

## Teaching Ideas for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Award Shortlist 2019

**Title:** Beyond the Fence

**Author:** Maria Gulemetova

**Illustrator:** Maria Gulemetova

**Publisher:** Child's Play

*These notes have been written by the teachers at CLPE to provide schools with sessions which focus on the importance of illustration in building a narrative and supporting children's response. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. The teaching notes show how picture books can be used in schools to enhance children's reading comprehension and composition of their own creative writing. We hope you find them useful.*

### Before beginning this sequence:

Collect together a range of art materials that will allow the children to engage in the activities exploring illustration, for example: cartridge paper, sketching pencils 2B-4B, water colour paints, ink, coloured pencils, chalk pastels, and a variety of brushes.

### Suggested Activities:

#### Session 1: Creating Contrasting Impressions

Explore the first double page spread in the text, without yet sharing the front cover, end papers, title or main text on this spread. Allow the children to explore the illustration. *What are the first things that they see? What draws their attention to these? Where is this set? What time of day? Why do you think this?* Now look at the people in the illustration. *Who do you think they are? What is their relationship? Draw attention to each character's body position, gaze and facial expression and what this tells us. The pig is smiling and its gaze is directed on the boy although very still in contrast to the boy who is animated in what he is saying. Whose story do you think this will be? What do you think might happen? Why? Is there anything interesting about the way the characters are depicted? Does this scene remind you of any other characters in stories you know? How?* The children may notice that the pig is clothed and sitting like a human and this may recall anthropomorphic characters such as those created by Beatrix Potter. Collect children's responses and questions they have on post-it notes around a large copy of the illustration. Now read aloud the text that accompanies this first illustration, tuning children in to the rhythm of the two, fairly abrupt, sentences. *How do the children feel about the two characters now? Why?* Give the children a copy of the text so they can look at the shape of the written print on the page and look more closely at the particular way in which the two sentences have been constructed. Ask them to consider how the text and the illustration have been created to reflect each other, e.g. through the layout of the spread with text on full white space on one side, full page illustration on the other; the first sentence about Thomas, the second, Piggy; the two characters facing each other across the table. Look at how Gulemetova has managed to create a sense of contentment in Piggy through the illustration but that this now jars with the meaning created in the text in which Piggy 'had' to listen to Thomas who talked 'a lot'. Look at the mirrors on the wall and how they



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would also create a reflection. *What would Piggy see if he/she were to look in one of them? Would Piggy like what was reflected back? What is Piggy thinking?* Ask the children to look again at the illustration. *How has Gulemetova created the sense that Piggy is trapped in the house with Thomas?* The children may notice the bar-like wallpaper filling in any white space, the mirrors looking inward instead of windows looking out and they may feel differently now about Piggy being dressed in human clothes, sitting smiling on a stool. *How has the way she has opened the story by introducing the characters and setting in this way significant for the story ahead?* Given our sympathy is being drawn to Piggy now through the text and the illustration has Piggy facing the page turn – suggesting he is the protagonist in this story – what do the children think this story will hold for each of the characters?

You could show the children the two endpapers, again demonstrating contrasting scenes; the first an imposing mansion house; the last the same house surrounded by fencing beyond which lies a panorama of green rolling hills. *What do these endpapers tell us about the story that will unfold? Where are we placed in each of the pictures? What is our perspective as we look at the house? How does the size and scale affect us? How has Gulemetova used directionality to convey a sense of discomfort or well-being?* In the first endpaper, we are looking up at a large house which takes up the whole right page and which faces to the left, leading us back out through the driveway and away from the page turn. There are lots of straight lines as in the internal room already viewed. The ornaments and trees are large in scale but the house still dominates, with seemingly blocked in windows and repressing any sense of space or nature. In contrast, in the last endpaper we are offered an aerial view of a sweeping green landscape which spreads from across the spread and dominates the now tiny fenced house? *Where would you rather be? Why? How does this make you feel about Thomas as well as Piggy living in this house now? Who else lives there? What happens in the rest of the house as well as the room already seen?* Encourage the children to make predictions for the story ahead as well as to consider how Piggy came to be at the house as companion or play thing for Thomas and domesticated in this way. The children could express their ideas through the medium of drawing or painting.

Pause here to reflect on how the children think the illustrator has created these illustrations. *What materials do you think have been used?* Begin to look back at the previous illustrations and unpick some of the techniques used and explore how these might be replicated in the classroom. Maria Gulemetova works in pen and ink or watercolour which could be further explored by the children and in response to other illustrators and artists using the similar techniques or media, such as John Burningham, Helen Oxenbury or Catherine Rayner. Encourage the children to have a go at this by replicating an element from one of the illustrations explored in this first spread or the endpapers. How would they create the straight lines of the house in contrast to the expanse of wild green or the endless sky? As they paint and reflect on each other's paintings, encourage them to note the sparse style and sense of space created or repressed by Gulemetova in her illustrations.

## Session 2: Conveying internalised feelings through body position, facial expression and gaze

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Read aloud the title 'Beyond the Fence' and elicit children's respond to this and to the accompanying illustration. What do the children think Piggy is thinking, given he has been illustrated with his back to us and we can't read his facial expression? *What makes you think that?* Why has Gulemetova chosen this title? How does the illustration add meaning for us? *What do we think lies beyond the fence? What does Piggy think lies there?* Compare this illustration with the one on the back cover without revealing the blurb. Open out the whole book so the children can see both illustrations side-by-side with the spine at the centre. What do the children notice? Encourage them to explore the way in which the illustrations have perfect symmetry with the spine as mirror line and yet there is the obvious difference of a closed hedge and no Piggy at the back of the book. *How does this speak to us? What does it make us feel or think about Piggy? What do we want to happen in this story? What do we wish for Piggy or Thomas?*

Now open the book, looking again at the illustrations and reading on until 'He just knew.' Pause at each spread to explore the way the illustrations and text work together, for example on the title page, how does the image of a humanised and subservient Piggy, walking upright and bringing a tea tray to Thomas, add to our ideas about the meaning of the title 'Beyond the Fence'?

Ask the children to revisit and explore the illustrations in the spread 'Thomas knew what suited Piggy. He always knew what they should play.' What do the illustrations say about the relationship between the two characters in contrast to first impressions gained when looking at a smiling Piggy drinking tea on the previous page? Look at the way in which the characters are engaging in the 'play'. Does it look fun to the children for either Thomas or Piggy? *Do either of the characters look content or satisfied? Why? Why not?* Look at the directionality of the illustrations and the positioning of the characters in which they are facing away from each other in contrast to the previous illustration when taking tea. *What does it say about Piggy's feeling that he is not engaging?* The children could discuss whether they think these might be small acts of defiance by Piggy; or that he is unable to do what Thomas insists they do; or that he has been given a passive role and is not allowed agency. Elicit the children's ideas and encourage them to draw on the portrayal of body position, facial expression and gaze of the characters in their discussions. How does the layout of the spread as a series of small illustrations work with the text; perhaps providing a sense of repetition suggested in the repetition of the phrase 'Thomas knew...' and reinforced by the use of 'always.' What is the effect of the white space around each of these moments? How does it make us feel? Why? It might provide a sense of overriding isolation or loneliness that the children will likely have drawn out when exploring the Piggy's feelings in each scenario. Turn to the next spread and revisit this illustration 'He just knew.' What do the children notice about this illustration, especially in comparison with the previous two spreads? How does this illustration add meaning to the text which again uses repetition for a third time? How has the illustrator created a sense of finality or resignation in the illustration as she has suggested in her language choices: 'He knew.' 'He *always* knew.' 'He *just* knew.' How is the white space used here? Again reflect on the directionality and positioning; the way in which Thomas looks only at his own reflection whereas Piggy is facing away from the page turn on the opposite page to Thomas, separated by the gutter and the dressing up box and surrounded by much white space and less cluttered flooring. What would we say he is thinking if we were to see his thoughts floating into the space provided by the illustrator? Children

could re-enact the scenarios explored through role play allowing them to explore both Piggy's viewpoint and perhaps also consider what motivates Thomas and his behaviour.

Children could draw Piggy to further understand his emotions, responses and engagement. Drawing him would strengthen their observation of body position, for example, and appreciate inferences that could be gained from it. Children might first sketch the character lightly using pencil to allow freedom to play with alternative body position and how this changes our impression and empathetic response. They could then overdraw final lines more decisively with pen and ink. Create a gallery of the drawings and encourage the children to read and respond to each of their images; connecting the way Piggy has been portrayed to suggestions of inner thoughts and feelings.

### Session 3: Creating life and movement through illustration

Read the book from the beginning and on until 'One day, Thomas' cousin came to visit.' Look at the way Piggy is portrayed in this scene; his positioning on the page; the use of scale bringing him to the foreground and the portrayal of his movement. *How might he be feeling in this moment? How is he moving? What might this suggest?* Explore the energy and determination in Piggy's movement as he leaves the children in contrast to the stillness seen in him previously. Even in the title page, he appears to be moving delicately with tea tray balanced. Look at the direction of his path which takes us to the page turn and suggests the start of Piggy's own story. *What is he thinking now? Where is he going? Why? What does he want to do? Where does he want to be?* Build on the children's predictions by asking them to illustrate what they anticipate the next spread looks like. You could read aloud the text 'Piggy took a walk.' To support their visualisation. Reveal the illustrations Gulemetova has created and encourage the children to compare their own with each other's and with the spread in the book. As well as appreciating differing ideas around story look at how the illustrations have provided more information than the text offers. Ask the children to think about how Gulemetova has laid out her illustrations as a series to show us the stages involved in Piggy's walk. Piggy's encounter with the stairs encourages our first sight of him on all fours compared with his humanised form above. *What is the significance of this? What might this suggest about what the story promises? How do the clothes look on Piggy now we are reminded he is an animal?* Look at the stillness of opposite page on this spread in which we see Piggy with back to us looking out. Explore facial expression and internalised feelings again but also consider the expanse of green filling the space and possibly Piggy's senses. Compare this with the lack of green and natural form he may have experienced within the confines of the house. *Do the children think he has ever seen this before? Why? Why not? Did he know what he would find on his walk? Did he know where he was going? When do the children think he was at the hedge as seen on the front cover?* The dip in the horizon and Piggy's gaze draws our eye to the small brown figure on the horizon. Elicit the children's ideas about who this might be and what this will mean for Piggy. And for Thomas.

Turn the page to reveal the next spread in which Piggy meets Wild Pig. Before reading the text, reflect with the children on how the illustrations and text work together and talk about anything that they find particularly striking about this spread. There is a significantly more text than previously and much of it is

dialogue which is in complete contrast to what we have experienced of Piggy when he is with Thomas. Consider how this reinforces Thomas' repression and dominance over Piggy. Look at how the two pigs are illustrated as reflections of each other on the spread and how this invites comparison. Read aloud the text and invite the children to discuss how it reflects their initial responses to the meanings created in the text and illustration and in the layout.

Children could draw and paint Piggy on all fours and at play with Wild Pig in imagined scenarios, using the illustrative techniques they are learning. They could consider the visual sources of information that she draws on in creating illustrations and reflect on her Bulgarian heritage and experience of seeing boars in real life. They could look at films or photographs of real pigs – both domesticated and wild – and learn to draw them in naturalised contexts.

#### Session 4: Exploring use of colour and light in creating sense of repression or freedom

Before teaching this session, create a display of wordless texts for the children to read and from which they can make meaning.

Turn over to reveal the next spread. Again, elicit the children's initial responses and reactions to this image and what strikes them about the spread. *Why is there no text? What impact does this spread being wordless have on us? Does this mean that we aren't being told the story if there are no words?* You might draw on the children's experiences of wordless texts as well as revisiting their responses to the illustrations in this book so far. *Does this remind us of other illustrations in the book or in other books? How? What do you notice first in this illustration? Why?* Consider the bright colour palette used to illustrate Piggy and the window in comparison to dominant tones of brown. *Has the outside, natural world been seen inside the house by us before?* Compare the detail and seeming care taken over the drawing of Piggy and the vista compared with the broader, rougher brush strokes used to create the internal space. *Is this consistent with her other illustrations?* Consider the repressive lack of light in the room and the discomfort created by the shadows as if from a low ceiling or leading us away from the page turn. Ask children to reflect on the repeated display of pictureless frames or mirrors reminiscent of the house windows in the first endpaper and how they reflect back yet more brown from the internal space. Explore the directionality created by the furniture and frames facing the reader; at odds with the urgency of the horizontal lines and flat brown tones which lead our gaze to a brightly coloured Piggy and his view. Encourage the children to look closely at Piggy's view in which we see a flock of birds sweeping into the air and flying free. *What might Piggy be thinking?*

Read aloud until 'Maybe Wild Pig would come again tomorrow. Reflect on the way the text and illustrations work together and how light, colour and painterly shade add meaning to the shifting mood, ending with Piggy in full shadow. *How does this make us feel? What would we like or expect to see happen next? Why?*

Children could create similar illustrations which draw the reader's eye to a subject; exploring the contrasting use of colour and light or contrast in painterly style. You might encourage the children to take further inspiration from the work of artists like John Burningham and how he creates meaning in his

illustrative techniques; use of light and colour and mix of drawing or painting techniques in books like *Borka, Oi! Get off our Train* or *The Magic Bed*. They could create carefully drawn and coloured portraits which they then overshadow with a painterly style of shading. Encourage the children to explore speeding up the brushstrokes when creating shadow. What impact does this have on the mood? Children could look at Oliver Jeffers' *Dipped Paintings* in which carefully painted portraits are dipped in bright colours to reveal only some of the original artwork.

### Session 5: How illustration can evoke an emotional response and empathy for a character

Read aloud the whole book and on until 'The next day at sunset.' Look at the way the spread has been split into text on white space on one side and illustration on the other. Compare this with the first spread in the story that it mirrors. Look at Piggy's movement and energy this time and bring together what children know of creating illustration in the use of space, directionality, movement and additional information illustration may be giving us. *What are we to anticipate on page turn? What was Piggy thinking in the lead up to uttering "Please excuse me for a moment."?* Children could role play this scene as they did the first. What would they want to say to Thomas; particularly in observing that he has the teapot and all the biscuits in his possession – and control?

Turn the page and encourage the children to share their initial responses. *How does this make them feel? Do they like what they are seeing? Why? How has the illustrator created a sense of freedom? Why has she chosen to split the whole spread in to three, long horizontal panels? What is the effect of being taken on Piggy's physical and emotional journey in which he sheds his clothes and naturalises himself? What impact does the bright colour green have as it emerges from grey; the straight lines giving way to tufty grass? How does this represent Piggy's release from captivity?*

Read aloud to end of the book in which the natural landscape has taken on the golden hue of the sunset. *What does gold suggest to us? Why choose these warm tones at the end of the story?* Consider the use of scale and placement of the two new friends within a huge expanse of sky and fields, back to us and side-by-side and given equal status. As the pair look ahead and beyond the fence, reflect on what their future holds. Reflecting on the children's likely reactions of relief at Piggy's happy ending, you might return to Thomas in the previous spread and reflect on his viewpoint; now looking down but facing the page turn for the first time; so what is his story? *What does he want? Do the children sympathise with him at all? Why? Why not?* Compare his oppressive and abusive behaviour towards Piggy to that with his cousin in which he had equal positioning and scale, suggesting negotiation in play and status. Elicit children's personal responses to each character's behaviour and the decisions they have made. This could lead to further discussion and work on the rights of children, animals and humans and a wider exploration of action versus inaction.

This would be an opportunity to pause and explore our perspective as a reader and where the illustrations place us throughout the story? *How does the illustrator achieve this? When are we spectators and when are we seeing things from his point of view? When do we experience the birds' aerial viewpoint? What effect do the reflections created by the mirrors have on us as readers?* The children could create images which play with reader perspective, drawing on these illustrative techniques. Provide opportunity for the children to

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revisit and re-read the book and explore it as an object. There is much use of reflection and mirroring; from the book jacket to certain spreads already compared to smaller instances. The children might create their own handmade picture books based on a story about a character escaping oppression or even Piggy's new story. They could play with perspective and consider the books as a whole object in their choice of illustration style; its layout and the way it works with the text and the space on the page.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: [www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources](http://www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources)

In depth teaching sequences for over 200 other high quality texts can be found at:  
[www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading](http://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)

Further resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at:  
<https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>

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