

VISUAL LITERACY NOTES

2017 Kate Greenaway Medal shortlist

Title: **The Journey**
Illustrator: **Francesca Sanna**
Publisher: **Flying Eye**



First look

- Share the book with all the shadowers. Take time to look closely at the pictures but do not spend too much time talking about them yet.
- Look through the book together again, this time discussing at all the images, decorations and other graphic details. Ask them to point out to each other anything that strikes them as interesting about the artwork in terms of colours, shapes, lines and spaces.
- You may like to look at the Amnesty International website to find the excellent downloadable materials to help explore *The Journey*.
- Chat in pairs or as a group about whether they enjoyed about the book. What did they like or dislike and why? Talk about all the visual aspects of the book i.e. end papers, font choices, title page and layout. How do these 'extras' contribute to the overall impact of the book?

Look again

What does the narrator know?

The story is being told by one of the children so, if we only had the printed word, we can only know what the children know. For example, find these two pictures in the book:



What do the pictures tell us that the children do not know? Are there other things that the children can't tell us but the pictures do?

Colours

At the opening of the story, the sea is black. Does it symbolise the encroaching fear that the family are experiencing? When you turn the page the black darkness of war is taking over, reaching across the city with claw-like hands. How has the loss of father been illustrated?

Visual conventions

The conversation between the mother and her friend is happening in this picture. The usual way to show speech in a picture is to use a speech bubble. What is the friend saying?



Find this picture in the book.

What thoughts are the children having as their mother shares a book with them? How can we tell?

The family's hopes and fears are overwhelming. How do the images reflect this?



Clue 1: When the two red bearded guards are looking for them, why are the guards in the pictures so much bigger than the family? Are they really that much bigger or is it the fear that is so huge?

Clue 2: When the little boat is on the sea, we see what is beneath the boat. Can you see things there that represent fears?

Right from the start of the book, starting with the picture on the front cover, the images demonstrate the confusion and complications of the family's situation. Once you have read the whole book a couple of times, see how many parts of the story are represented on the front cover.

Empathy

Can we understand what the characters in this story must be feeling? It will depend on what we know whether when we have an emotional response to the book. One of the scariest bits is when the family get into a small boat. Thinking of them adrift on the sea is terrifying. Why do you think the people on the boat tell each other frightening stories? Are there any parts of the book that make you feel concerned for the family?

What is the significance of the page of birds at the end of the book?



Interpreting the texts

It is always beneficial, when studying a book, to use tasks which require imaginative response to encourage students to engage fully with the text. The following suggestions may help the group of young readers to become engaged in the book.

Writing

Imagine you have been told that you will be leaving home and can only take one small suitcase. What would you pack? Make a list.

Look at the pile of suitcases at the start of their journey. How many cases do they take on the boat?

Write a short description or a poem about how the members of the family felt at different stages of the story. You can make up your own starter lines but here are some if you can't think of anything:

1. My father has gone 2. We are going on a journey 3. The guards are scary 4. I can see land

Artwork

The family travel in at least seven different ways. Fold a piece of A4 paper into four rectangular sections. Choose four ways of travelling and draw one of your chosen ways of travelling in each.

Research & IT

Search CBBC News Round via a search engine to find appropriate videos for younger readers about children who have had to flee their own country because of war.



The CILIP Carnegie
& Kate Greenaway
Children's Book
Awards