

TK–1st Grade The Art Bridge Workshop: Color Detectives — Discovering How Colors Mix

Spreading a love of art and an early understanding of color through storytelling and hands-on creation

Student Workshop (In-Person)

Best for Ages 4–7 (TK–1st Grade)

Duration: 45 minutes to 1 hour; works for any number of students.

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce young children to color theory basics — primary colors, color mixing, and creative expression — through a read-aloud and a hands-on painting activity. Through this workshop, students will understand how colors combine to make new colors and create their own "Color Creature" to celebrate what they discovered.

Materials

- 1 copy of [Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh](#) (or another local library copy — a classic, inexpensive picture book about three mice who discover jars of red, blue, and yellow paint)
- Washable paint in red, blue, and yellow (dependent on # of students)
- Paper plates or small paint trays for mixing colors
- Paintbrushes, cotton swabs, or fingers for painting (dependent on # of students)
- Paper or a blank "Color Creature" template, one for each student
- Sample Color Creature Drawings (create and print, or project on a screen) — this should show a finished example made from mixed colors, similar in spirit to the Cyber Detective sample sheet
- Smocks, old t-shirts, or paper towels to protect clothing
- Wet wipes or a damp cloth for clean-up
- Recommended, not required: small stickers or treats for each student

Workshop Outline

1. **Intro (3 min)**
 - i. The volunteer should introduce themselves and The Art Bridge.
 - ii. Introduce the plan for today: Book Read-Aloud and Color Mixing Activity.
2. **Read-Aloud (15 min)**
 - i. Presenter will read Mouse Paint aloud to the students, maintaining an engaging and friendly tone — pausing to point out each new color the mice discover.
 - ii. Post Read-Aloud
 - a. Ask students what colors the mice mixed and what new colors appeared (e.g., "What do you think happens when red and yellow mix?").
 - b. Ask students what their favorite color is and why.
3. **Activities (20 min)**

- i. **Create Your Own Color Creature**
 - a. Students will use red, blue, and yellow paint to mix new colors directly on their paper, then use those colors to paint their own imaginary "Color Creature."
 - b. The presenter will show a printed or projected Sample Color Creature Drawing to the class, pointing out which colors were mixed to make it.

Note: Volunteer(s) should start passing out paper, paint, and brushes to each student. Volunteer(s) will walk around during the activity to help with mixing, ask students what colors they're combining, and offer encouragement.

4. Presentations (3–5 speakers)

- i. Students can volunteer to share their Color Creature, name it, and explain which colors they mixed to make it.

5. Conclusion (5–10 min)

- i. Recap the primary colors (red, blue, yellow) and the new colors students discovered by mixing them.
- ii. Thank participants for joining and creating with The Art Bridge.
- iii. Optional: Provide a sticker or small treat to everyone at the end.

Facilitator Tips

- Keep extra paper towels and water nearby — mixing paint gets messy in the best way.
- If paint isn't available, washable markers or colored tissue paper collage can substitute for a lower-mess version.
- For larger groups, set up 2–3 mixing stations so students aren't waiting long to dip their brushes.