

# Freckle Juice

by Judy Blume

Andrew Marcus envies Nicky for having freckles all over his face and neck. If he had freckles, Andrew decides, he'd never have to wash his face and neck and then he wouldn't be late for school all the time. When Sharon offers him a secret recipe for getting freckles, he pays her fifty cents and hopes it's going to work.

## THEMES

problem-solving, friendship, self-image

## I. PRE-TEACHING

### A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

million, freckles, warts, eighty-six, giggled, noise, supposed, secret, recipe, wiggled, inspected, depends, juice, allowance, combination, bathrobe, curlers, scratched zippers, pretended, arithmetic, aisle, balance, o'clock, principal, important, attention, sweaty, blur, manners, vinegar, mayonnaise, awful, terrible, greenish, appendicitis, ambulance, stomach, surprised, sensible, monster, pillow, reflection, whispering, settle, chattering, package, formula, through, alongside

### B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:

1. Do you or someone you know have freckles? How do they feel about having freckles? What might be some advantages of having freckles?
2. Have you ever wished you could change something about your appearance? What would you like to change? Why?
3. Do you know someone who always seems to be getting in trouble? Does this person do it on purpose?
4. Does your mother or father always have to tell you to wash your face, hands, and neck? Why do they think this is important? How would you feel if you never had to wash again?

## II. PRESENTATION

### A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapter 1: Why does Andrew envy Nicky? How many freckles is Andrew able to count before the teacher calls on him? Why does the class laugh at him? Why doesn't he like Sharon? What does Andrew ask Nicky? What does Nicky reply? What does Sharon offer Andrew? What will it cost? Why does he doubt her?
2. Advance to Chapters 2-3: Why does Andrew have trouble sleeping? What happens when he tries to reach the recipe? Why does he decide Miss Kelly isn't so bad? What does he promise her? Where does he hide the recipe? What does he hope about the recipe? What

does it say? Where does he find everything? What changes does he make? How does it smell? How does he manage to drink it?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 4-5: How does the drink make Andrew feel? What does Mrs. Marcus decide is wrong? What does she plan to do? What makes her change her mind? How does Andrew feel about Sharon now? What does he dream about? Why does he decide he's never going to school again? What does his mother say will happen if he doesn't go? How does he hope to fool Sharon? How does the class react? How does Miss Kelly handle it? What does she offer him? How does he get rid of his freckles? What does Nicky ask Miss Kelly? How does he feel about his freckles? What does she tell him? What does Andrew overhear Sharon telling Nicky?

### B. For Discussion:

1. In what ways would you say Miss Kelly is a good teacher? How does she show that she understands Andrew's problem?
2. In what ways would you say Andrew's mother doesn't understand boys? How does she discipline him? What seems to be important to her? How would you suggest she get him to wash his face and neck?
3. What sort of person is Sharon? Do you think Nicky will fall for her trick? Should Andrew tell him? Why or why not?
4. What does Andrew learn about having freckles from his experience?

## III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give students the opportunity to work with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

#### A. Language Arts:

1. Have students make up humorous recipes for changing something about themselves, such as for curly hair, smaller ears, brown eyes, and whiter teeth. Then have them put the recipes on the bulletin board and include "before and after" pictures.

2. Hold a freckle counting contest in class. Give a prize to the person with the most visible freckles (without taking off their clothes). Find out how many freckles the whole class has in total. Compare with another class.
3. Have students write in their journals about something about themselves that they wish they could change. Have them share this with another student. Make this a session in which each student comes to accept themselves.
4. Have students write about a nightmare they have had. What causes us to have nightmares? Why do they think Andrew has the dream he has?

### B. Art and Music:

1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might begin the tape with the song, "My Funny Valentine" and talk about what this says about accepting ourselves and others.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could cover the board with pink for skin, cut out eyes, a nose, and a mouth, and add giant freckles. They could add the recipe for freckle juice and labels off bottles for the ingredients.
3. Have students find simple recipes and learn to make a special punch that might imitate freckle juice, but be tastier, and hold a Freckle Juice party in class.
4. Have students draw a series of cartoons showing an action the way Andrew and Sharon are shown exchanging money for the recipe. If they don't want to draw them, have them take a series of photographs to show an action. Another group might want to find out how animated cartoons are made.

### C. Social Studies:

1. When Miss Kelly gives Andrew the formula for getting rid of freckles, Nicky asks for it because he hates his freckles. Have students talk about how they feel about themselves. Is there something about themselves they wish they could change? What things can we change? How can we learn to accept what we can't change?
2. Have students talk about their reading groups. Do they feel this is the way to learn to read? What other ideas might they have for helping students learn to read?

### D. Science and Math:

1. Have students find out what causes freckles. What nationalities tend to have more freckles? Why do freckles so often come with red hair? Why do they come out more when someone has been sitting in the sun?
2. When Sharon runs her tongue along her teeth, Andrew thinks she looks like a frog catching bugs. How does a frog catch bugs? What is on its tongue that allows it to catch bugs?
3. Andrew's allowance is ten cents a week. Have students compare this with their own allowances. Do they feel Andrew's is fair? Why or why not?
4. Have students find out how a combination lock works.
5. When Andrew complains about a stomach ache, his mother decides he has appendicitis. Have students find out what this is and what could happen.
6. Miss Kelly gives Andrew a secret formula. Have students find out what a formula is. How is it different from a recipe?

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