



Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2018

Set up to honour Klaus Flugge, founder of Andersen Press, this award is for the most promising & exciting newcomer to children's picture book illustration.

Title: The Night Box

Author: Louise Greig

Illustrator: Ashling Lindsay

Publisher: Egmont

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 you how to use picture books with your class to enhance children's reading comprehension and understanding of how to convey messages through illustration. 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, oil pastels, coloured pencils, scraper sticks, poster paint and a variety of brushes.

Suggested Activities:

Session 1:

Explore the first double page spread in the text, without yet sharing the front cover, 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? Whose story do you think this will be? What do you think might happen? Collect children's responses on post-it notes around a large copy of the illustration. Read aloud the text that accompanies this first illustration, tuning children in to the language on the page. Give the children a copy of the text and ask them to consider which words and phrases the illustrator has particularly tuned into when she created this illustration. Look at how she has managed to tell more of the story than the words give away, how she has opened the story by introducing the characters and setting. Look at how the questions in the text, and the placing of the words on the page draw our attention to the key the boy is holding, if they haven't already noticed this. What do they think the key could be for? What might its significance be for the story ahead?

Now read the text, until '*Two eyes, two ears, two wings, wait, as Day inches like a snail, around the clock, tick-tock, tick-tock.*' What do we know about the boy now? Create a role on the wall for the character, drawing an outline of the boy on a large sheet of paper and noting his external characteristics on the outside of the outline and his internal feelings in the inside of the outline. Look for clues in the illustration,



e.g. the fact that there are two coats hanging up means he might just live with his mum, the fact he is holding a ball might mean he likes playing football, the fact that he is on his own coupled with his facial expression might mean he is happy in his own company. He is playing quite far away from his mum in the first illustration which may mean he is quite confident or feels safe where he lives. That he waves goodbye as he goes in might mean he loves the outdoors. The fact that he gets himself changed might mean he is quite independent.

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. Ashling Lindsay tends to work digitally (see: <http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/visual-arts/made-shade-belfast-illustrator-ashling-lindsay>) but techniques can be replicated with different media for drawing in the classroom. Look at the pencil and brush-like marks that are used to create pattern, texture and interest throughout the illustrations; for the hair, fur, tree bark and leaves, roof tiles, even the rays of light in the sky. Encourage the children to have a go at this by replicating an element from one of the illustrations in this first section of the story. Tree bark could be replicated by scraping into oil pastel, the leaves could be laid down in one colour of coloured pencil or crayon with paint brush marks to emphasise the leaves caught by the light or hidden in the shadows with lighter or darker paint, shadows could be shaded in with soft pencils, different colours and marks can be used to create hair on people or fur on animals, different shapes could be repeated to create the effect of the roof tiles or floorboards of the house.

Session 2:

Read on, up until *'Gently, he turns the key in the Night Box.'* Reflect back on the words and illustrations in this section, exploring what else we can learn or see reinforced about the character of the boy and the relationship he has with his mother. Explore the way in which she makes hot drinks in the kitchen while he gets his room ready, they both come together for *'milk and a song'*, but her cup is left in the other room for her to come back to. How the pictures on the wall are of the mother and son; the focus of their gaze in each other at this special time and how the intensity of the gaze is diverted to the box when she leaves. Re-read the page where Max puts the key into the Night Box. What do the children think a Night Box is? Look at the way he kneels down to the box, placing a hand on it. How do you think he feels here? Look also at the cat's gaze and expression from the bed.

Now read the text on the next double page spread, without revealing the illustration, from *'Up comes the lid...'* to *'It chases blue, white, pink and green away.'* Ask the children what images they visualised while the text was being read. Where is this happening? What does it look like? What colours could you see? How do you think Max looks or feels? Talk about the words that might indicate these things. Read the text through one more time so the children can secure a clear image in their minds. Give each child an A3 sized piece of cartridge paper and a variety of different art materials as referenced above and allow them to draw what they think the illustration on this page could look like, drawing on the words that describe this in the text. They may also choose to replicate some of the styles and techniques they studied in the previous session. Do they think it is a single page spread or a double page spread? (They could fold the page down the middle to take this into account.) You could type out the text and give this to the children to refer to and re-read as



they work. When they have completed their illustrations, pin these up around the room and allow the children to take the time to look at each other's interpretation, comparing and contrasting thoughts and techniques.

Turn the page and allow the children to see the illustrator's interpretation of the text. What similarities and differences are there in their own work?

Session 3:

Read on to '*A mountain and a whale, even an ocean too!*' Think about how the words and illustrations in this part of the text show the small sounds and movements in the night on the first two single page spreads; Max cupping his ear to hear the tiny sounds, the drip falling from the outdoor tap, the trees tapping on the window, the tinkle of the cat's bell and its prrrrr. Collect examples of all the words that relate to the small aspects of the night, e.g. *tiny, plink, drip, tap, little, gentle, nothing more, tinkle, prrrrr, kitten*. Lots of these words are examples of onomatopoeia, focussing our attention on the sounds of the night. Now contrast this with the next double page spread which shows how the vastness of night covers everything. Look at the decision the illustrator has made to move from two single page spreads for the small aspects to a large double page spread to magnify this. Compare the language used to describe the larger aspects covered by night and collect examples of the words that reflect this, e.g. *swirls, spills like ink, huge, house, forest, mountain, whale, ocean*. Look at how the clouds spill off the sides of the pages as if they continue on, and how the horizon line of the land meets the sky and how the road weaves off into the horizon in one direction and carries on off the page in the other direction, looking like it carries back as far as the eye can see. Look at the scale of the whale against the land, think about how huge these creatures are in real life and how vast the land is in comparison.

Think about how the children could show this in words and pictures themselves. Give them access to cartridge paper and art materials to make their own spreads to show either small sounds or movements that could be heard or seen at night or explore how to show the expanse night covers. You might use a video stimulus such as: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUp_P2g8sAc to share panoramic shots of the Earth that might inspire ideas of what they could include in such illustrations. Encourage the children to think about whether they will use single or double page spreads to exemplify the size that they have chosen to work on and how they will share this with carefully chosen words and images. Allow time and space for the children to complete their spreads and then display these to reflect on and discuss techniques and their impact as a group afterwards.

Session 4:

Read on to '*And out of the shadows they snout and snuffle, leap and swoop.*' Investigate the verbs in the text that tell us that this section of the story focusses on the movements in the night. In this section of the text, Ashling Lindsay uses a variety of different techniques, choosing poses carefully and using varied compositions, to bring the animals to life and make the reader feel as if they are part of the action. Closely observe some of the spreads that focus on different ways of representing movement, the bold flight of the swan across a double page spread, highlighted in bright white across the dark sky. Look at the way its wings



spread showing power and the way the head and body are straightened and lengthened to lead the swan on its way. Explore the words in the text that might have influenced her illustration, *soars, streams, stretches, beats her strong white wings*. Compare this with the smaller movements of the other creatures on the next spread; the mother deer alert as her babies sleep, ears pricked and eyes bright, the curiosity of the badger, the mole peeking out of its hole, the owl swooping to land, claws outstretched, the fox bounding out from behind the tree, where the action is clearly observable in the white space, also accentuating the shadows.

Give the children time to observe other nocturnal animals that move in different ways through a film resource, such as a fast flying bat or a more careful moving hedgehog and give children opportunities to try out different sketches of ways to represent the animal's movements against the white space on the page, considering where shadows might fall to anchor their movements.

Session 5:

Read the rest of the text. Spend time talking with the children about how the night is perceived in the text. Look at the words that the author chooses to describe the night and its actions at the end, the idea that night gives something to all the creatures and natural objects in the environment, the passage, '*Night is kind. Night stays in Max's room, silent and strong all night long, to hold in its arms a bear and a boy.*' How do Max and all the creatures in the story react to the night? Explore the fact that by the end of the book, we return to virtually the same double page spread we started with at the beginning.

Give mixed pairs or groups of children copies of both these images from the start and end of the text and give time for the children to compare and contrast these illustrations, picking out the similarities and differences. Explore observations such as how the shadows now fall in the opposite direction and link this to the scientific knowledge around the sun's movement throughout the day. Look at the different tones and colours used to represent objects in the picture, the crisp blue of the sky in the sunrise spread compared to the warm yellow of the sunset spread and the effect this has on the other colours used for the leaves, water, grass, etc. You could give children time to construct a palette of sunrise colours and one of sunset colours, referencing tones and shades in the images and then allow the children time and space to construct an illustration of their own, either based on the book or their own experience that takes place at sunrise or sunset.

Finish by discussing the book as a whole. Allow lots of time for the children to explore the book independently following these sessions. They may want to re-read, or they may continue to be inspired to create their own illustrations; allow time and space and access to art materials and reference photographs or videos to allow children to do this. You may want to get extra copies of the book to explore in group reading sessions or for interested children to borrow from the reading area or school library and read together.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Klaus Flugge shortlist. To access more resources to support your literacy teaching, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources



Further teaching sequences and 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>

If you have enjoyed this teaching sequence you might want to look at our Power of Reading resource. This contains in depth teaching sequences for more than 200 other high quality texts helping you to plan and deliver a rich literacy curriculum with quality children's literature at its heart.

www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading