

Picturebook lesson series

Still a Family

Gail Ellis and Tatia Gruenbaum



Still a Family

BRENDA REEVES STURGIS

pictures by
JO-SHIN LEE

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Teaching Notes

Part A	Picturebook information	Part A provides general information about the picturebook such as the publisher's synopsis and background about the authors / illustrators and the teacher is invited to share selected information with their pupils as appropriate.
Part B	Lesson information	Part B provides lesson information about age/level suitability, lesson objectives, cross-curricular links and links to children's rights and world-event days. Part B also includes an A-Z or vocabulary for each picturebook. Teachers are encouraged to share the lesson objectives with their pupils to make learning explicit and purposeful.
Part C	Lesson plan 1: Exploring the front and back covers. 2: Meet the author. 3: Listen, enjoy and respond. 4: Eliciting learners' voices. 5: My reflection activity.	Part C comprises 5 key steps and pupils are invited to participate by responding to questions with their own personal interpretations and opinions. To add a metacognitive dimension in order to make learning visible, pupils are encouraged to systematically reflect on, review and evaluate their own learning and decide on their personal action. This reflection also inspires pupils to transfer their newly acquired awareness and knowledge from inside the classroom to informed involvement with the world outside the classroom.
Part D	Extra activities	Part D provides suggestions for supplementary activities and links to additional resources. Pupils are invited to choose from the extra activities according to their needs and interests.



The lessons are informed by a story-based methodology (Ellis and Brewster, 1991; 2014) and a story-based e-methodology for video picturebook read-alouds (Ellis and Gruenbaum, 2023). In addition, the lessons are embedded in a children's rights perspective (Ellis, 2019; 2021) and comprises three categories: **Protection**, **Provision**, and **Participation**. This threefold categorisation is referred to as the '3Ps' which we have applied to our picturebook-based English Language Teaching (ELT) lessons to create a pedagogical framework (see below). This framework enables teachers to create a relationship of shared control with their pupils and allows pupils to exercise their agency and participate fully in their own learning. Our picturebook choices link to six Articles from the UNCRC as well as Article 12 which is given prominence throughout the lessons. This article promotes listening to children's views and opinions and taking them into account. The following table offers an outline of the '3Ps' in picturebook-based ELT:

Protection	Provision	Participation
<p>Teachers set up a safe space in a positive, inclusive classroom climate where all pupils are respected and learn with and from each other. Pupils may encounter social issues for the first time in the classroom which provides a window into the lives of people different to their own or may offer children who are experiencing difficult circumstances the opportunity to understand that they are not alone. It is especially important, therefore, to ensure a learning environment conducive to exploring such topics and to encourage empathy and understanding.</p>	<p>The lesson sets provide a structured plan and clear guidelines for pupils to engage with an authentic piece of children's literature, a picturebook, in which both the words and the pictures create meaning. Individual differences in primary and lower secondary pupils are especially marked, but picturebooks can be interpreted on many levels and thus satisfy pupils of different ages and at different points in their English language learning. The lessons provide activities which teachers can select according to the age, language level and interests of the pupils in their classes and provide pupils with stimulating activities to develop their critical thinking as well as their English language skills.</p>	<p>The lessons are structured around four parts which facilitate pupils' agency and active participation. The activities offer opportunities for decision-making and respect pupils' right to an opinion. In return, listening to pupils' views, offers teachers the opportunity to discover pupils' feelings and lived experiences.</p>



As previously mentioned, each picturebook is linked to Articles from the UNCRC in order to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the convention and of their rights and responsibilities.

Each lesson provides a children's rights activity which invites pupils to consider potential action they can take.

We suggest you provide pupils with a child-friendly copy of the UNCRC in English or their own language(s). The themes represented in our picturebooks also link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "No poverty" (#1) and "Zero Hunger" (#2).

We would like to point out that it is not necessary to complete every activity and / or include all the vocabulary and expressions.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt the lessons to suit the needs of their learners. However, we recommend completing the book-cover-based activities to encourage pupils to make predictions about the story from the title and cover illustrations, and to appreciate the picturebook's different features.

Learning objectives

The general learning objectives for each lesson are to empower pupils to:

- engage with social issues as presented through picturebooks to broaden their outlook of marginalised groups in society.
- develop English language skills.
- develop critical thinking.
- raise awareness and understanding of the UNCRC and of their rights and responsibilities.
- understand the importance of individuals and the community showing kindness.
- make responsible decisions when taking action in order to make a difference.



Bias-free language recommendations

In keeping with the category of ‘protection’, we advise teachers to adopt and encourage bias-free language (see glossary below, adapted from Bias-Free Language APA) in the classroom when exploring the social issues presented through the picturebook.

Offensive terms	Person-respecting terms
Poor	People with an income just above or below the poverty line.
Homeless	People experiencing homelessness (ie not having stable, safe and adequate housing, nor the means and ability of obtaining it).
Ghetto / inner-city child	People living in subsidised housing in a city area.
Welfare reliant	People who receive benefits and financial support from the state.
School drop-out	People who did not complete a full education.
Undocumented	People who are living and working without official papers (passports, ID cards, visa, etc.).
Illegal immigrant	People who have entered a country without official papers.



Part A: Picturebook information

Title	Still a Family. A story about homelessness	Publisher	Albert Whitman & Co
Author	Brenda Reeves Sturgis	ISBN	9780807577073
Illustrator	Jo-Shin Lee	Date of publication	2017

Illustrative style	A combination of crayon and watercolours are used to create colourful, child-like illustrations throughout this story.
Publisher's synopsis	A little girl and her parents have lost their home and must live in a homeless shelter. Even worse, due to a common shelter policy, her dad must live in a men's shelter, separated from her and her mom. Despite these circumstances, the family still finds time to be together. They meet at the park to play hide-and-seek, slide on slides, and pet puppies. While the young girl wishes for better days when her family is together again under a roof of their very own, she continues to remind herself that they're still a family even in times of separation.
Awards & Nominations	2017 Named a "Top 100 Book" by the NYC Public Library 2017 Named a "Top 20 Book" by A Mighty Girl
Trailer / Film / Look-Inside	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uewvnoSaPII&t=2s



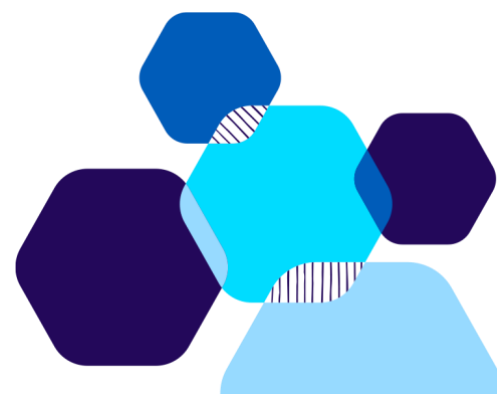
Part B: Overview (general)

Level	Primary
Lesson Objectives	<p>The general learning objectives for each lesson are to empower pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engage with social issues as presented through picturebooks to broaden their outlook of marginalised groups in society• develop English language skills• develop critical thinking• raise awareness and understanding of the UNCRC and of their rights and responsibilities• understand the importance of individuals and the community showing kindness• make responsible decisions when taking action in order to make a difference.
Cross-curricular links	Social studies, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, Global citizenship
Children's Rights	9. Keeping families together 26. Social and economic help 27. Food, clothing, a safe home
World event days	10 October: World Homeless Day 17 October: Int. End Poverty Day

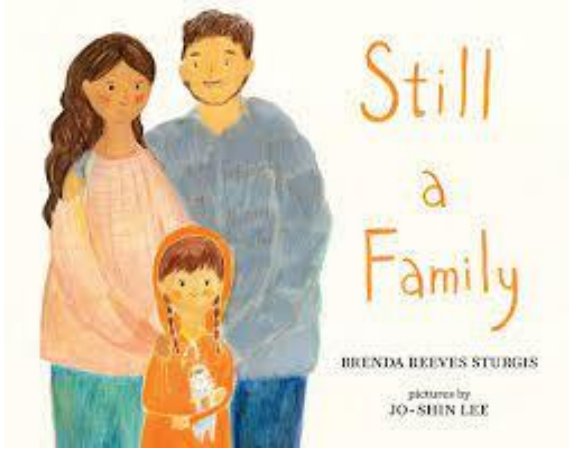
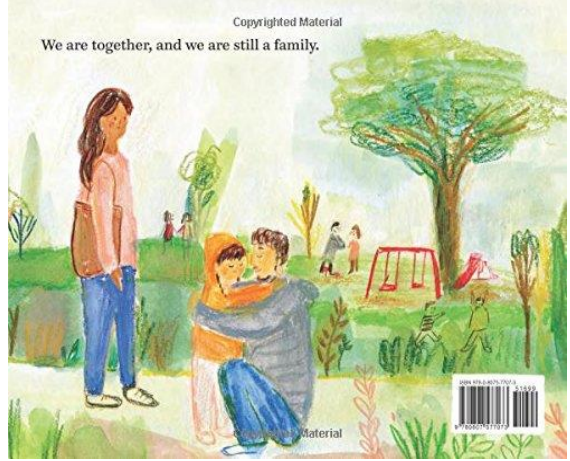


Part B: A-Z Vocabulary & Expressions

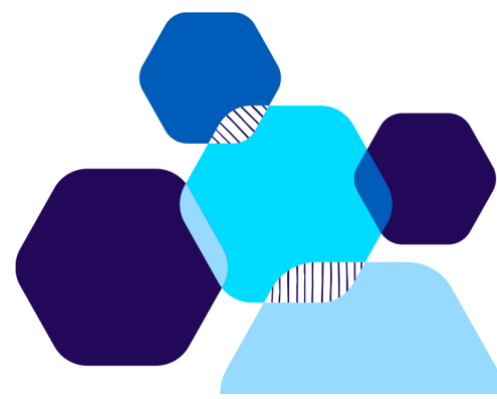
a		j		s	safety to scrimp and save to share shelter to live in a shelter sidewalk sleeping bag to sniff to snore snug soup kitchen squished subway
b	beef-stew a / my belly grumbles bunk beds blanket to blow kisses braids to braid	k		t	to take turns tarp tattered to toss and turn trash can to try your / my best to tuck somebody in
c	to comb comfy = comfortable cot cozy to cuddle	l	lean-to to stand in a long line to love you to the moon and back	u	
d		m	to make a wish meal men's shelter to miss (place / person) meal	v	
e		n		w	women's shelter
f	to be a family to fall asleep fort To build / make a fort	o	outdoor		
g		p	pavement to pet puppy, puppies pillow		
h	to play hide-and-seek to honk	q			
i		r	to roar		



Part C | Step 1: Exploring the front and back covers

Front cover (FC)	Back cover (BC)
	

Describe and predict	FC: Who do you see? How do you think they may be related?
Notice and predict	FC: Where are their hands and arms? Can you see a shape in the way they are holding each other
Describe and predict	BC: Where do you think the three people are? Describe the scene.
Predict	BC: How do the people look? Why are they hugging?
Personalise	How many family members do you have?
Activate your vocabulary	Together with your classmates, think of words related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bedrooms • toys
Translanguage	What is the word for 'hug' in your language? Is it a short word like in English?



Part C: Step 2 – Meet the author: Brenda Reeves Sturgis

Watch the Video: <https://bit.ly/3UX8ec2>

Part C: Step 3 – Listen, enjoy and respond

1. Where do the girl, her doll, her mum and father live? Do they live together?
2. Does she have her own bedroom?
3. What kind of noises can the girl hear when sleeping? Is it difficult for her to fall asleep?
4. What does the girl miss?
5. What does the girl do while the older children are at school?
6. Where does the girl go with her mum? Why do they go there? What do they do?
7. Do you think her parents have a job?
8. What do her parents do during the day?
9. What do they do with their money?
10. Where does the girl and her family eat? How does the girl feel when goes to eat? Who does the girl share her food with? What is her favourite food? Are there any other children in the queue?
11. How long has the family been in a shelter?
12. Why does the girl think they are 'still a family'? How do they remain together?

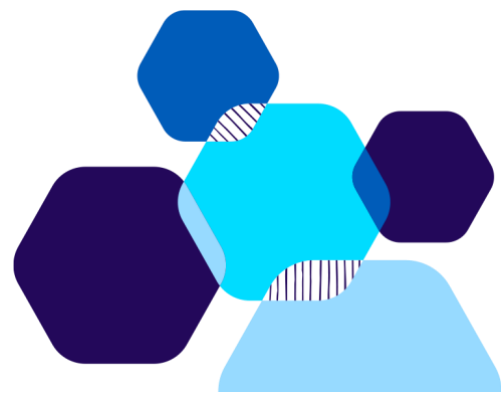


Part C | Step 4 – Eliciting children’s voices

1. How did ‘Still a Family’ (the words and pictures) make you feel? Why?
2. What would you say to the girl if you met her? What would your message be?
3. Who is telling the story? How would you continue the story?
4. Do you have a favourite toy?
5. Have you ever had to stand in a queue for a long time? What was it for and how did you feel?
6. How do the colours in the pictures contribute to the story?

Children’s rights activity:

How can we help families who need a permanent place to live?

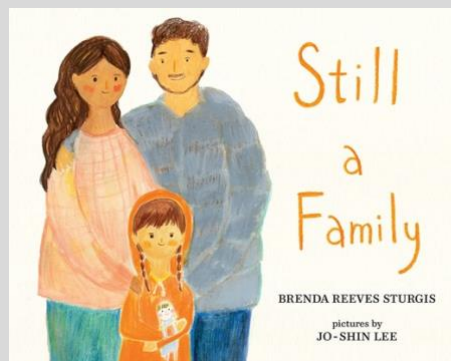


Part C | Step 5 – My reflection activity

Part C: My Reflection Activity

Still a Family

by Brenda Reeves Sturgis, illustrated by Jo-Shin Lee
Albert Whitman & Co 2017



Personal response

- What did I enjoy most about 'Still a Family'?
- What is my favourite illustration?
- How did 'Still a Family' make me feel?
- Write down 5 new words or expressions I have learnt from 'Still a Family'.

Personal evaluation

Colour the jars to show how well I worked:
5 jars = I am pleased with my effort and progress.
3 jars = I am quite pleased with my effort and progress but could do better.
1 jar = I need to concentrate and work harder.



Personal action

- What personal action am I going to take to help families who need a stable home?
- What personal action am I going to take to improve my English language learning?



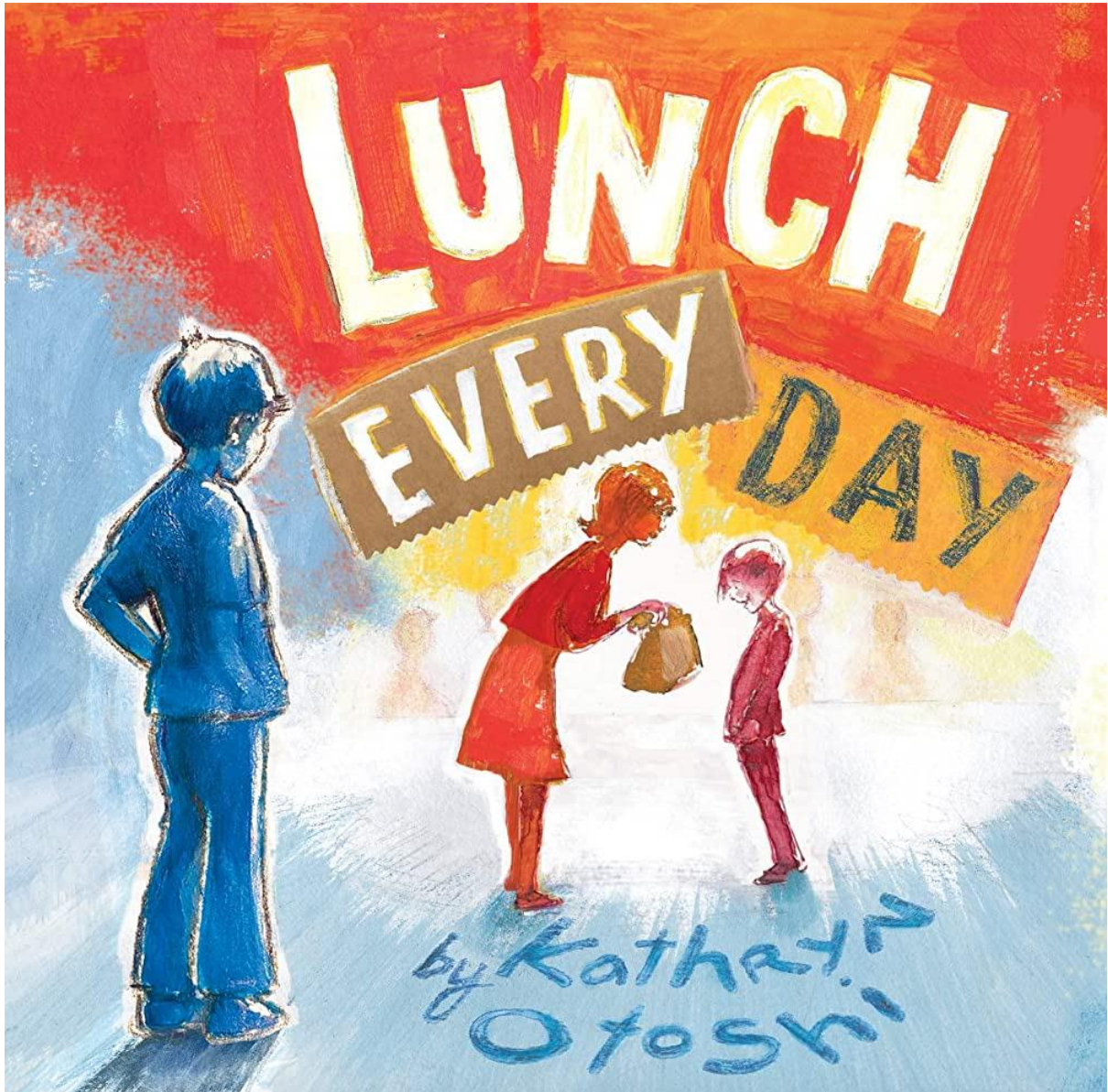
Part D: Extra Activities

1. At the end of the story, there is a candle to celebrate the child's birthday. The candle is often considered to represent hope. Do you know any expressions of hope: words, signs, symbols or colours? Perhaps you know what expresses hope in your language(s) and culture (s)?
2. Do you remember your ideas about how the story continues? Draw: What happens next? Give the parents and the girl names. Fold a piece of paper in four and in each of the four boxes, draw how you think their life continues.



Lesson 3

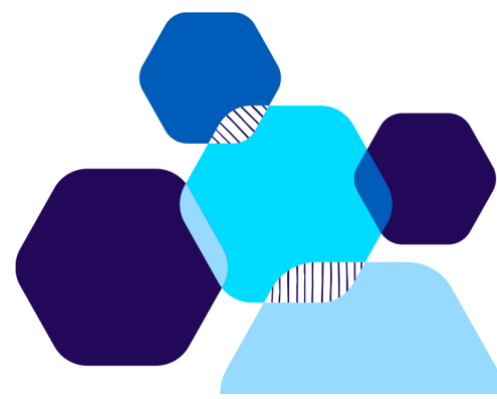
Lunch Every Day



Part A: Picturebook information

Title	Lunch Every Day	Publisher	Ko Kids Books
Author	Kathryn Otoshi	ISBN	9781734348200
Illustrator	Kathryn Otoshi	Date of publication	2021

Illustrative style	A combination of acrylic paints, watercolours, and coloured pencils used to create emotionally explicit, bold colour-blocks (orange / red versus blue / purple) and sketch-like illustrations.
Publisher's synopsis	Every day Jimmy takes 'Skinny Kid's' lunch at school. No way will he be seen in that FREE LUNCH line. When he's sent to the office, Jimmy shrugs, "Whatever." Until a surprising act of kindness stops him in his tracks. For a split second a door cracks open into Jimmy's heart. Maybe he'll just kick that door wide open.
Awards & Nominations	
Behind the book	Interview with Kathryn Otoshi about her book 'Lunch Every Day'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BP8faKdpXZY



Part B: Overview (general)

Level	Primary or Lower Secondary
Lesson Objectives	<p>The general learning objectives for each lesson are to empower pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engage with social issues as presented through picturebooks to broaden their outlook of marginalised groups in society• develop English language skills• develop critical thinking• raise awareness and understanding of the UNCRC and of their rights and responsibilities• understand the importance of individuals and the community showing kindness• make responsible decisions when taking action in order to make a difference.
Cross-curricular links	Social studies, Global citizenship, Personal, Social and Economic Education
Children's Rights	19. Protection from violence 24. Health, water, food, environment 26. Social and economic help
World event days	3 November: International day against violence and bullying at school 13 November: World Kindness Day



Part B: A-Z Vocabulary & Expressions

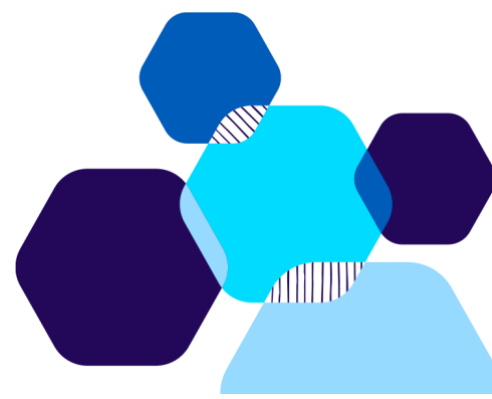
a	to be / feel alone ally to be / have an ally aggressive aggressor to be / feel angry to attack	j		s	to shove to shrug to shrug your shoulders skinny to slump down to stand in line
b	to be a bully bullying to bully to be a bystander	k	to kick air to be kind kindness	t	to tap target tattletale to topple trust
c	cuz = because	l	to look up to get lost to eat / have / make lunch	u	
d	doorway	m	mad to march up to somebody	v	
e	to end up in (+place)	n	name-calling nothing (no) need for	w	a while
f	fear	o			
g	gonna = going to	p			
h		q	to queue		
i	to be invited to invitation	r	to roar		



Part C | Step 1: Exploring the front and back covers

Front cover (FC)	Back cover (BC)
	

Describe and predict	FC: What do you see? What do you think is the relationship between the three people? Why do you think they are represented in different colours?
Personalise	How do the colours make you feel? Which is your favourite colour (block?) on the cover? Why?
Notice and predict	FC & BC: What differences can you see between the 'blue' boy on the front and back covers?
Predict	FC: What do you think is in the brown bag?
Predict	BC: What do you think the numbers on the brown bags represent?
Personalise	Where do you eat lunch at school? And what type of meals do you have?
Activate your vocabulary	Together with your classmates, think of words related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying (physical) • School common areas • Home/family
Translanguage	What is the word for 'lunch' in your language(s)?
Research	English Footballer Marcus Rashford is a famous campaigner for free school meals for children. Find out the reasons why and what kind of free lunch programmes exist for children in your country?

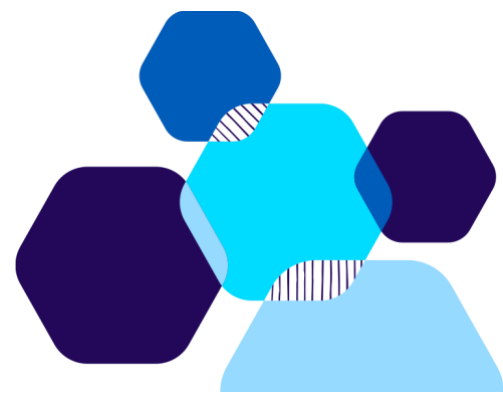


Part C: Step 2 – Meet the author: Kate Milner

Watch the Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWMCw3WgFKw>

Part C: Step 3 – Listen, enjoy and respond

1. What does Jimmy think when he sees the boy sitting at the table?
2. What does he call the boy? Why?
3. Why does he take the bag from the boy? What is inside the bag?
4. Why does Jimmy not want to queue for his lunch?
5. Does Jimmy have problems at home? If so, which ones? What does the graffiti say?
6. Why does Jimmy have to see the school principal? What does the school principal tell Jimmy? What is Jimmy's reaction?
7. Does Jimmy change during the next month?
8. What kind of invitation does the class suddenly receive? Who is it from?
9. What does Jimmy first decide to do? What do his classmates decide to do? Is the class excited? What do they talk about?
10. How does Jimmy feel when he arrives at the party and sees children holding presents?
11. Does Jimmy join the children? Where does he go? Does he get into trouble? Is he worried?
12. How does the mother behave towards Jimmy? What does the mother offer Jimmy? What is Jimmy's first reaction? Does he want to accept her offer? Why? Why not?
13. How did the mother help Jimmy? What change did it make to his life? Did Jimmy change his behaviour?
14. What does he call the boy? Why?
15. Why does he take the bag from the boy? What is inside the bag?



Part C | Step 4 – Eliciting children’s voices

1. How did ‘No Lunch Today’ (the words, the pictures and the colour blocks) make you feel? Why?
2. What do you think are the main messages in ‘No Lunch Today’?
3. Who is telling the story? How would you continue the story?
4. Has ‘No Lunch Today’ inspired you to make any changes at your school? If yes, what?
5. What would you do if you saw a classmate being bullied?
6. How does the print (capital letters, hand lettering, typeface, graffiti) used in ‘No Lunch Today’ contribute to the story? Why do you think Kathryn Otoshi blurs the children’s faces?

Children’s rights activity:

How can children who have no lunch at school be provided for in a way that is inclusive?

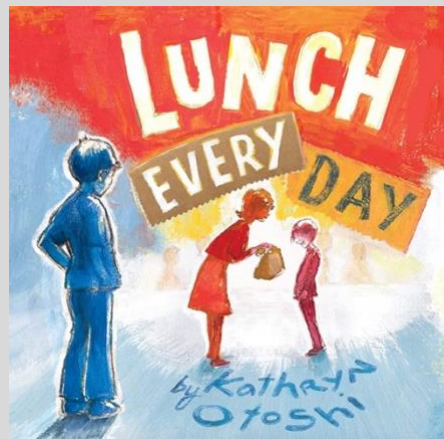
Part C | Step 5 – My reflection activity

Part C: My Reflection Activity


Lunch Every Day

By Kathryn Otoshi

KO Books 2021



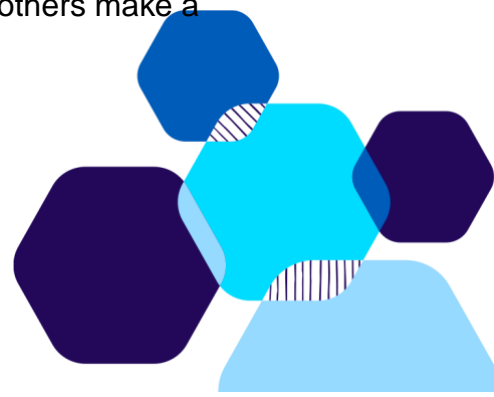
Personal response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I enjoy most about 'Lunch Every Day'? • What is my favourite illustration? • How did 'Lunch Every Day' make me feel? • Write down 5 new words or expressions I have learnt from 'Lunch Every Day'.
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Personal evaluation	<p>Colour the jars to show how well I worked:</p> <p>5 jars = I am pleased with my effort and progress.</p> <p>3 jars = I am quite pleased with my effort and progress but could do better.</p> <p>1 jar = I need to concentrate and work harder.</p>	
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Personal action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What personal action am I going to take to encourage kindness and inclusion at my school? • What personal action am I going to take to improve my English language learning?
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Part D: Extra Activities

1. Be a journalist: Read Jimmy's story at the back of the book. Together with a friend, make a list of 5 questions you would like to ask him.
2. It is difficult to stand up alone against bullies and become an ally for children who are being bullied. How can you become an ally and together with others make a



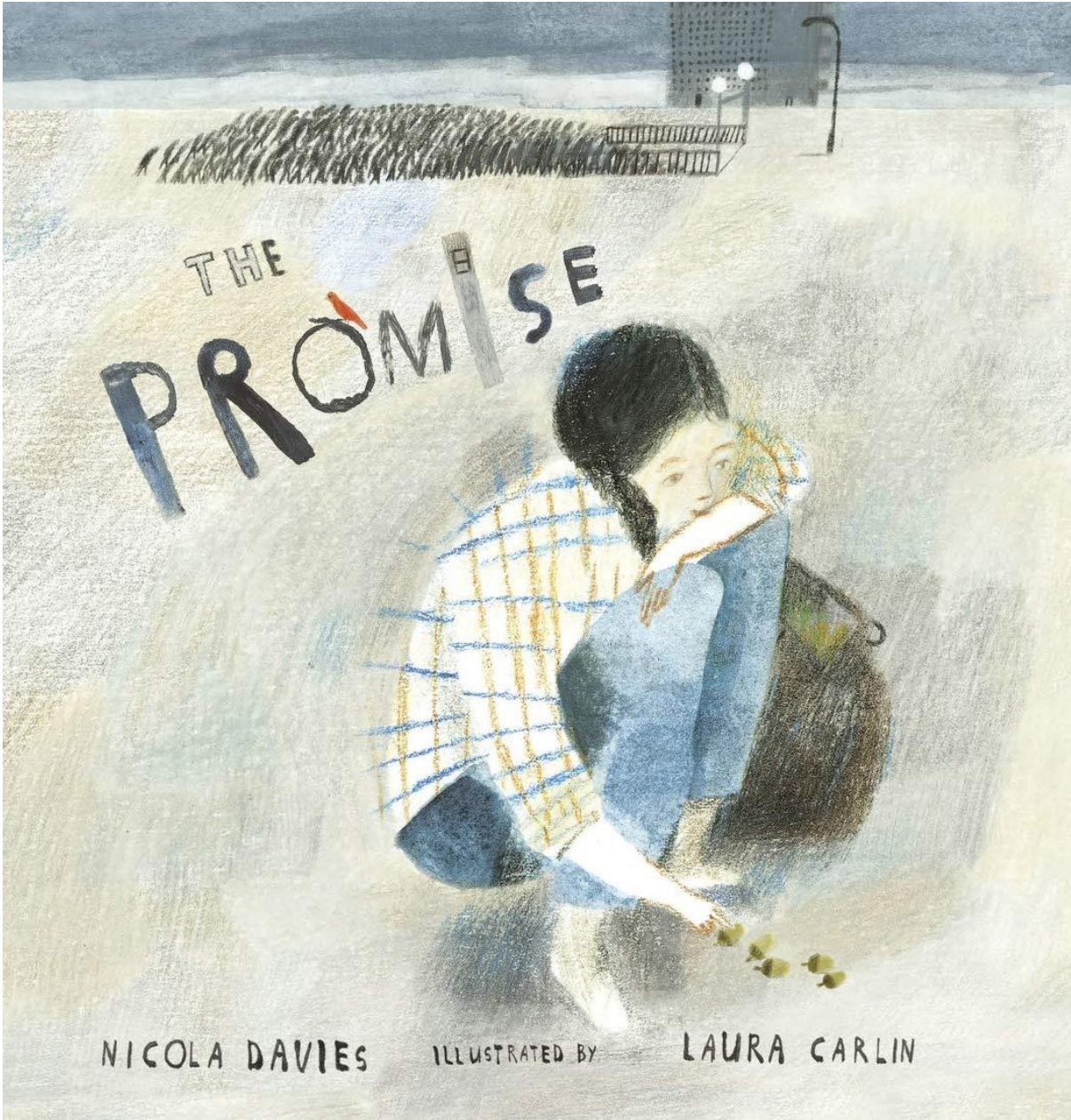
difference? Make a list of 5 tips. Check the US organization 'Bikers against Bullies' perhaps it will give you some ideas.

Video: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/04/us/bikers-escort-bullied-kid-to-school-trnd/index.html>

Lesson 4

The Promise





Part A: Picturebook information

Title	The Promise	Publisher	Candlewick Press
Author	Nicola Davies	ISBN	9780763693039
Illustrator	Laura Carlin	Date of publication	2013

Illustrative style	A gradual shift from black, white and grey tones of the cold, dark city to bright colours representing growth and nature. The use of colour communicates the messages found in the words and conveys the importance of our relationship with nature. A combination of watercolour, pastel and crayon.
Publisher's synopsis	On a mean street in a mean, broken city, a young girl tries to snatch an old woman's bag. But the frail old woman says the thief can't have it without giving something in return: the promise. It is the beginning of a journey that will change the girl's life — and a chance to change the world, for good.
Awards & Nominations	Winner of the 2014 English Association Picture Book award for best fiction. Green Earth Book Award 2015
Behind the book	Laura Carlin talks about illustrating 'The Promise' by Nicola Davies. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HjRgG4M3P8 Nicola Davies discusses 'The Promise' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjtaB2ij2PQ



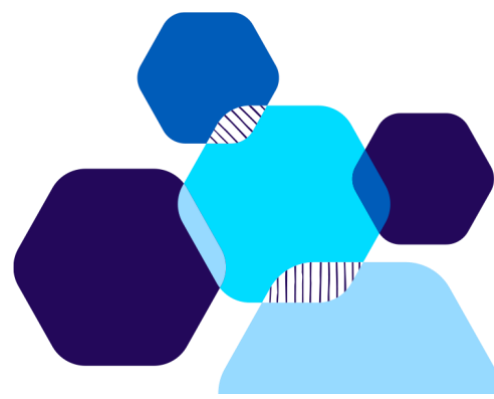
Part B: Overview (general)

Level	Secondary
Lesson Objectives	<p>The general learning objectives for each lesson are to empower pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engage with social issues as presented through picturebooks to broaden their outlook of marginalised groups in society• develop English language skills• develop critical thinking• raise awareness and understanding of the UNCRC and of their rights and responsibilities• understand the importance of individuals and the community showing kindness• make responsible decisions when taking action in order to make a difference.
Cross-curricular links	Science / environment, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education, Global citizenship
Children's Rights	19. Protection from violence 24. Health, water, food, environment 26. Social and economic help 27. Food, clothing, a safe home 40. Children who break the law
World event days	28 January: Global Community Engagement Day 12 August: World Planting Day

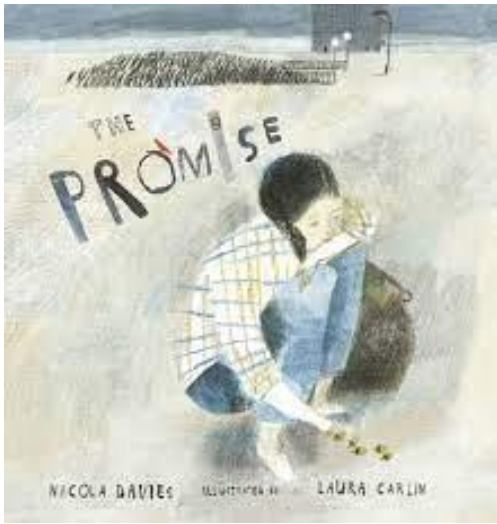


Part B: A-Z Vocabulary & Expressions

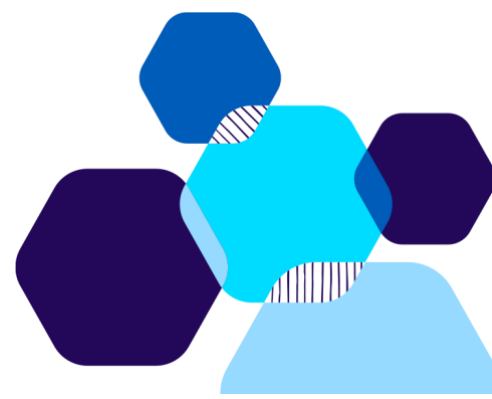
a	to be / feel abandoned acorn alley to be / feel alone	j		s	street to steal, stealing to snatch shoots sad
b	broken bargain	k		t	thief theft threat
c		l	to be / feel lonely	u	ugly to understand
d	dark	m	mean	v	victim
e	to end up in (+place)	n		w	
f	forest frail	o		x	
g		p	to plant to promise to make/keep a promise	y	youth
h	hard	q		z	
i		r			



Part C | Step 1: Exploring the front and back covers

Front cover (FC)	Back cover (BC)
	

Read, define and personalise	FC: Look at the title and define the word 'promise'. What does it mean to make and keep a promise? Have you made any promises recently?
Read and predict	BC: Read the blurb on the back cover. Why do you think a young person would steal from an old lady? What do you think could be in the bag the young thief snatches from the old lady?
Describe and predict	FC: Describe what you see on the front cover? The setting, the girl, the people, etc.
Notice and predict	FC: Do you think the girl on the front cover is the thief? What is in the bag the girl snatched from the old lady? How do you think the girl is feeling? What do you notice about the title? What do you think the red bird represents?
Predict	FC: What do you think the girl is going to do with the acorns? What do you think may change forever?
Activate your vocabulary	Together with your classmates, think of words related to a city under the following headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings • Transport
Translanguage	What is the word for 'acorn' in your language(s)?



Part C: Step 2 – Meet the author: Nicola Davies

Watch the Video: <https://vimeo.com/73026206>

Part C: Step 3 – Listen, enjoy and respond

1. How is the city described in 'The Promise'.
2. How are the people in the city described?
3. What do you think the old lady meant when she said, "If you promise to plant them, I'll let go?" Why didn't the girl care what she meant?
4. How did you feel when the girl discovered acorns in the bag? What was the promise the girl had made? Why do you think she felt her heart was changed?
5. Why do you think the girl felt lucky and rich? What do you think is meant by a 'leafy vision'?
6. Where did the girl begin planting the acorns?
7. Why did nothing change at first?
8. What did the people start doing once they saw the trees growing?
9. What impact did the growing trees have on the people and the city? How are they transformed?
10. What did the girl do next?
11. Why did the girl let the young thief steal her sack of acorns? How old do you think the girl is at the end of the story?

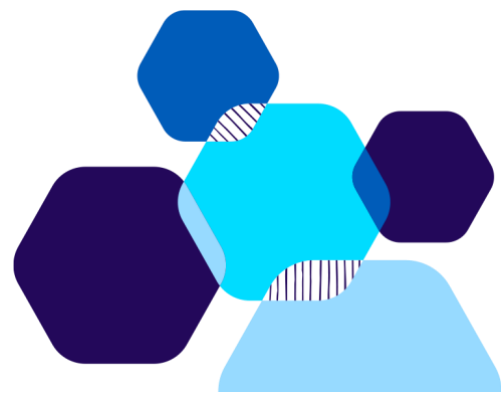


Part C | Step 4 – Eliciting children’s voices

1. How did ‘The Promise’ (the words and the pictures) make you feel? Why?
2. What do you think are the main messages in ‘The Promise’?
3. Who is telling the story? How would you continue the story?
4. Has ‘The Promise’ inspired you to take any action to improve the environment? If yes, how?
5. Tell your partner about a promise you would like to make and keep.
6. How do the illustrations contribute to the narrative? Think about colour, line, shape and space on each page.

Children’s rights activity:

How can you help protect children from youth crime?



Part C | Step 5 – My reflection activity

Part C: My Reflection Activity

The Promise

By Nicola Davies, illustrated by Laura Carlin

Walker Books 2013



Personal response

- What did I enjoy most about 'The Promise'?
- What is my favourite illustration?
- How did 'The Promise' make me feel?
- Write down 5 new words or expressions I have learnt from 'The Promise'.

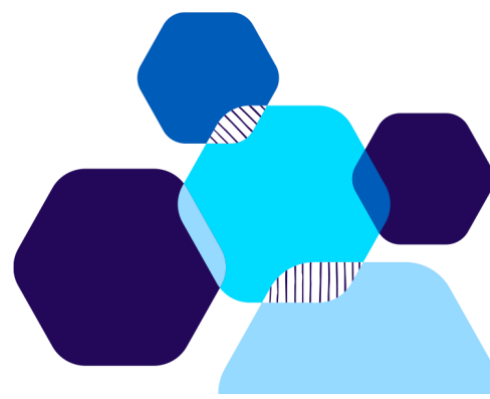
Personal evaluation

Colour the jars to show how well I worked:
 5 jars = I am pleased with my effort and progress.
 3 jars = I am quite pleased with my effort and progress but could do better.
 1 jar = I need to concentrate and work harder.



Personal action

- What personal action am I going to take to care for the environment?
- What personal action am I going to take to improve my English language learning?



Part D: Extra Activities

1. Research: Why are trees important to the environment? How old must an oak tree be to produce acorns? How many seeds are there in an acorn?
2. Planting Acorns: Watch the film to find out how to plant acorns:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-trSFUMZ-c>

