

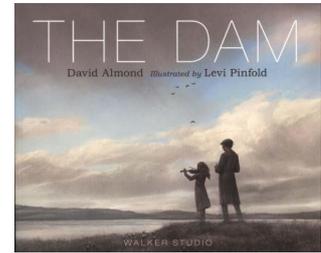
Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

The Dam

by David Almond, illustrated by Levi Pinfold (Walker)

Explore it

Read the text below and take time to look carefully at the illustrations:



"This will be gone," he told her.
 "And this."
 "And this will be washed away."
 "And this will never be seen again."
 "And this will drown."
 "And these can never live here again."

 The dam was almost done.

Consider what is happening in this scene. Who are these people? Why do you think they are here? Do you think they have been here before? What makes you think that?

Now, look carefully at the setting. How would you describe the place they are in? Is it urban or rural? How do you know? What do you think it might be like to be there? What might you see, hear or smell? How do you think it feels to be there? Consider what is being said in the text. Why do you think he is telling her that all these things will be gone? What does he mean when he says **this** and **these**? What do you think is going to happen to them?

Do you know what a dam is and why dams are built? If you are not sure about the word, look it up in a dictionary, if you have one, or use an online dictionary, such as:

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> Does this change what you first thought about what might happen next to this place? How does this make you feel? How do you think these people feel? Why do you think they came here at this particular time?

2. Illustrate it

In this scene, you only see small snippets of the landscape where the story takes place. What do you think this landscape looks like as a whole? Imagine you are the man and the girl standing in the image toward the centre of the spread. What do you think they are looking out onto? What might the landscape where all these plants and animals live look like?

Look back at all the images for clues to what the wider landscape might look like. You might notice the hills behind the sheep, the forest behind the fox, the long grass and clover around the smaller animals and

flowers and the clouds in the sky where the birds fly. Can you put these things together to create an image of the landscape in your mind? When you have a clear picture in your head, take a pencil and piece of paper and start to draw out what you see. If you don't have paper to hand, the back of an old letter or envelope will do. You could refer to some photographs of a rural landscape to help you if you can access these.

The illustrator uses a muted colour palette, why do you think he has chosen to do this? Why might he want to make this moment seem more subdued? If you have access to coloured pencils or crayons at home, you could also think about how to use colour to reflect the mood of what is happening here.

3. Talk about it

- Why do you think the illustrator chose to focus on small close up images of the plants and wildlife and of the man and girl rather than sharing the whole scene all at once?
- Why are dams built? If you are not sure, you can find out more at the DK find out! website here: <https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/earth/rivers/river-dams/>
- How do you think the author and illustrator want you to feel about what is happening in this spread? What have they both done in the words and the images to make you feel this way?

4. Imagine it

Think carefully about the impact that the dam being built might have on the people that live in this place. What might the positive and negative impacts of having a dam and reservoir on the land be? What else do you think might have been on this land, as well as the animals and wildlife?

The dam is being built to flood the valley and create a reservoir to meet the human demand for water. Do you think human needs should come before the land and the Earth? Why is there such a demand for water in the modern world? Is there anything else that can be done to conserve water, rather than building dams and reservoirs to collect reserves of water?

5. Create it

Can you think of other ways that humans are impacting on the Earth? For example, there is lots in the news at the moment about climate change, plastic waste, deforestation, the clearance of woodland and rural areas for roads and housing.

Can you think of an environmental issue that is important to you and your local community? This might be how to reduce water consumption to make sure the world has enough of this finite resource for everyone on the planet, linked to the book. It could be something like littering or fly tipping in your local area, or something larger like reducing the use of cars to reduce carbon emissions or the need to recycle plastic.

Conduct some research about the area you want to focus on. To help you focus your thinking, consider:

- What is the problem you want to talk about?
- Why is this a problem?
- What could reduce the problem? What do people actually need to do?

Now, think about how to present your information. Will you make a leaflet, poster or webpage, a newspaper or magazine article or an audio or video report? Decide on your format then collate your information together thinking about what will help your audience understand your message. Like the book, will you use images and text? When you have completed your writing, share it with someone else. Do they understand the issue and what they could do to help? Are they persuaded to make changes?