

Miss Rumphius

by Barbara Cooney

Detailed and bright illustrations combine with an enchanting storyline to prove to all readers that one's imagination can truly change the world.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what's on the other side of the river? What's by the house?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Miss Rumphius*

- wharves: landing place for ships
- bristling: thick with stiff hairs
- masts: vertical support for sails, and upright pole
- figureheads: a carved figure on a bow of a ship
- prows: the front of a ship
- porridge: same as oatmeal
- conservatory: a greenhouse
- jasmine: scented plant
- tropical: typical of tropics, very hot and often combined with high humidity
- cockatoos: an Australasian parrot
- lupines: plant with tall flower spikes
- bushels: unit of measure used for dry goods
- sowing: to plant a seed by scattering on an area of land
- hollows: not solid, having an empty space inside

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Who is telling the story?
- Who is Miss Rumphius?
- Where did Miss Rumphius live when she was a young girl? Who told her stories?
- What did her grandfather tell her to do that was most important when Miss Rumphius grew older?
- Can you describe some of the places that Miss Rumphius visited on her travels to faraway places?
- Where did Miss Rumphius live after she stopped traveling?
- Why was Miss Rumphius in bed all winter?
- What happened to Miss Rumphius' lupine flowers?
- What did Miss Rumphius decide to do to fulfill her grandfather's third wish?
- What happened to all the scattered seeds?
- What nickname did the local children give Miss Rumphius after the lupines started to bloom?



Do

Small Actions – BIG Results!

After reading the story, hold a discussion with your children about different ways they can change the world, help those around them and make the world prettier. Write down all their ideas and, as a class, vote to decide which idea they would like to do. For example: if the kids want to make their playground or school prettier, they can pick up trash, plant flowers, clean up the playground or anything else that will help the school look better. Keep the poster and refer to it several times a year, completing some of the tasks and adding new ideas.