

Wild Animals of the North by Dieter Braun: A Sequence of activities for Key Stage 2

Session 1:

Give the children the images, including the animal's names, from the index of the book but do not reveal the book's title. Ask the children to initially respond to the images, and pose questions or thoughts about the images. Ask the children to annotate copies of the picture with post-it notes and then develop the discussion starting with the children's ideas. Following this, ask the children how they could categorise these animals, *what groups might they be able to place them in?* Keep this open ended and allow the children to work in groups to sort the animals any way they want, reasoning on why they have placed them into these categories. After the children have worked in groups, have a whole class discussion and ask the children to share the ways in which they have organised the animals and to compare and contrast the ways in which they have categorised them.

Following this, read aloud the title of the book and the book's introduction. Reflect on the ways in which the children have organised the animals and ask the children to reflect on whether any of the children grouped them into endangered or 'at risk' species. *Were the children shocked to discover a third of the animals' pictured are endangered?* Calculate how many of the animals this would be and remove them from the illustration, for example by cutting them out. If possible, conduct some cross-curricular research into which specific animals they are. Consider the impact of this visual representation of extinction and ask the children to reflect on the themes the introduction to the book addresses such as climate change, urbanisation and the destruction of the wild. Show the children the map of the different regions that the book explores and return to the animals. Ask the children to consider what they already know or think they know about the wild animals, what they want to find out and how they think they can find this out. The children could record this in a simple table and can return to it as they explore the book further.

Session 2:

Have a series of images from the book enlarged onto A3 for the children to respond to. The pictures in which the wild animal looks directly out to the reader may work well. Such as the Kodiak bear, the wolf, the racoon, the long-tailed weasel, the puffin, the red fox, the barn owl, the Iberian lynx, the snow leopard, the panda, and the mouflon. To begin with, consider the author's choice to have some of the wild animals looking at the reader. Ask the children to reflect on what impact this has on them, making links to the work they completed in the previous session.

Ask the children to look closely at the images considering the choice of colours, shapes, lines, patterns, how much space the animal takes up on the page, the positioning of the animal's body and so on. Draw out through discussion considerations around the way in which Dieter Braun has chosen to illustrate the wild animals. Consider the use of the layered geometrical shapes set against different backgrounds and their poster like appearance. Some children may make links to Cubism and you may want to explore this art movement further to support the children's understanding. Compare this style to more naturalistic depictions of wild animals and wildlife photography. Allow the children to then explore the rest of the book and illustrations, noting their responses and discussing their considerations.

Session 3:

In this session the children can create their own images of wild animals in the style of Dieter Braun. You might want the children to choose their favourite animal or to choose an animal from a particular region, continent or country. Return to the ideas explored in the previous session and ask

the children how they might go about drawing an animal in this style. Allow children to find a photograph of the animal they have chosen and ask the children to consider how they might break the image of the animal down into geometrical shapes. They might find it supportive to place tracing paper over the top of the photograph so that they can see the simple lines and shapes they can use.

Once the children have done this they can extend and develop the illustration considering colour, shading and pattern. After the children have had time to develop their illustrations, display them so that they can conduct a gallery walk, this is where the children can respond to each other's works commenting on their composition and effect and discussing the different techniques used.

Session 4:

Read aloud a selection of the captions that accompany the illustrations of the wild animals in the book and ask the children to listen to the language used and to note down any language that stands out or to note memorable words and phrases. Following this ask them to discuss what they noticed in their groups. Ask the children why these words or phrases in particular stood out to them, *what made them so vivid or memorable? What do they notice about the way in which the captions have been written?*

Give the children copies of the different captions and ask the children to re-read them and then to reflect on the way in the captions are written which support a reader's understanding and make impact. For example, considering the figurative language used to describe the animals such as '*masters of the sky*', '*white giant*', '*finger acrobats*', '*king of the forest*' and '*the carpenter of the bird kingdom*'; the scientific language such as *eyries*, *carrion*, *grampus*, *metamorphosis*, *canid*; or the description of the ways in which the animals are named by indigenous communities or the animals' common name such as '*ghost of the mountain*' or '*little rain man*'. Elicit from the children which words or phrases help them to imagine the different animals described. You may also want to explore the Latin names given to the wild animals and also the way in which the Latin names have origins in other languages, such as 'moose' deriving from the Greek word 'alce' meaning power and strength. They may have experience of this already if they have seen Wes Anderson's film version of *Fantastic Mr Fox*, where Mr Fox refers to the other creatures by their Latin names. This can provide a starting point to explore the morphology and etymology of certain words.

Session 5:

In the book, some of the wild animals that are illustrated do not have accompanying captions. In this session allow the children to choose an animal or animals, that they would like to write the accompanying caption for. Give the children time to research and find out about this wild animal and then give them time to write their own caption.

Ask the children to consider what they learnt from analysing Dieter Braun's captions and encourage the children to use the same techniques in their own writing. Once the children have completed their captions ask them to share them with one another, commenting on what language choices were most effective. Following this, you could take the completed captions and place them alongside copies of the illustrations to create a new book, complete with all the wild animals featured in the original book. The children might also want to write their own captions for the illustrations they created.

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

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