For each pattern found, have students determine if it is a regular or an irregular pattern. If it is a regular pattern, challenge students to represent it as a letter pattern such as ABAB, ABCABC, ABBA, etc.

Cooking/Math

If possible, let students make peanut butter and jelly burritos in class to share at snack time. Make one burrito and have students decide how many pieces it should be cut into to make good snack-size portions. Then have students figure out how many burritos they need to make so that everyone in class gets a snack-sized piece.

Art

1. If students wrote a new episode or adventure for the story as part of a Reader's Response activity, have them now draw an illustration to go with their text.
2. Marisol's new dog has some unusual physical characteristics. Let students draw pictures of unusual pets they may have encountered, or let them make up and draw unusual imaginary pets. Also encourage students to name their pets and explain why they chose the name.

Additional Activities

Additional activities and reproducible worksheets are available on author Monica Brown's website. You can find her *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina* Activity Kit [here](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monica Brown is the author of many award-winning bilingual books for children, many of which are inspired by her Peruvian American heritage. Monica is a Professor of English at Northern Arizona University, specializing in US Latino Literature and Multicultural Literature. She lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, with her family. You can find her online at monicabrown.net.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sara Palacios studied art in Mexico and the United States, and has illustrated books for publishers in both countries. “Marisol is one of the most interesting characters I’ve worked with,” says Palacios. “Her unique personality presents a fun challenge.” Palacios divides her time between San Francisco and Mexico City. See more of her work at sarapalaciosillustrations.com.

Book Information

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RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina* at: http://www.leeandlow.com/books/440/hc/marisol_mcdonald_doesn_t_match_marisol_mcdonald_no_combina

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