

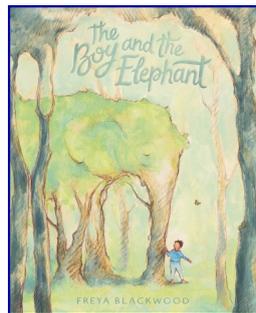
The Boy and the Elephant

By Freya Blackwood

Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460760000 SCIS: 5375417

The boy lives in a city, where everything is fast and loud. But amidst the bustle and the noise, the boy has a secret ... In the overgrown lot next to his apartment building, deep within the green, he has a friend. But one day progress arrives, bringing with it plans for something new, and the boy must find a way to save his friend before it's too late ...



Teacher Notes have been based on those prepared by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Belonging
- Identity
- Visual Literacy

Discussion Questions: After Reading

Features of storytelling -

- People tend to remember stories, images, feelings, and sounds more than individual facts.
 - ◇ What are the most memorable aspects of *The Boy and the Elephant*?
 - ◇ What is the lasting image that stays in the mind of the reader?
 - ◇ What is the most important relationship in this story?
 - ◇ How do you feel after reading this story? Why? Ask students to bring in an object from home, which represents an important story to them. Invite them to write a short story about the object. Illustrate the story and share it with the class.

Telling a story with no words -

- In most stories, even those told in picture books, words are an important part of how the narrative is conveyed. However, in *The Boy and the Elephant*, Freya Blackwood uses only pictures to tell her story. Despite this, it is easy to 'read' the story. Ask students to write, in their own words, the story that is told in *The Boy and the Elephant*. Try to be as descriptive as possible, while staying true to the original story.
- Have a class discussion about the following questions:
 - ◇ What do you think is Freya Blackwood's purpose in telling this story?
 - ◇ What would she like readers to think about or feel while reading this story?
 - ◇ What do images and symbols add to the story?
 - ◇ Invite students to write a news story about a grove of trees being cut down on a block of land in a city. Compare the news story to *The Boy and the Elephant* – which one is more powerful? Why?

The boy and his environment -

- Throughout *The Boy and the Elephant*, we see a contrast in the types of environments that the boy interacts with. There are the highly urban streetscapes and schoolyard, and then there is the wild beauty of the vacant lot next to his home.
- Compare the spread of the boy in the schoolyard with the spread of the boy entering the vacant lot. In which spread does he look more 'at home'? How does Blackwood demonstrate the boy's sense of belonging? Comment on the use of colour, facial expression and gesture, and framing in your response.
- Go back through *The Boy and the Elephant* and look for all the clues that show the reader that the boy feels a strong connection with the natural environment.