

Wolf Won't Bite!
Written and Illustrated by Emily Gravett
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Use the double page spread depicting the wolf standing on a stool.

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 Emily Gravett, 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...

Is there anything that surprises you about this picture?

How do your eyes travel across the page and where do they come to rest?

What is the focus of this page?

What stories come to mind when you think of pigs and wolves?

In what ways are the roles of the wolf and the pigs similar or different in this story?

How would you describe the style that has been used to draw the pigs: caricature, realistic, satirical, comic?

Which features of real pigs have been maintained and how have they been drawn?

What do you notice about the contrast between the way that the pigs have been portrayed and the wolf?

Why do you think Emily Gravett chose to dress the pigs wearing clothes?

How would you describe these clothes and where would you expect to see people wearing clothes like these?

Do clothes empower or emasculate them as characters?

Why do you think Emily Gravett has chosen to place the characters and text on a stark white background?

In what ways has the illustrator created the illusion of a circus?

If you could hear any sounds as you look at this page what would they be?

Who do you think the circus audience is?

If you were in the audience how would you be feeling about the wolf? Do you like the pig's show?

Look at the pig standing by the stool, how would you describe his posture and body language?

What does this tell you about his character?

What is the impact of placing the other two pigs under the text?

Who do you think is speaking those words?

What is the effect of making the font large and bold, with movement in the layout of the letters?

What do you think the other two pigs really think of the wolf act?

Look closely at the wolf. How has his wildness and wolfishness been maintained in this illustration?

Look at his body language and facial expression, how does this help you understand how he might be feeling?

Why do you think he is allowing the pigs to control his behaviour?

What other animals have you seen standing on a circus stool like this?

How does the wolf make you feel towards him?

What is the difference between the way that the pigs and the wolf have been drawn?

What range of colours have been chosen and how would you describe them: bright, subtle, muted, restricted palette, naturalistic?

Use your knowledge of pigs and wolves and the clues that Emily Gravett has given you, to predict what might happen in the rest of the story.

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

Role on the wall

This activity is appropriate for use with all age groups and is designed to activate prior knowledge and, through shared ideas and comments, extend children's knowledge and understanding of the character studied. It is an effective way to generate children's own questions which can be used later in hot seating. It creates an opportunity for children to focus on one character in the picture and use all the evidence and clues they can find to build up a character profile.

You will need:

An enlarged image of the picture on either an IWB or flip chart
Pens to scribe children's feedback

Working in small groups or with the whole class, start by asking:

Question 1

What do you know about the wolf from this illustration?

- Annotate around the illustration, recording children's comments and observations
- Use this as an opportunity to encourage further clarity of their expression and to extend their descriptive language.
- Insist that during this stage children stick to telling you what they can actually see rather than inferring meaning. For example: the wolf has a grey shaggy coat, his tail is tucked between his legs, he appears to have taken on a submissive role...

Question 2

What do you think you know about the wolf from the illustration?

- Focus on children's personal interpretations and inference.
- Listen and record children's ideas as accurately as possible.
- Promote dialogue and debate between the children to encourage consideration and respect for other people's interpretations of the same picture.
- Encourage children to draw freely on their prior knowledge to interpret this new experience and to use contextual cues to make their own meaning.

Question 3

What more would you like to find out about the wolf?

- Use shared writing to model open ended questioning.
- Children compose their own questions to further pursue their interest in the character.
- Follow their interests in the character. For example: "How did the pigs capture you?"; "How do you feel about being in the pig's show?"; "What are you going to do?"

Use “hot seating” of the character/s to answer the children’s questions

Hot seating is a device for getting inside the characters head and utilising the viewpoints of children.

- Ask class, “Who could best answer the questions you have?”
 - The wolf?
 - The pigs?
- Ask a child to volunteer to be the wolf for example.
- Ask them to leave the room and quickly get into character, thinking about how the wolf is feeling, whether s/he is young or old, how s/he might move and talk and to consider how s/he might enter the room.
- Ask the child to knock on the door when they are ready.
- The wolf enters and sits on a chair in front of the class.
- The children take it in turns to ask the wolf questions using the questions from the “role on the wall” activity as a starting point.
- Encourage children to respond to the wolf’s replies in order to develop their questioning.

Opportunities for writing

- Design a poster advertising the pig’s circus featuring the wolf’s act.
- Write a letter from the wolf to his friends/family asking them what has happened to him.
- Write a newspaper article, featuring how the pigs have captured and tamed a wild wolf or what happened to the pigs when they tried to keep a wolf in captivity.
- Write and perform the “ring master” pig’s script as he describes what the wolf can do. Consider how he will draw the audience in, play on their fears of wild creatures and demonstrate the pig’s control and authority over a wild animal.