

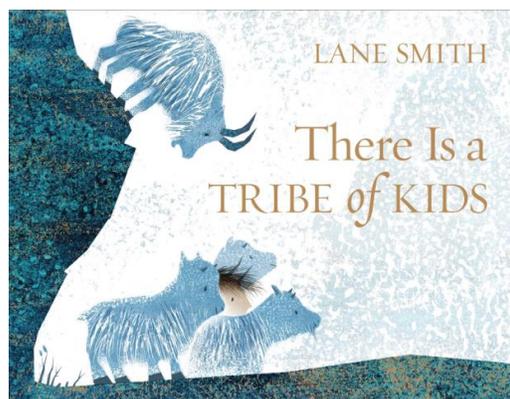
## VISUAL LITERACY NOTES

### 2017 Kate Greenaway Medal shortlist

Title: **There is a Tribe of Kids**

Illustrator: **Lane Smith**

Publisher: **Too Hoots**



### First look

- Present the book to the whole group by going through each page with little comment, but looking closely at the pictures.
- Look through the book together at all the images, decorations and other graphic details. Ask the shadowers to point out to each other anything that strikes them as interesting about the artwork.
- **Lane Smith** is a very popular illustrator of children's books. He uses many methods of presenting his work. We are told at the bottom of the imprint page at the beginning of the book that the illustrations in *There Is a Tribe of Kids* were 'painted in oils and sprayed with an acrylic varnish to create various mottled textures'. He also uses pencil crayons and collage.
- Chat in pairs or as a group about whether they enjoyed *There is a tribe of kids*. What did they like or dislike and why?

### Look again

- Look at the front cover. The graphic text shows us a child (gender unknown – what do you think?) huddling together with some kids (baby mountain goats) . Above them is an adult goat: what is going to happen?
- The author's name and title of the book are written in gold on the cover. There are also speckles of gold in the rocks and on the ground. What does gold usually imply when used to decorate books?
- If you have the hardback version, take off the dust jacket and see the differences on the front of the hard cover. Can you think of a reason for the writing not being there?
- When the 'story' starts, what happens to the kids? Is their mother calling them? Follow the child through the book. On each double page spread he/she meets different creatures and natural things such as rocks and flowers. The child tries to join each set by imitating the behaviour of each group but, despite efforts to fit in, is always left alone by the end of the page. As we go through the book we can see that the child is seeking a sense of belonging.
- Can you see what the child is feeling by looking at the facial expressions in the pictures?
- When does the child look: happy, frightened, disappointed, lonely, upset, confused, contented?
- At last the child finds a trail of shells and at the end of it he/she finds ... another tribe of kids ... but this time the child belongs.



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?



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Look closely at the picture of the tribe of kids at the end of the story.

Can you see all sorts of children? Are there children of different:

- ages – from babies to teens
- gender – boys and girls
- ethnic groups



Are they playing, dancing, running and dressing up as most children do? Is this the group to which the child belongs? Look at the last two pages to see if the child fits into this group. How can you tell?

## 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.

### Artwork

Choose one of the pictures to copy. A quick way to get a mottled effect is to draw and colour in with wax crayon or waterproof pastels then to do a wash of coloured ink or watercolour paint over the top of the finished drawing.

### Calligraphy

Smith has used a mixture of upper and lower case letters for all the writing – as in the title:

***There Is a TRIBE of KIDS*** and on each double page spread: ***There was a SMACK of JELLYFISH.***

As there is not a story being told in words on the pages, what effect does this calligraphy have?

### Research

Use your library and technology to help look things up. Look up the word **kid** in a dictionary. How many meanings can you find? If you have an etymological dictionary, you may be able to find out the origins of the word **kid**.

Words that name a group of items, creatures or people are called **collective nouns**. List the collective nouns for each set of creatures up to the *FLIGHT of BUTTERFLIES*. Look up the collective nouns on your list to see if the ones that Smith uses are authentic.

***“There Was a Tribe of Kids”*** on the first page; ***“There Is a Tribe of Kids”*** on the last. What is the significance to the change of verb tense in the title?



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