

Father Christmas By Raymond Briggs

LEARNING TO LOOK

This activity is to encourage children to look more closely and critically at illustrations. It can be modelled whilst working with the whole class or a mixed ability group. It encourages children to offer their personal interpretation of the illustration and to share and shape their ideas orally in a collaborative setting.

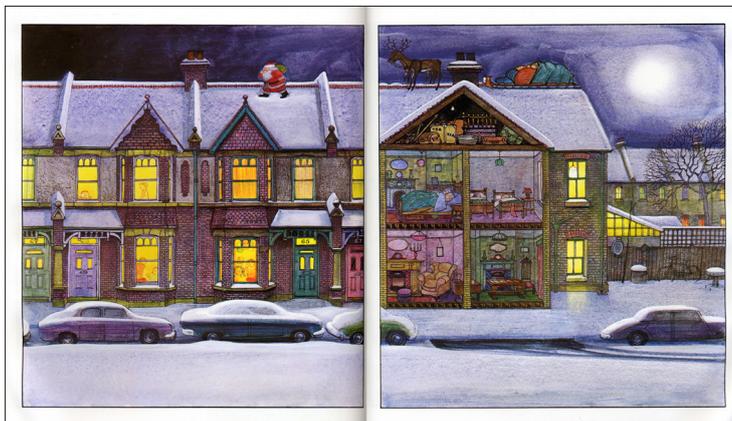
The aims of this activity are:

- 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 **Raymond Briggs**.

By moving from the whole picture to the smallest part children are encouraged 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.

If possible give children one copy of the picture to share between two or use an enlarged picture that everyone can see.



TELL ME ABOUT RAYMOND BRIGG'S ILLUSTRATIONS...

Please select/adapt questions, which you think are most appropriate for the children you are working with...

Is the setting of this picture significant?

What kind of place is it?

Do you know when it is taking place?

What is your immediate response to this scene?

Where are the sources of light coming from?

What are the qualities of this light?

How has Raymond Brigg's contrasted the warmth inside with the icy chill outside? Consider his choice of colour and the intensity of their application.

Does anything surprise you about this illustration?

Do you think they are expecting Father Christmas?

Why has the illustrator cut away the fronts of two of the houses?

What is your response to this?

How do you try to find out about the interiors of the other houses?

What have you found about the people inside?

Does anything puzzle you about this picture?

Look at the boy looking out of the bedroom window on the left hand side.

What do you think he's doing?

There's a little girl at the window of number 65. What do you think she's thinking about?

What is the effect of all the parked cars covered in snow?

Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to show a space where one car has pulled out?

- How long ago did it leave?
- Where do you think it was going?
- Who was in it?

What do you know about the people who live in the end house on the right hand side?

Why do you think there's a light on in the shed?

Why do you think that the illustrator has given so much information about each house?
What do you notice?

How would you describe Father Christmas?

Is there anything that surprises you about him?

What do you notice about his size, body language and facial expressions?

Do you think anyone knows that Father Christmas is on the roof?

Do you think he will visit all these houses?

How do you think Father Christmas feels about being alone on the roof in contrast to the family groups in the houses?

What is your response to him?

Is he how you imagine him to be?

What do you know about his character from this illustration[?]

Do you think he enjoys his work?

How would you describe the deer?

Look at their stance and the way that the sleigh is parked on the roof.

What does this tell you about their training and Father Christmas's experience?

How has Raymond Briggs created this picture?

What do you notice about his use of line and colour?

What medium do you think he has used?

Consider how this picture is framed.

Why do you think that the picture does not cross the gutter at the centre of the book?
What is the effect of the white border around each page?

How has the story on this page been told?

How much of the story has been told by you?

In what ways did the illustrator help you?

In other parts of this book, Raymond Briggs uses speech bubbles. Who would you like to give a speech bubble to in this picture? What would they be saying?

Much of this book is told in a cartoon style. Why do you think Raymond Briggs chose to use a close up of this frame rather than incorporate it as series in a comic strip?

Is this book contemporary? Does the style and presentation of these illustrations give you any clues about when it was published?

Consider details such as:

- Page layout
- Fashion
- Use and application of colour
- Definition of colour
- Amount of colours used
- Appearance of characters
- Illustrative style
- Artistic movements

When do you think it was published?

1950s?

1960s?

1970s?

1980s?

1990s?

2000s?

WRITE IT DOWN

Harvest children's responses and record their descriptions and comments on a whiteboard/flip chart. Are there any aspects of the picture that they find particularly interesting or puzzling?



Father Christmas, give us some money We'll beat you up if you make us annoyed Father Christmas, give us some money Don't mess around with those silly toys. But give my daddy a job 'cause he needs one He's got lots of mouths to feed But if you've got one, I'll have a machine gun So I can scare all the kids down the street. Father Christmas, give us some money We got no time for your silly toys We'll beat you up if you don't hand it over We want your bread so don't make us annoyed Give all the toys to the little rich boys.

