

Millie's Marvellous Hat
Written and Illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura
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Use the double page in the park where, "Everyone had a hat of their own and they were all different."

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 Satoshi Kitamura 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 SATOSHI KITAMURA'S ILLUSTRATION...

What is your initial response to this page?

How does it make you feel?

How do your eyes travel across the page?

Notice the directions that people are walking, what affect does this have on how your read the page?

Is there anything in particular that captures your attention, what is it and why?

Who is the central character in this picture?

How is your attention drawn to Millie? What do you notice about her position and stance on the page?

Notice the colours used for Millie's clothing and hat. How do they contrast with the colours on the rest of the page?

Look at Millie's face, how would you describe her facial expression, what does it tell you about how she is feeling?

How has your attention been drawn to the text?

Choose a character or pair of characters and consider the way the illustrator has portrayed them.

What is special about their particular hat/s?

What does each hat tell you about each personality, what they might like doing, what they are thinking about or what job they might do?

Which is your favourite hat and why?

What hat would Millie imagine you to be wearing?

How can you tell the mood of the character, what clues have you been given?

Look at their facial expression, body language, posture and their relationships with other people, what more do these things tell you about them?

Consider the way that they move, how has the illustrator conveyed this?

What can you find out about this setting, the time in history, the time of year, and the time of day?

Why do you think that Satoshi Kitamura chose a park for the setting of this particular scene?

How would you describe the style used to draw the characters; realistic, caricature, cartoon, etc?

Does the way in which the characters have been drawn affect your understanding of their personality and nature?

What medium do you think has been used?

Where is the park, what helps you to decide?

Where is the humour to be found in these illustrations?

Where is the movement coming from in this picture?

What do you notice about the use of line and application of colour?

If you could hear sounds coming from this illustration, what might they be?

What would make you revisit this page?

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?