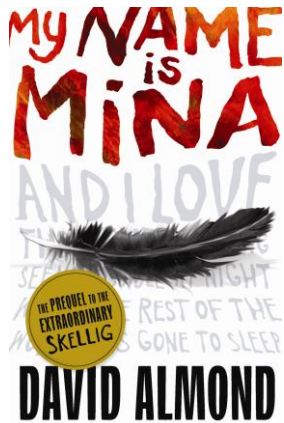


# TALKING POINTS

## CILIP Carnegie Medal Shortlist 2012



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards



### My Name is Mina by David Almond

#### LEARNING FOR LIFE

“How does a bird that was born for joy/ Sit in a cage and sing?” - William Blake.

- Why has Mina chosen this quotation from Blake's poetry? And see the “Now read on” section below.

Study David Almond's chapter headings.

- Do they tell you what to expect from the chapters?
- How do they reflect the kind of mind Mina has?
- Why do you think the chapters in *My Name is Mina* don't have numbers?

Read the second chapter, “Banana, Weirdos, A Beautiful Tree and Boring Heaven” and list every subject that Mina thinks about or notices.

- What does this tell you about what her mind is like?

Read the chapter on “Sprouts, Sarcasm and the Mystery of Time”.

- Why does Mina find school so hard?
- Why does Mrs Scullery, the English teacher, find Mina so challenging?

Mina likes to learn in many ways: for example trying things out, reflecting, stillness.

- What other ways does she like to learn?
- Does she ever stop herself from trying something out as much as she wants to?
- Think of something you enjoy doing, in or out of school. How did you learn to do it?

How is Corinthian Avenue Pupil Referral Centre in “The Story of Corinthian Avenue” different from Mina's school?

- How do we know what Mina is feeling about her day at the centre?
- Why doesn't she want to return?

#### A VISION OF MINA

Look at the many different ways the words have been placed on the pages in this book. Choose any chapter and ask:

- How does the type design and use of black and white space tell you more about what Mina is thinking, doing or feeling?

#### ONLY CONNECT

Mina spends a lot of time alone and finds it hard to socialise in groups, but she does make deep connections with people.

Overall, what is missing from Mina's life

- In general
- After her move to home schooling?
- And what does she have in her life that other people would envy?



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What is special about Mina's meetings with:

- Her history teacher, Mr Henderson?
- The taxi driver who takes her to Corinthian Avenue Pupil Referral Centre?
- Steepy, the tattooed boy at Corinthian Avenue?
- Malcolm, the teacher at Corinthian Avenue?
- Sophie, her old friend from St Bede's.
- Her grandpa.

### DOING POINTS:

Try out ALL Mina's Extraordinary Activities at some point in the rest of your life. To start with, try these:

- The day and night sky-watching activities from the end of the chapter on "Sprouts, Sarcasm and the Mystery of Time".
- Write a page of utter nonsense (see "Sats Day, Glibbertysnark and Claminosity")
- Take a line, some words and yourself for a walk (see the end of the chapter on "Walking, Pizza, Stars and Dust")

### NOW READ ON:

Read (or re-read) David Almond's first novel, *Skellig*.

- At what points in the *Skellig* story does Mina appear?
- What does she know about Michael and his family when *Skellig* begins? Does Michael know what she knows about him?
- Does Michael know how important the house in Crow Road is to Mina?
- *Skellig* was written some years before *My Name is Mina*. Why do you think David Almond decided to tell *Skellig* readers more about Mina? Is there anything else you might have wanted to know about her?
- What does *My Name is Mina* tell us about what happened in Michael's house before he lived there?

Read (or re-read) David Almond's second novel, *Kit's Wilderness*.

- How is the character Allie similar to Mina?
- What else in *Kit's Wilderness* reminds you of *My Name Is Mina*?

Read the Greek myth of Persephone.

Find all the Greek myths mentioned in *My Name is Mina* and read those.

Read the poems of William Blake and use reference books and the internet to find out about his life and collect images of his art.

- What do William Blake and Mina have in common?

