

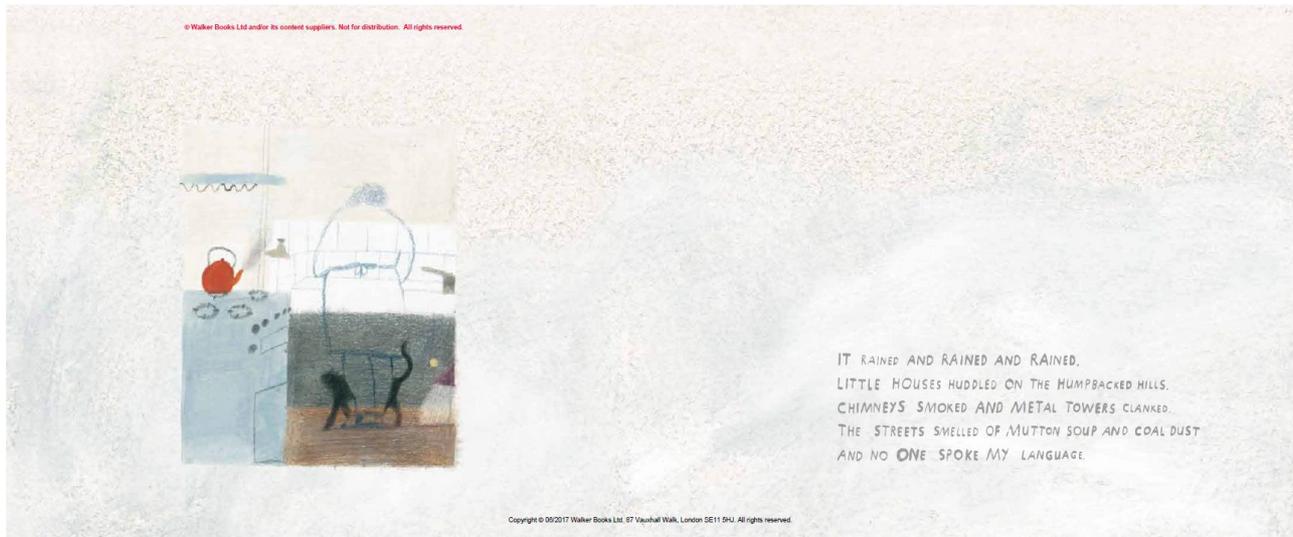
Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

The King of the Sky by Nicola Davies and Laura Carlin (Walker)



1. Explore it

Look at the spread from the book below, searching like a detective in the illustration to see what clues it gives you to the story, thinking about what is happening and the character you meet:



If there are words you don't know or understand, like 'humpbacked' or 'mutton', you could look them up in a dictionary or online, e.g., <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>. Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences? How does this spread make you feel; what do you like or dislike about it? Does it remind you of anything you know in stories or real life? How? Is the illustration what you expected to see? What do you picture in your mind as you read the words? Which words and phrases put this picture into your mind?

When and where do you think this story is set? What clues do you think this kitchen scene might give you? What details in it catch your eye? Why; what might they tell you? Whose viewpoint do you think we are seeing it from? Who do you think might be speaking, is it the person we see at the sink, or someone else? If so, how might they be connected to the woman in the apron; and to the cat? What do you think you know about them? What can you tell about their life from what you have read?

2. Illustrate it

Re-read the text, or ask someone to read it to you. After you have read it a few times, take a pen or pencil and a bit of scrap paper, the back of an old envelope or cereal packet; whatever is to hand. Draw what you see in your imagination as you read or hear the words. It might be interesting to share the passage with a friend or family member and see what they draw, then compare it with what you have drawn.

What is similar and different about your illustrations: did you both draw smoking chimneys, metal towers, rows of houses, grey-green fields? What have they shown that you have omitted, omitted that you have included? Did you give the same focus to the same elements? Beyond content, what are the similarities and

differences in the style or the colours you have chosen? Remember, their illustration is a response to the words just like yours. Everyone has their own ideas, imagining things their own way; this is a good thing!

Look at your drawings again. What do you think it would be like to live in this place? Do you think you'd like to live there? Why or why not?

3. Talk about it

Scour the spread — both text and illustration — for any clues to the story. Find and copy any words and phrases which show what the setting is like, and how it might affect the narrator.

- Think about the phrases used to describe the place: ***it rained and rained and rained [...] little houses huddled [...] chimneys smoked [...] metal towers clanked***. What does the narrator's language tell us about the place where they are living; what picture do they paint, how do you think they feel about the place?
- Consider the phrase ***the streets smelled of mutton soup and coal dust***. How do you think the narrator feels about these smells? Do you know what these things are and what they smell like? Do they have any associations for you? Do you they give a clue to where the story might be set, and when?
- We are told that ***no one spoke my language***. What do you think this tells us about the narrator and how they feel in the setting? How do you think it has come about that they find themselves somewhere where no one speaks their language? Can you think of other stories or situations where someone finds themselves in this situation?

4. Imagine it

Have you ever been to a new place, or found yourself in a new situation where you've felt awkward, uncomfortable or out of your element, as if you didn't feel you belonged? What do you think it would be like to find yourself somewhere that felt very different from home and where it was hard to communicate? What do you think you would do? What do you think are the kind of things you would want to express, and to be able to find out? What strategies can you think of that would enable you to do this — to communicate — without spoken or written language? How would it feel to have to do so, to be in this position? Maybe you could discuss your ideas with a friend or family member, and perhaps role play a situation where you struggle to understand or be understood, and how you overcome this difficulty. How does it feel?

5. Create it

The King of the Sky is partly about discovering a sense of belonging in a new place. You have been asked to create a Welcome Guide for someone who is new to the area where you live. As the local expert, how will you introduce them to all that is on offer in your community, to all that is good about where you live? How will you make them feel welcome and part of the community? Consider the narrator of this story: what if the person you're writing for doesn't speak the same language as you? How could you use visuals, symbols, icons, illustrations or photographs, maps and so on to communicate the benefits and pleasures of where you live? You could do this with words and/or annotated pictures, and on a computer if you have access to one, or is there another format or layout that you think would work well? Share your Welcome Guide with someone else and see what they think of what you have created, and whether they can suggest any improvements.