

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

**Title:** You're Safe With Me

**Author:** Chitra Soundar

**Illustrator:** Poonam Mistry

**Publisher:** Lantana Publishing (2018)

*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 KS1. The distinctive illustration style of Poonam Mistry is inspired by her love of nature, interest in the relationship between pattern, shape and colour, and the art, culture, folklore and theology of her Indian heritage as well as drawing wider inspiration from Aboriginal, African and Scandinavian art.

Set aside a display table or shelf and use this to display a range of:

- Indian traditional tales;
- a sample of Indian fabric and prints;
- illustrations of Hindu deities;
- photographs of Aboriginal art;
- masks from different parts of West Africa;
- examples of Scandinavian ceramic tiles.

These should be available for children to browse at their leisure and can be referenced and incorporated into discussions regarding the artistic choices and inspirations of the illustrator.

The traditional tales can be a feature of story time sessions and opportunities should be available to draw parallels and connections with common themes and concepts.

The illustrations are extremely rich and detailed. 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.

## Session 1

Share the endpapers and invite the children to discuss what they notice. In reflecting on the details, consider the use of colour, shape and pattern. Which details in the illustration are they drawn to, and why? Where might the story be set? Note their thoughts, reflections and ideas on flipchart paper.

Share the front cover of the book with the title omitted. Invite the children to discuss what they notice, their initial impressions and what they think the book might be about. If they were to give the book a title based on the endpapers and front cover what might this be? Share the actual title and discuss how the title consolidates or varies their initial thoughts. Discuss in what ways the artistic choices on the front cover attempt to convey the feeling of safety. Consider for example, the composition, the use of symmetry and the palette choice. Invite the children to consider and discuss what and who makes them feel most safe. Note their comments and responses on flipchart paper.

Share the first double page spread and invite the children to discuss what they notice. What might each animal be thinking? Read the text aloud and consider whether their initial responses are altered as a result. Invite the children to join in groups of four to recreate this moment as a freeze frame. Once they have assumed their positions and had some time to consider how they might be feeling in this moment, invite the children to freeze. Move around the space and tap individuals on the shoulder as a prompt to speak aloud in role to share what they might be thinking and feeling in this moment. You might choose to photocopy this double page spread and invite the children to note the thoughts of the animals in thought bubbles. Attach the bubbles to the image and add this to your working wall.

Return to the illustration and discuss the contrast in shape, colour, detail and composition between the group of animals on the ground and the sky above. Consider the ways in which the illustrator uses shape and colour to connect the animals on the ground and the sky. Consider the ways in which the illustrator uses detail to create marked distinctions between the two. What can we infer from these similarities and distinctions? How does this influence how we view the animals and their habitat? How does this, along with the overall composition, encourage the reader to infer the vulnerability of the animals?

## Session 2

Share the next double page spread and invite the children to discuss what they notice and how the shapes and colours make them feel. Note their reflections on flipchart paper. Read the accompanying text and discuss which words or phrases create a sense of calm.

Explain to the children that in Aboriginal art, which is an art form that the illustrator draws a great deal of inspiration from, different colours carry specific meaning. Black is said to represent the people and the night, red the earth, yellow the sacred sun and white the spirit. What effect does the concentration of red and yellow shades in one part of the spread and the dominant, swooping concentration of dark shades of teal have? What might the white of the eyes of each character indicate about their spirit?

---

©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.

Discuss the shapes that feature in the illustration. What do they notice about the shapes, what shape is most commonly repeated? Why might circles feature so prominently in this double page spread? Attach a sheet of tracing paper to the double page spread. Using a marker, follow the shape of the circle made by the trunk of the elephant that holds the animals together. Using a different colour marker draw a square around the group of animals. Using a different colour draw a rectangle. Using another colour draw a triangle. Discuss with the children strengths and limitations of each shape in conveying a sense of ease, safety and togetherness. In what ways might the feeling of the illustration have differed if one of the other shapes was the more dominant shape in the spread?

Ganesha, the elephant headed Hindu deity is known for amongst other attributes as the remover of obstacles. In this double page spread the elephant is removing the anxieties of the animals by soothing them and making them feel safe. Share a video like this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0v5MldyxZc> that shows elephants in their natural habitat and gives the children the opportunity to discuss ways in which elephants move and use their trunks. Share a range of photos of elephants with trunks in a range of positions and postures and give the children the opportunity to sketch some elephants, paying particular attention to the trunk. Draw an outline of an elephant spread over six to eight large sheets of terracotta coloured sugar paper. Divide the sheets up so that groups of three to six children are working on each piece. Provide a set of paints that are similar to the palette of the book and a range of materials that would create a circular shape such as cork bottle stoppers, thread spool, cotton buds, bottle lids, felt tip lids, (also encourage the use of fingertips) etc. Invite the children to decorate their part of the elephant with a range of different sized circles to emulate the style of the illustrations shared so far. Once dry, tape the pieces of sugar paper together to create a large elephant that embodies the strength, wisdom and protective aura of the character portrayed in the book.

### Session 3

Read aloud the next double page spread and consider with the children how this spread differs from the one before. Reflect on how the use of colour differs and how the concentration of pattern varies. How does this alter the way we feel and how might this alter the way the young animals might feel? What words and phrases corroborate this?

Read aloud the next double page spread in which Mama Elephant whispers to the animals not to worry about the wind. Consider the shift in which colours dominate. What effect does this have, how does this correspond to the words and how does the use of colour, shape and space complement the underlying message of the words and convey the lightness and positive connotation of the wind?

Read aloud the next page, ask the children to comment on what they notice about the shapes and colours and invite them to consider how the illustrations of this double page spread differ from the previous spread and how each gives a distinctively different perception of the wind.

---

©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.

Using pastels (limited to the same palette of the book and paper in the colours of the pages of the book) and inspired by the style of the illustrator, invite the children to draw the wind, as they would like to convey it, either the soothing, uplifting, life invigorating wind or the ill-tempered, heavy, sullen wind.

Invite the children to view one another's work and discuss what feelings the drawings evoke. Note the words and phrases contributed in the discussion and working with the children co-construct the opening for a free verse poem.

Allow the children the space and opportunity to build on this to create their own wind illustration inspired poetry. Allow the opportunity for the poems to be typed up and for the words to be cut up and arranged onto their pastel drawings in a way that complements the meaning of both. Encourage the children to revisit the way in which the text and illustration are arranged on the pages of the book to enhance and enrich the meaning to support them with their own artistic choices.

#### Session 4

Read the next double page spread that comments on the clattering 'DUM-DE-DUM' of the thunder. Discuss what they notice. Consider the way in which sharp edges/ points and leaf/ teardrop shapes dominate the spread and how this corresponds with the text. Discuss how the use of white in particular is used and to what effect.

Provide the children with a range of triangle, teardrop and leaf shapes of varying sizes cut from paper in different shades of green or forestry images from magazines. Invite the children to create their own collage forest scene on green backing paper using the different shapes. Provide the children with white, black, brown, orange, gold and silver Sharpie pens and invite them to add dots, dashes and shapes as inspired by the illustration style to capture the scene of a rainstorm in the forest.

Read the next double page spread, ask the children to comment on what they notice about the shapes and colours and invite them to consider how the illustrations of this double page spread differ from the previous spread and how each gives a distinctively different perception of the thunder.

Read the next page from 'She's noisy,' discuss the shift in the colour palette and the softening of the shape edges. What effect does this have? What impression of the thunder does this give? How might this make the animals feel? What words come to mind when viewing this illustration? Note their contributions. How does this contrast with the shapes used in the previous spreads relating to thunder? How does the dominance of birds and their body language extenuate the feelings being conveyed in this spread? How does this contrast with the heavy dominance of foliage engulfing the animals on the ground in the earlier double page spread?

Using tissue paper and cotton balls on the same colours as the colours featured in this spread (pale yellows, baby blues, cream and teal) along with colour photocopies of the birds, you could allow the children to create their own mobiles. Invite them to write words on pieces of coloured card that they feel most capture the essence of this moment in the book.

Using shared writing, you could draw on this vocabulary bank and artwork to co-construct a poem, allowing children to go on to draft their own. Final pieces could be typed up and attached to their mobiles.

### Session 5

Read the next page from 'CRACK-TRACK!' What do the children notice about the placement and size of the animals? Why might the illustrator have chosen to do this? What effect does this have? How does it correspond to this moment in the text? How is the drama of each onomatopoeic word mirrored in the illustration?

Read the next page from 'Don't be frightened,' to 'clouds collide.' Invite the children to consider how the illustration makes them feel and, how the animals might be feeling at this point in the story. Which parts of the illustration are their eyes most drawn to and why? How do the colours differ from the previous double page spread and what effect does this have? Does the illustrator manage to balance effectively the awe, wonder and magic of the sparkling lightning with its powerful, threatening, dangerous energy as implied by the text? Discuss how the illustrator uses shape, colour, size and composition to try to achieve this balance. You might need to show a video clip of a thunderstorm to help stimulate the conversation and elicit deeper, more context embedded responses.

Provide the children with dark blue card and a range of materials including but not limited to:

- Malleable strips of silver, bronze and gold wire or strips of paper in these colours
- Paper cut into varying sizes of triangle and diamond shapes in the colour palette of this double page spread (gold, cream, pale blue)
- Sharpie pens in gold, bronze, silver and white.

Give the children the opportunity to interpret this moment in the story and create their own thunderstorm using the materials provided and inspired by the illustrative style of the book.

### Beyond Session 5

Continue to share the remainder of the book pausing intermittently to discuss the contrasts between each spread; reflecting on how the words and illustrations work in harmony to convey the tension stemming from the animals' anxieties and the soothing calm assurances of the elephant.

You could continue to offer opportunities for the children to experiment with using a range of materials to interpret each scene as inspired by the distinctive illustrative style of the book.

---

©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



Upon completing your exploration of the book, you might choose to reread the text and consider how you might use instruments, body percussion and sound effects to create a soundtrack that could accompany a performance reading of the text. This performance reading could be recorded and set against a video recording of the range of artwork inspired by the study of this text.

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>

---

**©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.