

BIG BEAR LITTLE BROTHER
Written by Carl Novac and Illustrated by Kristin Oftedal
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Use the double page spread depicting the storm.

Working in pairs, encourage children to explore the picture discussing their responses and working together to make meaning of what they see. Ask them to jot down words and phrases, which reflect their responses to looking.

The aims of this activity are:

- to increase the interaction with and enjoyment of picture books for children of all ages
- to develop children's confidence and vocabulary to respond to what they see – to observe and describe
- to encourage them to build on their previous experience, imagination and understanding to make sense of visual information – to interpret
- to consider a variety of graphic forms and their interaction with a text in order to convey layers of meaning – to appreciate
- to recognise different styles and techniques used and developed by a variety of illustrators – to analyse
- to begin to recognise and appreciate visual metaphor, irony, puns and jokes etc. – to participate

The following questions have been designed to help children to look more closely at the illustrative work of Kristin Oftedal moving from the whole picture to the smallest part and to search for and use all available clues given by the artist to make meaning. Please select and adapt the questions to make them appropriate for your setting.

TELL ME ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION...

How do your eyes travel across this double page spread? Where do you first pick up the bear's footprints?

How would you describe the child following behind the bear? How do you think s/he might be feeling?

How does the child know which way to travel?

How confident do you think the child is about their journey?

Describe the kind of weather portrayed. What can you hear in this picture?

How have the proportions of the two characters been contrasted?

How is your attention drawn to the bear? Consider his position on the page and his posture.

Where do you think the bear is going?

How do you think the child feels about the bear?

How has the illustrator softened the ferocity of the storm?

How would you describe the tones of colour in this picture?

The bear has been created with a simple pencil outline. How has the artist created three dimensional effects which make the bear stand out on the page?

What medium do you think has been used to draw the bear?

The bear, the landscape and the storm appear to have been drawn quickly using a soft pencil in a sketchy style. Why do you think the illustrator has chosen not to erase unwanted lines? In what ways do they compliment the mood and movement in these pictures?

What is the effect of the colour wash background? How do you think the illustrator has created the effect of the snow falling?

How would you describe this snowfall?

What kind of landscape can you see?

How has the illustrator created a sense of hills and slopes?

In what ways do the words and pictures work together?

Who do you think is the intended audience for this book? How does the content of the page inform your answer?

What kind of bear do you think this is? Does the type of bear make a difference to your interaction with the story?

Polar bears are huge and sometimes quite fierce; do you feel afraid of this bear? Why not?

Do you have any sense of this child being in danger?

Where might the danger come from?

WRITE IT DOWN

Harvest children's responses and record their descriptions and comments on a flip chart. Are there any aspects of the picture that they find particularly interesting or puzzling? How do these pictures interact and work with the rest of the book?