

Can We Save the Tiger?
Written by Martin Jenkins and Illustrated by Vicky White
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Use the double page spread depicting the tiger.

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
- to use drama and role play techniques to engage more fully with the picture – to comprehend

The following questions have been designed to help children to look more closely at the illustrative work of Vicky White, 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...

What is the initial impact of this illustration?

What is your response to this creature?

If the tiger takes another step, where will it be?

How does it make you feel: e.g. nervous, scared?

How has the illustrator achieved this sense of immediacy?

What is the impact of a white background?

In what ways does it allow you to see the features of the tiger without other distractions, to imagine its environment in your own mind's eye or bring it into your environment, here and now?

Sometimes, illustrations of wild animals in children's books are caricatured, and given human characteristics. Why do you think illustrators do this?

In what ways has Vicky White maintained the dignity of this wild cat whilst allowing you an opportunity to examine it close up?

What words would you use to describe this creature?

Who is the tiger looking at?

How has the illustrator engaged you in the picture?

Does this picture allow you to be a passive observer?

Consider the ways in which the illustrator has used the page. What is the effect of allowing the tiger's tail to lick across the gutter of the book and onto the next page? Why hasn't she made the picture smaller and let us see the whole cat?

What do you find to be the most striking features of this animal?

What do you notice about its posture and expression?

What do you think it would do next?

If you could hear anything on this page what would it be?

What materials has the illustrator used to draw this tiger?

Look closely at her techniques to create the thickness and texture of its fur. What do you notice about the application of colour?

Where is there most attention to detail?

What do you notice about the layout of the pages and the varied font sizes?

In what ways does the illustration work with the text?

WRITE IT DOWN

Harvest children's responses and record their descriptions and comments on an IWB or 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?

PLAYING THE BOOK

The picture we have been looking at has focussed on the size and wildness of this fierce creature. As a result of these qualities, tigers are constantly competing for space to roam and for food with farmers who live in the same remote areas of India and Indonesia.

Conscience alley provides an opportunity to help children consider some of the complexities of conservation and the dilemmas which, for example, a poor farmer might face when a tiger lives nearby.

Conscience alley

Children act as the farmer's conscience, before he decides whether or not to set a trap and kill the tiger. They offer contrasting thoughts and opinions to help the farmer make his/her decision.

- Children form two parallel lines standing shoulder to shoulder and facing one another to form an alley, wide enough for another child, acting as the farmer to walk through.
- Each line represents the contrasting aspects of the character's conscience. For example one side could be thinking of reasons why it was acceptable to trap and kill the tiger, such as:
 - they feel frightened of the big, fierce tigers and worry that they might attack their family and eat their animals.
 - they know that if they trap and kill the tigers they will be able to sell their skins for fashion and decoration and bones which some people think have medical qualities.
 - this will give them more money than usual and keep their families safe.
 - that although it is illegal to kill a tiger they are unlikely to get caught as they live in such an isolated place.
- and the other side would be thinking of reasons why they should not trap and kill the tiger, such as:
 - tigers are beautiful animals.
 - tigers lived on the land before man.
 - that the land should be shared by people and animals.
 - they understand that tigers are an endangered species.
 - they know that it is against the law to trap and kill tigers.
- Each child thinks of a word, or phrase that encapsulates their point of view.
- Very quietly children practice chanting their word or phrase to create two walls of sound.
- A child is chosen as the farmer to walk through the 'conscience alley' and as they approach each child raises the volume of their voice and then, as they pass, fall back to a whisper.
- When the child reaches the end of the alley they are encouraged to recount their experience and the impact/impression it has had.
- Ask if they have reached a decision to kill or save the tiger.

Opportunities to extend this activity

- Children record their conscience alley ideas as a starting point for constructing a full written argument.
- Children are given the opportunity to have a full debate.
- Children design the text for this tiger to persuade local farmers to let the tigers live.