

An ordinary day L. Gleeson & A. Creder. Scholastic Australia, 2001

Special visual features:

Use of texture to create mood and speed; use of colour to contrast and create mood changes; use of motifs or signposts throughout to spark the imagination; contrast of full page illustrations and smaller pictures.

Pre-unit assessment tasks to gauge students' current level of understanding

Flick slowly through the pictures in the book. Ask students to observe the type of illustrations used and their tone. Ask students what they notice about the tone of the pictures and how the tone makes them feel. *Sombre; unhappy; rushed; no time to enjoy life.*

Outcomes

English Stage 2

RS2.5

Reads (and views) independently a wide range of texts on increasingly challenging topics and justifies own interpretation of ideas, information and events.

RS2.6

Uses efficiently an integrated range of skills and strategies when reading and interpreting written (and visual) texts.

RS2.7

Discusses how writers (and illustrators) relate to their readers in different ways, how they create a variety of worlds through language (and images) and how they use language (and images) to achieve a wide range of purposes.

Teaching and learning activities

On a first reading of the book, teachers ask students:

- to observe how the vehicles that Jack sees while he waits for the school change as the story progresses. Why has the illustrator done this? What message are the author and illustrator trying to give. *Jack is bored; would rather be anywhere else but on his way to school; he might be an only child; no one else at home talks to him; everyone is too busy.*

On a second and possibly subsequent reading(s), the teacher asks students:

- to observe when the fish/dolphin/whale image first appears in the book. *The picture above his bed; his breakfast plate; the fish bowl by the front door.*
- to look for other signposts in the early stages of the book that hint at the larger changes coming up, where cars turn into sea mammals.
- why they think Jack picks up on a colour or object and sees it reflected in other things. *Book with red balloon, baby's red balloon; red chewing gum. Golden dog's coat; gold earring; golden motif on t-shirt; gold hair clip. Man carrying a ladder; snake on a carry bag; snakes and ladders on the man's tie.*
- why they think there is a 'no way' or 'no entry' sign after the man with the snakes and ladders tie. *Jack would like to follow his imagination but knows he really has to go to school. It could represent his thoughts saying 'don't go there'.*
- why they think we see Jack's 'fish' things reappearing as the cars change into sea mammals. *These might be his favourite things reminding him of his favourite place to be, beside the seaside.*
- to notice the lighter, warmer tone as Jack imagines himself catching a whale instead of a bus. *Has the effect of lightening the mood of the book.*
- to notice how the appearance of the bus starts to bring Jack back to reality, but also how Jack maintains his sense of imagination and adventure with the last page, where the bus driver turns out to be a walrus.

Post-unit assessment tasks to determine students' progress towards stated syllabus outcomes

Ask students to reflect on the motifs and signposts the illustrator used in this text to signify an imaginative story in Jack's head, underlying the main story of a young boy's mundane preparation for school.