MAHOGANY

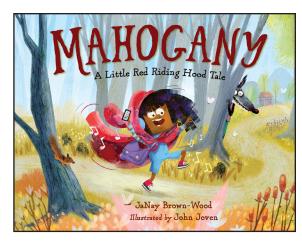
ACTIVITY KIT

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JaNay Brown-Wood Illustrated by John Joven 978-1-62354-367-9 HC e-book available

About the Book

Mahogany is a spunky girl who loves to sew, listen to music, and wear fresh kicks. On the way to deliver homemade honey cornbread to G-Ma's house, she encounters a hungry wolf. Mahogany thinks fast and stands by a willow tree, where her long, black curls blend with the branches. Her ebony skin merges with the shadows. And Mahogany knows her lavender scent will mix with the smell of flowers, tricking any wolf nose.

A clever, Black contemporary twist on Little Red Riding Hood, Mahogany embraces the beauty—and magic—of her culture to thwart the Big Bad Wolf.

About the Author

JaNay Brown-Wood is an early childhood professor and the author of several books for children, including *Grandma's Tiny House, Imani's Moon,* and *Shhh! The Baby's Asleep*. She also contributed to the poetry anthologies *Thanku*: Poems of *Gratitude* and *No World Too Big.* JaNay lives in California.

About the Illustrator

John Joven is the illustrator of *The Plan for the Gingerbread House* and *Preschool, Here I Come!* He grew up in Bogotá, Colombia, and studied graphic design at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He still lives there with his wife, Ana, and two children, Avril and Ian. When not illustrating, he enjoys spending quality time with his children, playing soccer with his friends, watching movies, and traveling.



Before Reading

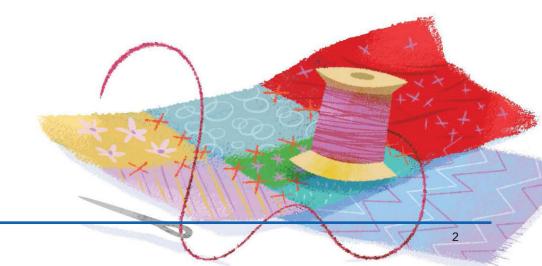
Pre-reading concept reviews help enrich students' learning experience!

For younger students (K-2nd):

- After looking at the cover of the book and reading the title, ask students what they think *Mahogany* is about. Write their responses on chart paper.
- Ask if students are familiar with the "Little Red Riding Hood" story. What do they think the subtitle "A Little Red Riding Hood Tale" means?
- "Little Red Riding Hood" is a fairytale. Ask students to list other fairy tales they know. Write their suggestions on chart paper and ask students how they know when a story is a fairy tale.
- Invite students to describe the characters on the cover of the book. List the description words they use on chart paper.

For older students (3rd and up):

- Based on the title and cover, ask students to describe what they think the book is about. Write their responses on chart paper.
- Have students discuss the following questions in small groups. Tape the questions to a wall and ask students to tape their answers beneath the questions.
 - Who is the hero of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story? Why?
 - What do students know about the Big Bad Wolf character?
 - What is the difference between a fairy tale and other types of story?
- Invite students to reflect on traditional stories that are told and retold by cultures around the world. What do these stories have in common? What makes them distinct from each other?
- Ask students to observe the trees and plants on the cover. What clues do they have about the kind of forest that appears in *Mahogany*? How is it like or unlike the forests they are familiar with?





After Reading

Post-reading discussion can help students develop greater understanding and connect them to curriculum activities.

For younger students (K-2nd):

- Revisit student predictions from the pre-reading discussion. What predictions were correct? Did Mahogany surprise them?
- What makes Mahogany "A Little Red Riding Hood Tale"?
- Ask students to think about the description words they heard in the story. Compare those descriptions
 to the list of words from their pre-reading reflection.

For older students (3rd and up):

- Revisit student predictions from the pre-reading discussion. What predictions were correct?
- Take a second look at student responses to the pre-reading discussion questions:
 - Who is the hero of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story? Why?
 - What do students know about the Big Bad Wolf character?
 - What is the difference between a fairy tale and other types of story?

Talk as a class about how these questions are connected to the story.

- Mahogany is described as "A clever, Black contemporary twist on Little Red Riding Hood . . ." What cultural elements do students recognize in this text that resonate with Black experiences?
- What time period do students think this story takes place in? Why? If they were to become a fairy tale character, what modern tools, toys, or hobbies would they bring into the fairy tale world?
- At the beginning of the story, what does Mahogany's mother tell her not to do? Does Mahogany listen?
 What do students think of Mahogany's choices throughout this book? Which choice is her smartest choice? Which is her most foolish choice?
- Invite students to reflect on the role of the forest in the story. What plants does Mahogany use? How
 does she connect to the natural world?
- The three main human characters are all members of the same family: Mahogany, her mother, and her grandmother. What is Mahogany's relationship like with her mother and grandmother? How is it like or unlike students' relationships with their own grandparents?

MAHOGANY Activity Kit

Language Arts Connection: Little Red Riding Hood

Learn about plot and retellings using the classic fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood."

For younger students (K-2nd):

- Before class, write the phrases "At home," "Walking in the woods," "Meeting the wolf," "Leaving the path," "Wolf goes to grandma's house," "Wolf takes grandma's place," "Red Riding Hood confronts the wolf," and "The wolf is defeated" on separate pieces of poster paper. Post these signs in order in a big circle around the room.
- Ask students if they are familiar with the story of "Little Red Riding Hood." Read *Mahogany* aloud together as a class and reflect on the following questions:
 - Is Mahogany the same story as "Little Red Riding Hood"?
 - What other versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story do you know?
 - What's the difference between copying a story and retelling a classic fairy tale?
- As a class, read at least two other versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" together. As you read each story, move around the room as a group to stand by the sign that represents the part of the story you're reading.
- Invite students to share their reactions.
 - How were these stories different? How were they the same?
 - What is your favorite of the versions we read?
 - Why do so many authors retell the story of "Little Red Riding Hood"?

For older students (3rd and up):

- Begin by asking students to help you solve a dilemma. What's the difference between copying a story and retelling it? Invite students to think of specific examples of stories that get retold. Is it copying if someone makes a book into a movie? If someone writes a version of a European fairy tale set in a different place and time?
- As a class, read Mahogany aloud together and discuss:
 - Is Mahogany the same story as "Little Red Riding Hood"? What makes it similar or different?
 - Do you know other versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story?
 - Why do you think the author chose to retell this story?
- Distribute copies of the "Little Red Riding Hood Diagram" on page five of this kit. Read through a copy of Little Red Riding Hood by Trina Schart Hyman (or another traditional version of the story) together and break down the plot into its basic steps (see the first bullet point under "For younger students (K-2nd)" above).
- Reread *Mahogany* together and ask students to keep track using their diagram of where they are in the story, and raise their hands each time the book progresses to the next step.
- Discuss the basic elements of plot with students: beginning, rising action, climax, falling action, and
 resolution. Ask them which part they believe each step of "Little Red Riding Hood" belongs to.
 Distribute copies of the "Plot Arc" worksheet on page six of this kit and invite students to cut out the
 boxes from their "Little Red Riding Hood Diagram" and tape them into place along the arc.



Little Red Riding Hood Diagram

Name:	
Date:	

Use the boxes below to break down the plot of the classic "Little Red Riding Hood" story.



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Name: _____

Date: _____



Explore color, shape, rhythm, and other elements of design with this fun patchwork art activity.

Materials

- Craft felt in a variety of colors, precut into eight-inch squares
- Awls or hole punchers
- Tapestry needles
- Embroidery thread
- Heavy craft cord, such as macrame cord

Procedure

- 1. Explore the genre. Ask students if they are familiar with patchwork. Together, closely examine the illustrations of Mahogany's cape and point out what distinguishes patchwork from a single-cloth garment. Share photos (and if possible, real-life examples) of quilts, sashiko-mended garments, and other patchwork styles. Discuss with the class how patchwork can be used to mend a hole in an existing piece of fabric or create a large piece of fabric out of many small pieces. Point out the use of color to create contrast or harmony—such as by using many shades of the same color, or two complementary colors, or a bold color paired with a neutral one.
- 2. Choose colors. Invite students to pick the colors for their patchwork cape from the craft felt. They may choose as many colors as they like. Remind them of the color combinations you discussed in step one and offer support to students who have trouble picking.

For older students: Each student should take eight squares.

For younger students: Each student should take four squares.

3. Demonstrate the technique. Explain to students that while Mahogany uses a sewing machine and handcrafters often use sewing needles to join their patches together, today you will be using tapestry needles and awls or hole punchers for safety. Demonstrate how you use your awl or hole puncher to create a row of small holes parallel to the edge of each patch of fabric, then thread your tapestry needle with embroidery thread and join the edges of two squares together by passing the needle through the premade holes. Don't forget to anchor your thread at the start and end by tying knots! Once the patch is joined and the thread is knotted, cut the thread and pass the sample patch around so students can see and feel that the two pieces of fabric have been joined to become one piece of fabric.

4. Project planning.

For older students: Ask your students to each lay out their eight squares flat on a table and arrange them as they like. Each square must be joined to at least one other square along at least one edge. Students can create a two square by four square layout, a four square by two square layout, or even an eight square by one square layout. They may also experiment with creating irregular shapes, such as by joining a row of three squares to a row of five squares. Encourage them to rearrange frequently as they decide how to combine their colors into a patchwork composition.



For younger students: Ask your students to each lay out their four squares flat on a table and arrange them as they like. Each square must be joined to at least one other square along at least one edge. Encourage students to rearrange their designs frequently and circulate around the room, inviting students to talk to you about how they are arranging their colors and shapes.

- 5. Independent work. Give students time in class to punch holes in their patches and sew their patches together. This may take more than one class session. Circulate around the room offering support and positive feedback as students work.
- 6. Project completion. Congratulate students on their completed patchwork samplers and encourage them to display their work in the classroom or take it home.
- 7. Optional extension for older students: Invite students to bring their completed patchwork compositions to a large clear space (either a wall or a floor) and work together to compose a class patchwork made of everyone's smaller patches. Encourage students to think of color arrangement, shape, and rhythm as they decide where each patch should go. The finished patchwork does not have to be regular in shape as long as every student's patch is joined to at least one other patch. Hang the finished patchwork on the classroom wall and invite everyone to reflect:
 - How do I feel when I see this patchwork?
 - What does our classroom patchwork say about our class community?
 - What are some colors and shapes that stand out to me when I see this patchwork?
 - If I could start this project again, knowing that my patch would be part of a larger piece, would I do anything differently?



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CAPE WOLF GRANDMA SEWING CORNBREAD LAVENDER MUSIC **FLOWER** DAYLILY

MAHOGANY

Activity Kit

Maze to G-Ma's House

Name: ____

Date: _____

