

The Dunderheads
Written by Paul Fleischman and Illustrated by David Roberts
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Use the double page spread, page numbers 22 and 23.

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 David Roberts 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 DAVID ROBERT'S ILLUSTRATION...

How do your eyes move across the page to read this visual image?

How have the pictures been presented for example as a cartoon strip, a series of fragmented images, a freeze frame, a close up etc.?

Why do you think David Roberts has chosen to frame these pictures-what effect do the frames have?

What are you immediately drawn to?

How would you describe these characters-what kind of story do you associate them with?

Which character does the illustrator draw you to the most-why has he done that and how has he done that?

The peacock's cage and Breakbone's house are very similar in shape, why do you think the illustrator has juxtaposed these two structures?

What do you notice about the trees around Breakbone's house, how do they contribute to the atmosphere created?

Have you seen a house like this before? What does this visual image tell you about the character who lives there?

What do you notice about the walls surrounding the house?

The dogs and the signs deter visitors, how does Pencil's body language convey her feelings towards Breakbone and her deterrents?

If you could hear sound effects around Breakbone's house, what would they be?

What is the impact of the technical detail of Pencil's diagrams in terms of your predictions about plot development?

What do these drawings tell you about her character?

What do you notice about the characters in the illustrations for e.g. facial expressions, bodily gestures, their positions in the picture, their movement and size etc?

- who do you think they are-what pictorial clues has the illustrator used?
- what are they doing?
- what is their relationship to one another?

Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to draw the tail of the aeroplane outside the picture border?

What do you notice about the artist's use of line, colour and shading-what medium do you think he has used?

What techniques has the illustrator used to convey movement?

How does the illustrator involve you in the picture for e.g. are you an outside observer, a bystander, a friend, a participant in the action etc?

Are you drawn to revisit the illustration, what more do you learn from it in terms of the story being told?

What is the relationship between the written text and the visual text-what devices has the illustrator used to draw your attention to both at the same time?

How would you describe the illustrations-realistic, zany, comic, cartoon-like, angular, jerky, lively, expressive etc?

How is the tension built in these pictures?

Where are these pictures taking place-can you describe them?

How does the illustrator involve you in the illustrations?

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?