

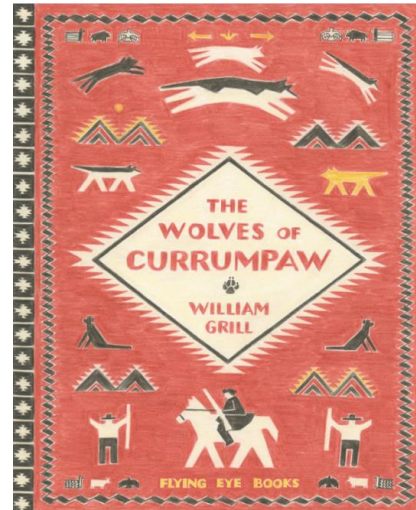
VISUAL LITERACY NOTES

2017 Kate Greenaway Medal shortlist

Title: **The Wolves of Currumpaw**
Illustrator and author: **William Grill**
Publisher: **Flying Eye Books**

First look

Ensure that all the shadowers have had a chance to look through *The Wolves of Currumpaw* before you discuss the book with them.



Remember the Greenaway is about 'outstanding artistic quality' so it is the images, decorations and other graphic details that are being judged – not the written text. Much of the tale is only told in images so readers need to follow them carefully. The tale of Old Lobo, the wolf king, is famous and it is this adventurous tale that Grill sets out to tell. Unfortunately, much of the content of the story (and, therefore, the illustration) is disturbing as it involves the slaughter of both human beings and animals.

Ask the shadowers to point out anything that strikes them as interesting about the artwork. Chat in pairs or as a group about whether they enjoyed *The Wolves of Currumpaw*. What did they like or dislike and why?

Look again

Grill uses pencil crayons to produce his work. Look at the limited range of colours that have been used in the illustrations. Why do you think he uses those particular colours?

At the beginning of the book, Grill uses just red and black but this changes on pages 9 & 10 when other colours – of the earth and of the sky – are introduced. It is at this point that we first meet Old Lobo. The colours remain muted throughout the book.

How does Grill achieve the sense of vast emptiness of the plains of SW America in his illustrations?



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Grill also uses a technique that helps to tell a story. It is similar to a comic strip but has no borders or speech bubbles. Can you write words to tell parts of the story on pages 30 & 34?



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?

Interpreting the texts

The following suggestions may help the group of shadowers to become engaged in the book. Encourage discussion and welcome diverse opinions.

Artwork

- Use pencil crayons or pastels with a limited range of colours to create your own pictures. Try doing a whole page that gives the sense of wide open space and big skies.
- Draw a sequence of about six small drawings to tell a story.

Research

Does it matter? A discussion for older students

At the beginning of the book, on pages 5 & 6, a sequence of twenty-four small scenes tells a devastating story of ethnic cleansing when the European settlers abused and drove out the Navajo communities (native Americans) from New Mexico. The reality of what happened at that time does not reflect well on the European settlers.

Visit www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/ for information on the 'long walk' of the Navajo peoples in 1864. Use the library, both print texts and technology to find out more about the mythology of the Wild West. Was it like the movies?

