



## Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2019

*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 King Who Banned the Dark

**Author/Illustrator:** Emily Haworth-Booth

**Publisher:** Pavilion

When a little boy grows up to be king, he decides to use his power to tackle his fear of the dark by banning it. His advisors persuade him that the best way to do this is by convincing the people that it was what they wanted anyway. They even plan a celebration of the dark ban with a grand fireworks display but maybe the people are not as susceptible as the king and his advisors believe... This debut picture book by Emily Haworth-Booth, in which the predominantly yellow colour palette lights up the darkness, has a strong underlying political and philosophical message very relevant for our times.

*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, crayons, paint (poster paint or watercolour) and a variety of brushes.

### **Suggested Activities:**

#### **Session 1: How illustration depicts a sense of place**

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 else do you notice in the room? What time of day might it be? Why do you think this?* Now look at the person in the illustration. *Who do you think they are? How do you think they are feeling? How do you know this? Whose story do you think this will be? What do you think might happen?* The illustration draws on a very limited colour palette. *Why might this be? What might the shades of yellow and orange in the image represent? What does it make them think of?* 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. Children might reflect on whether they have ever been afraid of the dark and, if they feel comfortable sharing, what different ideas they and their parents might have tried to help overcome this common fear. *What suggestions might they make to the boy in the illustration?*

Look at the next illustration (the double page spread of the child growing up). If possible cover or remove the text so that children are responding only to the image initially. *What do they notice? What more do they think they know about the character? How do they know this? Has anything changed? Has the character's (and/or the book's) mood changed since the start of the story?*

Then read aloud the text accompanying this spread. Discuss the implications of the king's decision. *What does it mean to ban something? Can they think of examples of when something has been banned? What are the moral and practical implications? Should somebody be allowed to ban the dark? How would people feel about that? Would it be a good thing? Who would like it? Who might not?*

Look again at the two double-page spreads explored so far. *What do they notice about the colours chosen by the illustrator? How would they describe this palette? What predictions might they make about the use of colour in this book? What colours do they expect to see as the story progresses? Why?*

Turn to the next illustration of the king at breakfast, without revealing the text. What do we know about the king now? Look for clues in the illustrations explored so far (both as a boy and an adult): what might we infer about the character of the king from the items in his room, from his facial expressions and body language, his relationship with his pet and with the other people who work at the palace. *What do you notice about the facial expressions of the different people in the 'breakfast room' in this last illustration? What might they think of the king's idea to ban the dark? Who might the people in the portraits be? How are they depicted? Why has the illustrator shown them looking at the king in this way?*

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. Emily Haworth-Booth has talked in interviews about how much she loves “drawing shadowy, dark things, and sketching outside at night-time. I wanted to think of a story that would enable me to draw these kinds of scenes and in doing so to show how beautiful the dark can be.” (<https://www.pavilionbooks.com/2018/10/18/qa-with-emily-haworth-booth-author-of-the-king-who-banned-the-dark/>). Look at the different ways that she has produced shadows and dark corners in the first two spreads (of the boy in his room, and then of him growing up in a series of spotlit moments). A combination of coloured pencil outlines and colouring, overlaid with layers of watercolour paints or watered-down inks. In certain places where the shadows are particularly heavy, they appear to have been emphasised with a thick layer of crayon or oil pastel. In some places, the darkness is so heavy that we can barely make out the details in the drawing; what objects might be placed on top of the boy's bookcase? If children don't refer to it, point out the impact of the light source in each illustration, such as how the lamp on the far right of the second double-page spread diminishes in its light the further away the boy is and how the shadows are darker on the side of the figure furthest away from the light. *Where is the light source in the first illustration? How do we know?* The children could try imitating



some of these techniques by drawing the outline of a figure or an object alongside a light source in coloured pencil or crayon and then using diluted paint to add layers of shadow until they achieve the effect that they are imagining.

## Session 2: How illustration can depict human response or emotion

Reread from the beginning and up until *'and so, the advisors started to spread rumours about the dark.'* Using post-it notes or the digital tools on the interactive whiteboard, cover up the text in the speech bubbles on this page. *How do the king's advisors want the people to feel about the dark? Why do they want the people to 'think it is their idea'? Are they trying to ban the dark to help people? Ask the children to work in small groups to create an agreed definition for the term 'rumour'. What is a rumour? Do they think rumours are negative or positive? Are rumours true or are they lies? What might the advisors say about the dark?*

Read aloud the next double page spread (up to *"...an enormous artificial sun was installed above the Palace."*) so that the pupils can see the success of the plan created by the king's advisors. Give the children some time to talk in groups about their response to this banning of the dark. *Is it a good thing? Is it likely to make people's lives better? Support them in exploring what we might understand from the last sentence on the left hand page ("And because everyone had got what they thought they wanted, everyone thought they were happy.>"). What's the difference between "everyone had got what they wanted" and getting what they "thought they wanted"? What does it mean by they 'thought' they were happy? Is it possible to only think you are happy but not really be happy?*

Now read the text on the next double page spread, without revealing the illustration, from *'Even when the real sun set...'* to *'because it never got dark.'* Ask the children what images they visualised while the text was being read. Where is this happening? What does it look like? 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. *How might this illustration differ from those explored in the previous session? The earlier illustrations used pencil drawings surrounded (and sometimes masked) by dark grey or black paint to depict the shadows and the darkness. If the dark is banned, how might the total lack of darkness be portrayed?*

*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.

Afterwards, allow the children to see the illustrator's own interpretation of the scene. *What similarities and differences are there in their own work?*



### Session 3: How illustration can contradict reader expectations

Read aloud again from the beginning of the text pausing again at “...because it never got dark” to discuss their response to this aftermath to the King’s decree. Look at both the text and the illustration. *How do the people feel? What do they notice?* As there is so much happening in this spread, you might give the pupils a viewfinder (a square of cardboard with a hole cut from the middle) to use to isolate parts of the illustration to look at in more detail. *Is there anybody or anything in the illustration that might be badly impacted by the banning of the dark? Can you envisage any problems that might start occurring in the near or distant future?* If the children don’t mention it, you might ask them why they think that Emily has included an owl in the sky for this illustration. *How might nocturnal animals be affected by this change to their environment?*

Read on to ‘*But if anyone tried to switch their lights off, the Light Inspectors would make them pay a fine.*’ Think about how the two full page illustrations on this spread help the reader to understand more fully the negative impact of the banning of the dark. Use the illustrations to explore some of the negative effects of having no darkness. *How has Emily chosen to show the reader just how tired the people are? How do you feel looking at these two images? How has she used the yellow wash? How does she use white space on the page? What can we infer about this society from details such as the ‘Light is good’ poster on the classroom wall, the ‘why the dark is bad...’ lesson taking place, and the implementation of ‘light inspectors’? Why do you think the plants of by the window are wilting?*

Work with the class to compile a list of the potential effects of it being light all of the time.

Using this list of shared ideas, give children time and resources to create their own text and illustration spread in which they communicate the consequences of never-ending daylight. They might choose to mimic and adapt the sentence structure that Emily Haworth-Booth uses on this page (“With the lights on all the time, \_\_\_\_\_”) or create their own. *How will they demonstrate to the reader/viewer just how devastating the ongoing artificial sunlight is?*

### Session 4: How illustration can demonstrate movement and action

Read aloud the next 3 spreads, pausing briefly to respond to the illustrations and story. *What can we tell from the gaze and body language of the characters in the king’s bedroom? How does Emily Haworth-Booth place the text on the page to help the reader, such as the positioning of “said the advisors” between the two speech bubbles?*

After reading the third illustration (up to “...The King sighed.”), discuss how the colour palette and layout of compare with the very first spread that they discussed. *How does this reflect our predictions about the colour palette of the book when they started reading? How do they feel looking at the expanse of empty space in the illustration? Are they watching the sky from the point of view of any of the characters? Whose eyes are they seeing the story through? Does it ever change?*

*How might the king and his dog be feeling? How does the illustrator communicate that feeling through the illustration? Would our response have been different if she had used a different composition? She might*



have drawn a horizon line across the page with the town below and a crowd of people watching. *Why do you think she might have chosen to keep the space so empty? What words would you use to describe the way in which the king is depicted on this page? Why is this important?*

Share the next illustration without revealing the text. In twos or threes, ask them to discuss what they think is shown in this illustration. What do they notice?

Read aloud the text. *Does that change their idea of what is being depicted?* Explore how Emily Haworth-Booth depicts the passing of time by repeating the image of the street six times. *Are there any other features to the illustration which helps the reader to understand what is happening?* The children might draw attention to the appearance of the Light Inspectors at the start and then again at the end of the street as well as to the gradual accumulation of houses with the lights switched off and the darkening of the yellow wash. *How does this make them feel as they read? Do we feel the propulsion and pace of the storytelling? How would this spread have felt different if she had the same text but only drawn one row of houses, some with lights off and the inspectors knocking on the door?* Consider whether there have been other illustrations in the text that have depicted time passing using similar or different techniques.

At the end of this session, read aloud the next page upon which the Light Inspectors are panicking. Discuss how Emily Haworth-Booth shows us the panic through action, facial expressions, body language and background details. The action on the page is in the middle of happening, you can imagine the movement (in the way that it treats time passing, it can also be compared to the streets on the previous illustration too), the walkie-talkie is in mid-air, the coffee is in the process of being spilt, etc.

During an art session, children could practise gestural drawing inspired by Emily Haworth-Booth's depiction of the Light Inspectors, sketching bodies in action. Look at photos of sports people (gymnasts, dancers, footballers, baseball or tennis players, etc.) and observe the positions of their arms, legs and torsos. Demonstrate using loose oval shapes or even scribbles to very quickly and loosely sketch out the body positions that you have observed. Use soft drawing pencils, coloured pencils (or even drawing pens to avoid the temptation to rub out and correct any lines) on art paper. Encourage the children to work as quickly as possible, scribbling down the positions of the head, torso, arms and legs without worrying about adding any details or making mistakes. Given just a couple of minutes to sketch out each pose, they might fill a sketchbook page with 6 or 7 different poses to compare. For the teacher's information, there are videos and guidance online which suggest several different strategies for beginning a gesture study or gesture drawing.

### **Session 5: How illustration can play with reader perspective and expectation**

Share the next double page spread without revealing the text (the illustration which features the people climbing the walls and the king on the ramparts). *What do they notice in this spread? What is happening in the story? How do the illustrations tell the story of this moment? How do they show time passing?* If necessary, draw the children's attention to the way in which the illustrator shows time passing in this single image. Note how the ramparts continue seamlessly from the left hand page to the right, as does the line of



the artificial sun, but the left hand page is 'before' they throw the switch, the right hand page is 'after'. *How is the suddenness of the darkness appearing, as the switch is flicked, communicated in the layout of the page?* Compare this with the other spreads in which she shows time passing that we have explored in previous sessions (the king growing up and the lights going out along the street).

Read the text which accompanies this spread – including the positioning of the text on the page ('Look' in the bottom right hand corner, tempting us to turn the page and reveal what the king can see). Do the class have any predictions about what they expect when they turn the page?

After turning the page and revealing the illustration and the text, discuss the impact of this almost wordless spread. Compare this with other points during the book when little text has been used, such as when the king looks out over the empty artificially-lit sky. *How does this compare? What is the impact of the sudden use of a wide variety of colours? How does it make you feel? Why might the author/illustrator want to inspire those feelings in the reader?* Compare this with their predictions of the colour palette throughout the book and the decision by Emily Haworth-Booth to use only a very limited palette up until this point. *Would it have been as effective if the fireworks were all depicted in only shades of yellow and white? Would it have been as effective if a full palette of different colours had been used in the illustrations throughout?*

Unpick some of the techniques and materials that the illustrator may have used to create this scene and explore how these might be replicated in the classroom, perhaps using chalk or pastels on black paper or card, overlaying coloured lines on white lines, capturing the energy of the explosions as well as the drifting sparks. Look at the different shapes, breadth and length of lines which she uses. *How does she create the impression of movement and excitement in this illustration?*

Reread the book from the start and on to the end. Finish by discussing the book as a whole, comparing the depictions of the king at the start of the story with how he appears at the end (look, for example, at his facial expressions in the final two illustrations as he watches the fireworks with the people and when he sleeps with his night light). *How has he changed? How are these changes communicated through the illustration?*

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](http://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](http://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading)