

SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2021 CILIP KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL

# HIKE

PETE OSWALD

## TEACHERS' NOTES



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards



PETE OSWALD

#1 New York Times Best-Selling Illustrator

9781406394351 • £7.99 • Paperback • 4 years+



WALKER  
BOOKS

*These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.*

## About the book:

### **Take to the trails for a celebration of nature – and a day spent with Dad.**

In the cool and quiet early light of morning, a father and child wake up. Today they're going on a hike. Follow the duo into the mountains as they witness the magic of the wilderness, overcome challenges, and play a small role in the survival of the forest. By the time they return home, they feel alive – and closer than ever – as they document their hike and take their place in family history.

In detail-rich panels and textured panoramas, Pete Oswald perfectly paces this nearly wordless adventure, allowing readers to pause for subtle wonders and marvel at the views. A touching tribute to the bond between father and child, with resonant themes for Earth Day, Hike is a breath of fresh air.

*These notes have been written with children aged 7–14 in mind. However, this is a sophisticated picture book which has scope for it to be interpreted in different ways with pupils of different ages.*

## 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, acrylic paints and a variety of brushes.

In order to engage fully with the layers of meaning and the details within the illustrations, it is advisable to ensure that you have access to a visualiser or similar device to enable you to share images from the text with the pupils on a large scale.

## Introducing the Text:

- Start by sharing the cover of the book, giving children time to fully explore the image and to consider their response, including anything that particularly interests them, how it makes them feel, and the expectations they might have for the story to follow. You might start simply by asking what they can see, encouraging them to look closely at each of the images within the letters, as well as the larger portrait of the two characters in action down the left hand side of the cover. They then can start to consider what these observations might tell them about the setting of the story and what they expect to have happen. As part of their response, they might also draw connections with their own lives if they have engaged in any of the activities depicted on the cover – or would like to. They may also draw upon their knowledge of nature and geography by positing potential locations in which the story might take place.
- Consider the choice of title and what the word 'hike' means to them. *Have they heard that word before? If so, where? Have they been on a hike before? Does this look like the sort of 'hike' they might like to go on? Why/why not?*
- The children might debate whether the child in the 5 pairings on the front cover is meant to be a boy or a girl,



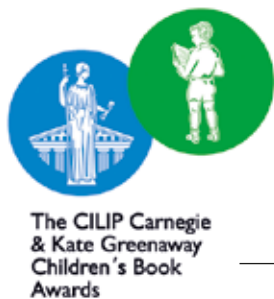
### **Hike Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

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a son or daughter. Acknowledge the ambiguity and discuss whether it could equally be one or the other and whether it would affect the narrative in anyway if that were the case. In interviews, Pete Oswald has discussed his choice to make the central child character gender neutral which children might like to discuss (<http://www.letstalkpicturebooks.com/2020/02/lets-talk-illustrators-130-pete-oswald.html>)

- Share and discuss the blurb and the full page illustration on the back cover. *How do they think the words on the back cover relate to the art work? How has the author portrayed the various elements at work in that sentence – **cool, quiet, light, morning**? What do you think the author/illustrator is trying to convey about these two people, this environment, and the story we're about to read?* They might imagine that they are standing, looking out at the landscape and the fauna depicted on the back cover. *What might they hear, smell, feel? What words would they use to describe that vista? Do they know what type of birds they might be? How could we find out? What does that tell us about potential locations for the story?*
- Next, open the book and turn to the front endpapers. *What do they notice? What does this drawing represent? And what might this indicate about the story to come?* They might point out various aspects of the landscape that are included on the map: river, lake, waterfall, path, mountainous terrain, forests, skyscrapers and high-rise buildings. They might predict what the circle and star markers might indicate, as well as some of the design choices – the grid, the colour, etc. Draw on their experience of either using maps themselves or of other books which feature maps at the start. *Does this map remind you of anything – from other books or films or comics, or from something you've seen in the real world?*
- On the next page, the book features a small portrait of the two characters surrounded by white space. *Why might this page have been included? How does it make us feel as a reader to see the characters like this before we start reading the story? What more do we notice about them on this spread? Who are you interested in?* Encourage the children to draw on all of the details that the illustrator has provided them with to develop early inference and insight into their relationship, their thoughts and their feelings. They might consider the facial expressions, body language, props, clothing, background, the direction in which they are looking, as well as the way in which the image is presented on the page.
- Finally, turn to share and discuss the title page. As with all of the illustrations so far, give the children plenty of time to closely explore and discuss what the illustrator has chosen to share on this spread and how we as readers respond to those choices. *What do they notice? What is their eye drawn to? Why?* The children might discuss the potential significance of the house in the foreground which dominates the left-hand side of the spread, as well as the various background features – possibly making links with what they have seen on the cover and the endpapers. They might consider the use of colour – *what does that soft pink pastel sky make them think of, how does it make them feel?* They might draw out other features distinctive to Pete Oswald's approach in this book, such as the use of relatively simple shapes with no outlined edges, reminiscent of stencils in places, and his use of the colour red to highlight certain features – cycle, car lights, door, flowers.
- Having discussed the cover, endpapers and title page of the book, draw together their overall expectations and predictions for the book. *What type of story are they expecting and what gives them these ideas?*



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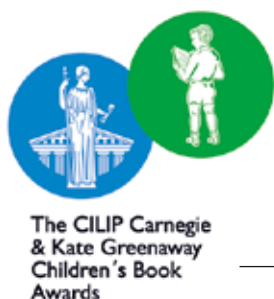
## Getting into the story and exploring characters:

- From the title page, turn to reveal the next spread. Give the children time to explore all of the detail included in the bedroom illustration which fills the left hand page. Ask the children to consider what this illustration might tell us about the character, and how it might build on our early impressions of both character and story from what they have already seen. They might also note anything that they are curious about, any puzzles or questions that it prompts and anything that reminds them of their own experiences.
- If possible, give out copies of the bedroom illustration for them to annotate, encouraging them to think beyond what they can see and on to what those details might mean in terms of character, reader response and prediction. *What might the drawings pinned to the wall and scattered over the floor tell us about this character's interests and personality? What might the book titles suggest; or the way in which the objects are laid out on the bench down the left-hand edge of the room?*
- After discussing the left hand illustration, read on as the child and father get ready for the journey and set off – pausing on the next page after the three vignettes of the two characters getting in the car, driving down the street and seeing the city fade behind them. As these spreads are largely wordless – apart from the occasional sound effect – ensure that the children have a good view of the illustrations as you read. Take your time so that children can fully appreciate the detail in each spread. You might model how to read a wordless text by sharing your enjoyment of the illustrations, by pointing out smaller details or how a character responds or predicting what might be about to happen, and invite the children to share their responses too – *“look at that expression on their face, I wonder how they're feeling or what they might be thinking right at this moment as they open their eyes.”* Acknowledge, if necessary, that there is no right or wrong answer and that we all are likely to respond to the story in slightly different ways and might be drawn to different details in each illustration.
- Consider what you know or can tell about the child from what you have read so far. *What do they know about their appearance and actions within the book so far, and what internal characteristics are they beginning to infer and deduce? What might the child's behaviours imply about their personality, thoughts and feelings?* The group might also use this opportunity to note down anything they would like to find out; any questions they have about the character, what they are doing, where they are going and why they might be undertaking this journey.
- While discussing the character, the children will benefit from being able to turn back through the book and revisit the spreads that have already been discussed (if you want to hold back for now the way in which the story concludes, you might use a bulldog clip or paperclip to hold the last few spreads closed at this stage). During these discussions, keep returning to what it is about the illustrations that informs or affects our response.
- Finish this session by encouraging the children to think about how they could share aspects of their own personality or character simply through the depiction of an environment – perhaps a bedroom like the opening spread in this story, or perhaps another space that says something about them. *Where would they choose? What would they include? What would certain props within the space communicate about their life, experiences, interests, and characteristics?* Maybe you wouldn't draw your bedroom as it actually exists, but instead you might imagine

and then sketch your 'dream' space. Provide the children with appropriate art materials for them to engage in this activity before inviting them to share their work with their peers.

## Exploring the environment:

- Reread the book so far, pausing on each spread, giving space for children to talk through what's happening, what they notice and what the characters might be thinking or feeling.
- Turn the page from the 3 vignettes of them leaving town to the double page spread of the vehicle driving uphill into the mountains. Pause to consider the impact of this change in layout, from a double page with 10 vignettes telling the story of the child getting ready and setting off on their outing, to this double-page, full-bleed spread to the very edges of the page. *How did it make them feel? What aspect of the image made them feel that way?* They might consider the illustrator's use of scale, perspective and composition, as well as the colour and the texture in the image.
- Share how the illustrations for the book were created digitally in Photoshop, but Pete Oswald spent a great deal of time creating authentic watercolour shades and textures, deliberately adding in imperfections rather than pursuing a seamless digital image (<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/82750-q-a-with-pete-oswald.html>). *Discuss the impact of those choices. Where can they see that 'handmade quality' that Pete Oswald refers to? What does this add to your experience as readers and your experience of the story?*
- As they explore this image, they may wish to turn back to the title page and compare it with this reverse shot. They may also choose to refer back to the map in the endpapers, considering where the father and child might be as they start their journey.
- Continue to read on through the next four spreads, as far as the right hand single-page spread of the father and child walking in line with their 'found' walking sticks. As before, allow the children to be part of the storytelling process through their response to the illustrations; summarising what the characters are engaging in, what they take notice of as a reader as well as what the characters are seeing and engaging with in their environment. Give them space to share their own emotional response to the images, and to discuss their ongoing inference of the characters' potential thoughts and feelings, as well as the ways in which the author/illustrator communicates that sense of the awe and wonder with the natural world felt by the father and child.
- Consider how Pete Oswald uses the constant shift in viewpoint and layout to give the reader new insights and offer new information. Turn the pages back and forth and consider how our viewpoint moves from being ahead of the characters as they set off, then takes us up over their heads for an aerial view of their walk, and then pulls us back down to ground level, behind the characters with the two of them striding off ahead of us, up the trail, leaving us behind, eye-level with the rabbits that have stepped up to the edge of the trail. *How do we read and respond to the images differently when they are presented as a series of sequential vignettes or when they are presented as a large double-page spread? Do they have a favourite illustration or spread? Which one and why?*



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## Communicating Narrative through Sequential Art:

- Continue reading, turning to the next page in which the two central characters have to cross a bridge made from a fallen tree. Allow time and opportunity for the children to respond to the drama and tension of the event, then reflect on the way in which Pete Oswald chose to communicate that event to us. *What options were available to him?* Here, he has chosen to use 7 separate vignettes to capture key moments from the crossing; in each of them, he uses different viewpoints, sizes, angles, distances and compositions to draw the readers' attention to particular details. Discuss how this spread made them feel as they read. *Did they look at each illustration in turn or in a particular order or did they take in the whole spread? Are there any particular illustrations that they found most effective in building an emotional response? When are background details excluded from the illustration? What impact does that have?*
- Consider what more we learn about the characters and their relationship in this spread and how that might differ if Pete Oswald had chosen to communicate this event in just one single image.
- Turn the page to reveal the full page depiction of the waterfall, with the characters enjoying the rewards of their efforts while we, the reader, are placed behind them taking in the same view – watching them, watching it. *How might it feel to actually be there, standing so close to the waterfall? How does the design of the page support that response?* The children might draw out the different techniques the illustrator has used to communicate the movement and power of the water and the size of the characters in relation to the rest of the spread.
- Continue to read the next two spreads. As they reflect on the next trial – rock climbing – and the reward at the end of that challenge, they could compare the depiction of this experience with the crossing of the river. *What similarities and differences are there in the way they are shared with the reader on the page? Which do they feel is more rewarding or more of a challenge for the young hiker? Have they noticed any differences in the body language, behaviour or facial expression of the child and/or their father as they progress through the day? How is the author pacing the different elements of the hike?*
- Pause on the next spread in which they plant the tree sapling. Consider the importance given to this moment in the book. *What helps us begin to understand that this might be a significant moment for the family? How do we know that this is important for both the father and the child?* The children might comment on how each moment is given its own space, with plenty of white space around it to focus the reader's attention on what is most important. The sapling is shown in 4 of the 5 vignettes, first revealing that it has been carried diligently by the child through the whole hike so far. *Consider the way in which the child presents the sapling to the father: what might this imply?* In the next vignette, the sapling is in the centre of the composition with both characters focusing their gaze upon it. *How would the children describe their actions and their body language in this moment?* And in the final vignette of this page, the children might note the use of the camera to capture this moment for the characters. *Is this the only time they've taken a picture of each other during the hike? Why might they want to capture this moment specifically?*

- Finally, turn the page and respond to the double page spread which allows the reader to pause on the significance of this moment. *How does the layout and sequence of images replicate other significant events in their hike, e.g. the page turns that led us into the car rising up into the mountains, that took us to the moment in front of the waterfall, that showed us the eagles soaring above the rocks? Why might Pete Oswald have included finer details such as the bees pollinating the flowers in the foreground, or the squirrel climbing the trunk on the right of the image? Why has he included the other hillsides, covered in trees in the distance? He could have depicted this moment as a close up with just the two characters and the tree in front of them – what is the impact of this wide shot?*
- Discuss what the two characters might be thinking or feeling in this moment. *With the planting done, why might they pause to stand and look down at the sapling? How does their body language, facial expression and the direction of their gaze inform our understanding?*
- You might use simple classroom drama techniques to bring this moment to life. In pairs, children could replicate the body language, facial expression and positioning of the characters as a still tableaux or freeze frame. Then, they can step into role as their chosen character, communicating in first person, what they are thinking and feeling in this moment. This might be captured as a recording or as an annotation to the illustration, a speech bubble or thought bubble, or a short piece of writing undertaken in role as the character, such as a diary entry or postcard to a significant friend or family member.

### Revisiting the story as a whole:

- Reread the story from the start, this time continuing to the end of the book, including the final close-up of the family album on the dedication page. On this reread, children may note the early clues in the child's bedroom that hints at one of the main purposes of the hike and its place in ongoing family traditions – we can see the sapling, the guide to planting trees, the camera and the family album. *Are there any other significant props that play a role in the story later on?*
- Discuss their response to the end of the story and the significance of the family album. What did they like or dislike about the way in which the story ended? What did they feel the story was about? Did it have a particular message?
- Consider the impact of this particular format – a wordless picturebook - and why the author might have selected it as an effective way in which to communicate their narrative and how Pete Oswald used the overall pacing of the story to situate and value each moment of the hike within the overall frame of the day. *For example, is it significant that, as well as spending time on the river crossing and the planting, he dedicated two full spreads to what happened back at home after the hike?*
- After reading, leave copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.



## After reading, you could also...

- Provide children with the opportunity to undertake Pete Oswald's Greenaway Shadower's Challenge: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/take-part/shadowers-challenges/>
- Watch the video and then ask each child to think back to an event or an activity that they might share using sequential images the way Pete Oswald has in this book. Once they have thought of the activity or event that they would like to share, give them the materials to loosely sketch out the sequence of moments, playing with different angles and viewpoints, facial expressions and body language, adding background for context or hiding superfluous details for clarity. You might share some of the early sketches that Pete Oswald produced for the book to demonstrate how this might look. You can find examples of the page in which the child is packing for the hike included as an image in this interview: <http://www.letstalkpicturebooks.com/2020/02/lets-talk-illustrators-130-pete-oswald.html>
- Once they have sketched out the moments, they could cut them out and try laying them out in different orders and different positions on the page to select the most appropriate layout with which to communicate the sequence of events clearly for the reader whilst highlighting any particular significant elements. Then they might work up their sketches using pen and ink, pencil and watercolour to produce similar textures to those in Pete Oswald's work. Finally, they might work with a response partner to consider whether any text is required to add clarity or further information, or whether the images communicate the event perfectly on their own.

If children are interested in further exploration of some of the environmental themes raised by this story, then at this site, you can find more information about contributing to the development of a national forest and planting your own tree within it: <https://www.nationalforest.org/get-involved/plant-a-tree>

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: [www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources](http://www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources).

Further 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>.

