

Teaching Ideas for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Award Shortlist 2018

Title: The Song from Somewhere Else

Author: A.F. Harrold, illustrated by Levi Pinfold

Publisher: Bloomsbury (2017, Paperback Edition)

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:

This is a sequence of sessions aimed at Upper Key Stage 2. The book supports the study of plot, character development and emotional response to strong themes including bullying and self-esteem in narrative fiction. Teachers are advised to read the book before using it with their children.

The black and white illustrations are subtle in depth and tone, adding nuance and depth to the reader's understanding of the text. It is therefore advisable to ensure that you have access to a visualiser or similar device to enable you to share images from the text with the pupils on a large scale.

In preparation for exploring this text in the classroom, children will also need access to a variety of art materials (cartridge paper, soft drawing pencils (2B+), charcoal pencils, charcoal, pastels, putty rubbers, soft pastels, soft coloured pencils) for them to be able to explore the effects of different media used in the illustrations in this text for themselves.

Session 1

Keep back the front cover, look at the first double page internal illustration of the girl riding the bike. Explain that this is placed here to give a sense of the story ahead. What kind of story do they think this might be from looking at this image? Where might it be set? When? Who might the character(s) be? Encourage the children to explore the illustration themselves in mixed pairs, discussing their thinking and noting down their thoughts around a large scale copy of this illustration. Now come back together to closely read the illustration. Discuss the choice of black and white for the colour palette, placing the action on a small scale and in silhouette in the foreground, making the girl and the journey she is on stand out. The houses out lighter, almost merging into the background. Look at the proportions of the land to sky, look at the swirling clouds, what might these suggest about the journey that may lie ahead for this character?

The author of the book, A.F. Harrold, and the illustrator, Levi Pinfold, were both asked to come up with playlists of songs that might in some way have something to do with either the book, or their feelings about the book, or their approach to working on the book. You can access both of these Spotify playlists on A. F. Harrold's website: <http://www.afharroldkids.com/the-song-from-somewhere-else-1/#the-songs-from->



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



[somewhere-else](#). The first song on Levi Pinfold's playlist is *Experiment in Terror* by Henry Mancini. Without mentioning the song title, play this track to the children as they look again at this illustration. If you are not able to access the Spotify playlist you can also listen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RXFODGTwdc>. Do they think this adds to the mood of the scene that the illustrator has set? What kind of atmosphere and feelings are evoked when the illustration and soundtrack are put together? Give time for the children to discuss and note their ideas in a different colour around the illustration.

Now move to looking at the illustration of Frank on page 7; you may find it useful to share this on a visualiser or scan in to show at a larger scale, separate from the text, and to also give copies of this illustration to pairs or groups for close reading. Relating back to the first illustration; *who do they think this character is? What can we tell about her character?* Encourage the children to closely read her facial expression, her body position, the choice of hairstyle, clothing, her stature and scale in relation to the background. Encourage the children to make a note of their observations around a copy of the illustration. *What questions do you have about this character?* Note these alongside your observations.

Now do the same with the illustration of the three boys on page 6. It might be useful to copy the two pages from the book with the text covered so that the children can see her size and scale in relation to the boys. *What do you think you know about these characters from looking at the illustration?* Again, draw children's attention to closely read their facial expression, their body positions, the choice of hairstyles and clothing, their stature and scale in relation to hers. Encourage the children to make a note of their observations around a copy of the illustration. *What questions do you have about these characters? How do you think these characters might interact in the story? What might their relationship be?* Note these alongside your observations.

Now read aloud the text from the beginning up until page 11; *'But quickly it got quieter and then she couldn't hear them any more.'* Give children copies of the text and highlighting pens to re-read together in mixed pairs or groups. What details in the text do you think the illustrator has used to build his illustrations of these characters? Give children time and space to re-read and text mark specific details that would be useful to the illustrator in creating his illustrations of Frank, Neil Noble, Rob and Roy. Share these points across the class when children have had time to mark their own extracts. *What similar language did different pairs or groups pick up on? Why was this language particularly effective in building a picture of the characters?*

You might follow up this work with some specific work in an Art lesson on looking at the style Levi Pinfold employs in his portraits and completing some close observational portraits of each other or of self-portraits. How will you capture the essence of your/your subject's character in their facial expression, pose, choice of clothing, scale? Allow time for the students to explore and discuss their thoughts around the theme and storyline of the text, supporting them in sharing and exploring their ideas. Provide children with

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



heavy cartridge paper, charcoal pencils, charcoal and putty rubbers and allow them to spend time exploring and trying out ideas. If the children have limited experience of using these materials, you may want to demonstrate techniques first, and draw alongside them, ideally under a visualiser so they can see the marks you make, how you smudge and blend, how you layer up to change the intensity of the colour, how to use the putty rubber to remove layers of colour to create different effects.

Session 2

Now come back to look at the illustration on page 15. Once again, give mixed pairs and groups a copy to read closely and annotate. Who do the children think this character is? Why? Where is this taking place? Whose perspective do you think this image is being viewed from? Look at how the use of colour makes the figure almost rise from the nettles, as though he is growing up and out of them. Look at the way the sun shines behind his head, almost as if it were a halo. What do you feel about this character? What mood or atmosphere is evoked in this illustration? Why? Give pairs or groups plenty of time to explore the illustration together, sharing ideas and drawing possible conclusions.

Now read the text from page 11, *'She wasn't sure how long she'd stood there...'* to page 14, *'Why couldn't she do something to make him stop.'* One again, give copies of these pages to the children to re-read and discuss in their pairs or groups, text marking words and phrases which give a clue to their character. Were your initial perceptions about this character correct? Why or why not? Do you think that people often get wrongly judged by their appearance? Why do you think people might misjudge Nick? You may want to expand these conversations in a linked PSHE discussion reflecting on how people are judged unfairly by their appearance in different situations.

Why now do you think that Levi Pinfold chose to depict Nick in the nettles? Look back at the words used to describe the nettles from Frank's perspective and compare these with the relative ease with which he retrieved the bag and the choice of verbs used to describe his movements; *'He'd surged forward, lumbering his huge feet through the nettles.'* Compare these with those used to describe Frank's reactions *'Frank's legs prickled; she felt goosebumps shiver across her skin as she watched.'*

Compare the depiction of the nettles around Nick with the nettles on the front and back endpapers. How are these different? How do they mirror the different reactions of the characters to the nettles? You could follow this with drawing some nettles from life if you have a nettle patch near the school building. Taking care to outline the risks of nettles and ensuring the children don't touch them or walk into them, sit down so the nettles are at eye level. Look at how they wind and grow like any other plant, capturing the bend of the stalks and the softness of the leaves and how and where the light catches them. If you don't have real nettles near you, you may want to use a photograph as a frame of reference such as:

<http://truckeeriverguide.org/species/stinging-nettle/> Now look down on the nettles from above. How does the light change? What do you notice close up that you didn't see from afar? The edges might look spikier? Again you could use a photo as a frame of reference, such as: <https://peggyschirmer.com/nettles-no-1->

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

[allergy-killer/](#) *How do the nettles look different from this perspective and how does viewing them from this perspective make you think differently about them?*

Come back together to look at the double page spread of the two figures running towards the house. *What do you think is happening here? Who are the two figures? Why do you think this?* Look carefully at the use of dark and light in this image, the two figures are bathed in light from above, their journey ahead leads from darkness on the left hand side of the page to a lighter outlook on the right. The path is bathed in a beam of light, almost like a beacon. What could the significance of this be? Make notes around the illustration, as a class or in pairs or smaller groups, drawing together ideas based on what they can see and capturing any questions the children have about the image.

Now read aloud from page 16: *'She didn't turn around.'* to page 24 *'They're not with us,' Nicholas said slowly. 'They're just going.'*

Session 3

Read on aloud from page 24, *'The inside of the house wasn't what Frank had expected'* to page 30, *'I'm certain too,' her stomach said, on her side for once.'* **ensuring that you do not show the children the illustration of the music on page 29.**

Give the children a copy of **the text only** from these pages so that they can re-read for themselves in pairs or small groups, looking for words or phrases that describe the music or how it makes Frank feel to hear it. Come back together to discuss their selections, looking at which they found the most powerful. Look together at the metaphor, *'She was suddenly filled with shoals of fish, darting and moving like one great whole, darting and flowing this way and that, darting and flashing, hundreds and hundreds of silver fish all moving as if they shared one brain. That was what she saw as she heard this faint, distant music.'* What image does this place in your mind? Have you seen a shoal of fish moving in this way before? What is it like? To give a shared experience of what has been depicted, play the following video, **muting the sound so that the children can firmly focus on the images:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wn3c46HJmHI>. Discuss what has been seen; why do you think A.F. Harrold chose this metaphor to describe the music? What do you think the music sounds like? How do you think Levi Pinfold, the illustrator, might show this in an illustration? Come back to the interrelationship of the arts, in particular illustration and music and how the illustrator might have been influenced by some of the music in his playlist when composing an illustration that depicts the music. Listen to the following track from Levi Pinfold's playlist, *Haunting and Heartbreaking* by Angelo Badalamenti: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLdedKjghsg>. Do you think this matches the description in the words? How do you think Levi was influenced by the music?

Give time and space for the children to access quality art materials such as charcoal pencils, listen again to the music and draw how this music looks to you. Allow time for the students to explore and discuss their thoughts around the theme and storyline of the text, supporting them in sharing and exploring their ideas.

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



Provide children with heavy cartridge paper, charcoal pencils, charcoal and putty rubbers and allow them to spend time exploring the different ways they could create the music. If the children have limited experience of using charcoal and pastels, you may once again want to demonstrate techniques first, and draw alongside them, ideally under a visualiser so they can see the marks you make, how you smudge and blend, how you layer up to change the intensity of the colour, how to use the putty rubber to remove layers of colour to create different effects.

Now look at Levi Pinfold has depicted the music; *what are the similarities and differences in your work and his? Where has he set his scene? How can you tell? Why might he have made this choice? Even with the limited palette of black and white, how has he depicted the awe and wonder Frank experiences hearing the music?*

Read on to page 54, *'It didn't roar at her, didn't growl.'* You can show the illustration on this double page spread, but don't discuss it in detail yet. Give the children time to reflect on and discuss what is happening here, how it might fit within the context of the story so far and what might happen next. Now look at the illustration in more detail. *Whose reaction has the illustrator chosen to reveal? Whose has he held back? Why do you think he has made this choice? What is Frank's reaction? Do you think she is shocked? Scared? Why / why not? What do you think the Troll's reaction is? What might the troll look like from Frank's perspective? Have we seen her looking up at a larger figure like this elsewhere in the book? When?* Investigate whether the children draw any parallels between this and the first image they saw of Nick. Explore with the children what else is different in this image; instead of black text on a white background, this is the first time this has flipped to white text on a black background. *Why do you think the illustrator has made this choice? What effect does it give?*

In between sessions, continue reading aloud to the point where Nick and Frank are both in the cellar with the troll that we now know is Nick's mother, up until page 104, *'This was turning out to be one strange summer holiday, Frank thought.'* Mirror this illustration with the one just studied. Again the choice has been made to switch to white text on a black background, with the illustration of the troll mother glowing bright against it. Note the change of perspective. Instead of looking at the children's reactions, we now see the mother; *why do you think this is? What do you imagine their faces look like? What in the text gave you an idea of this? Why do you think he has left this to your imagination?* You could extend this by giving the children an opportunity to draw what they think either or both of their faces might look like, following the style of the illustrator, then comparing and contrasting the artwork.

Session 4

Read on to Page 115, *'As he counted, Rob and Roy swung her up high over the nettles.'* Explore the illustration on page 108 that shares how Neil Noble comes back into power. Look at how her dad is facing away, as if he has literally 'turned his back' on her and what is really happening. *Why do you think her dad didn't see what was really going on? How did Neil enable this?* Look at the facial expressions of Neil and

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

Frank, how he has draped his arm right across her to show he is back in control, how he looks directly at her, but she looks down and away from him.

Now re-read the last two pages again, from page 114, *'The fear filled her upside-down brain...'* to page 115, *'As he counted, Rob and Roy swung her up high over the nettles.'* Now turn the page and reveal the double page spread of the nettles. *What is the impact of this double page spread? How is it different from the single page of nettles in the endpapers? Whose eyes are we viewing these through? Why has the illustrator chosen this perspective at this point?* This is also one of the double page spreads where there are no words to accompany the illustration. *Why do they think there are no words here? What does the space allow the reader to do?* Ask the children to predict what they think Frank will do at this point? *What would they do if they were in her shoes, (the illustrator is firmly placing us in her shoes through the use of perspective in this illustration)?* Read on to the end of page 119 to reveal what she does and discuss where the story might go from here.

Reveal the illustration on page 120. How do you think Frank is feeling about what just happened? *What has the illustrator done to communicate this to us?* Give mixed pairs and groups a copy of the illustration and get them to use and apply their knowledge of illustration gained so far to make annotations around the illustration sharing their observations and opinions.

Read on to page 132, *'Not to Frank.'* With whom does the power now lie? Do they think it will remain this way? Why or why not? Draw their attention to the fact that Neil's face was caught on camera and investigate the power images can have. You may want to continue this is a separate PSHE session which focusses on cyber bullying and/or how easily images can be spread and identified.

Session 5

Read aloud to page 146, *"Oh nowhere," it said. "Nowhere."* Spend some time reflecting on the character of Agent Jofolofski and where she might fit into the story. Look at the way she is depicted in the illustrations, always in the shadows, with dark glasses covering her eyes; *what does this make us think or feel about her?*

Now read on to Page 147, *To her shock, and totally without warning, she was knocked to the ground by two hurtling figures.'* Turn the page to show the double page spread of this scene. Explore how one figure looks back at what has gone on behind them whilst the other's gaze leads up to the tree towering over them with long branches reaching out towards them. *Who do they think these figures are? Why do they think this? What do they think they are running away from?*

Read on to page 154, *'It was right to be afraid of it.'* Closely read the illustration, what does the stick figure in the shadows remind them of? Compare this with the branches of the tree in the previous double page spread. What do you think is happening here? Investigate whether children make the connection that the

two figures in the last image were Rob and Roy and that they were without Nick. If they don't, you don't need to point this out yet.

Now read on to page 164, '*...towards the park exit that led to Nick's house.*' Stop to reflect on what has happened and now look at the illustration on pages 162-163. How do we know through the image that there has been a shift in power? Look at the way that Neil is depicted in bright white. He is literally, as the idiom suggests, *white with fear*. How else do we know how much of an impact whatever has happened has had on him? What moments has the illustrator chosen not to reveal from the words? Give the children a copy of the text and illustration and have them discuss in mixed pairs or groups before coming together to explore their ideas as a class. Look at how it is now Frank towering over him; not as a threat but as support. Look at how the action has shifted to the left of the page as if this is not going to go on any more.

Read on to the end of the book, exploring how Frank does make everything right but at an emotional cost to Nick. *How has her character changed as a result of her experiences and how can we see this in the illustrations?* You might look at how the darkness takes over in the illustrations to intensify the drama of this action-filled last section of the story. Flashes of light still spring from the music in the double page spread on pages 182-3 but in this spread Frank no longer looks full of the awe and wonder we have seen before when she is faced with the music. She does however look directly at the stick creature that we see reflected in the shadows and straight towards the glowing eyes in the spread on pages 188-189. You could look at how the figures creep out from the frame on page 194, intensifying the pressure on them to close the window '*for good*' and it is this that brings Nick and Frank to their final decision.

Look at the last emotive images in the book; of Nick embracing his mother – *how has he changed? What has shifted in the scale here? He's normally the big protector, how does he look here?* Compare this with the final image of them on the swings on page 210 – with his head bowed they now appear equal. What does this say about their relationship? Finally, look at the last image of Frank walking out of the nettles, with us looking up to her and the sun appearing in front of her – *what does this say about her? Why is this an important last image? Whose story is this?*

You may also want to compare hardback and paperback covers – which do you prefer? Which do you think most suits the story? Why? Why do you think the publisher chose to make the two covers so different? Which do you think best represents the story and why? Which do you think would make someone who hasn't read the book most likely to read it?

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

In depth teaching sequences for over 200 other high quality texts, include a full sequence for *The Song From Somewhere Else*, can be found at: www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards



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>

©The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.