



## Teaching Ideas for the Klaus Flugge Prize Shortlist 2020

Set up to honour Klaus Flugge, founder of Andersen Press, this award is for the most promising & exciting newcomer to children's picture book illustration.

**Title:** One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller

**Author Illustrator:** Kate Read

**Publisher:** Two Hoots

*These notes have been written by the teachers at the [CLPE](#) to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.*

### Reading aloud and key talking points:

- Begin by appreciating the book as an artefact, looking at the colours and textures of the artwork and the cover finish, the boldness of the illustration on the front and back. Pass the book round to the children and encourage them to hold it at an angle so you can see how the gloss of the illustration contrasts with the matt of the background colour. Collect their initial ideas around a copy of the cover to come back to later. *Do you like the look of this book? Do you know what this animal is? What do you know or think you know about it?*
- Look at how the fox is shown on this cover, just his head held high. *What do you think the fox's facial expression tells us? Can you make the same expression with your own features? What do you think it might be thinking or feeling? Why might this be?*
- Give the children an opportunity to share their own knowledge of foxes. *Have you ever seen, heard or even smelled a fox, or read any stories about foxes? What do you think you know about them?* Invite the children to share any knowledge or ideas about foxes that they might already have. These might have come from wildlife books or documentaries like *Springwatch*, or from the very wide range of books that feature foxes as protagonists, e.g., *Fox in Socks* by Dr Seuss (HarperCollins), *The Fox and the Star* by Coralie Bickford-Smith (Particular Books), *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck* by Beatrix Potter (Warne), *Gaspard the Fox* by Zeb Soanes and James Mayhew (Graffeg), as well as foxes in more traditional tales such as *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi, *The Gingerbread Man*, or *Aesop's Fables*. *What are the foxes like in the stories you know?*
- Now read the title of the book together, **'One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller'**. *What do you think this might mean? Do you own or have you ever read a counting book? What was it like? Did the counting go up in numbers or did it count back? Now focus on the word 'thriller' — What do you think a 'thriller' might be? Explore the meaning of this word with the children. What do you think this book might be like to read if it is a thriller? How might it make the reader feel? What do you think might happen in this book?*
- Now take some time to look at the back cover. *Why do you think the words 'one, two three...' are in a different colour from the rest of the text? Why do you think it might be described as 'no ordinary 1, 2, 3'?*
- Now open the book to reveal the front endpapers, and talk about these together. *What do you see on this page? Why do you think these footprints are here? Whose are they? What might they tell us*



*about the story?* If children are unfamiliar with the tracks of different animals, the RSPB has examples of those of different British mammals at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/natures-home-magazine/birds-and-wildlife-articles/features/animal-tracks/>. You could go on to look at the similarities and differences in the pawprints and the children's own hand or footprints, giving them opportunities to use paint to make prints of their own hands or feet and comparing these to the fox prints.

- Now look at the fox. *Where do you think it is going? How do you think the fox is feeling? How can you tell?* If the children do not talk about this naturally, draw attention to its facial expression and body language, the way the illustrator places the fox to lead you to turn the page.
- Turn to the title page. *Why do you think the fox's tracks cross the page as they do? Why are they not in a straight line? What does this tell you about the fox and the way it moves?*
- Turn the page and read the first spread, taking in both pages. Discuss the illustration and text together, and the way they are laid out on the page — *where do you look first: the curled-up fox, the large numeral '1' or the text 'one famished fox'?*
- Come back to the text on the page. *Do you know what the word 'famished' means? Have you heard it before?* To consolidate children's understanding of the intensity of this word, go on to explore where it would fit on a scale with words like 'peckish', 'ravenous', 'hungry', and 'starving'. Try out different pairings, such as 'hungry fox', 'ravenous fox' to see which children prefer and tune them in to the alliteration of '**famished fox**'.
- Encourage the children to make personal connections with the text. *Have you ever been really hungry, when all you could think about was food and what you wanted to eat? What is your favourite thing to eat? What do you think the fox might want to eat more than anything else?*
- Now look carefully at the illustration of the fox. *Can you tell from the illustration that the fox is famished? What tells you this? What might it be feeling or thinking?*
- Use your finger to follow the direction of the fox's gaze, right up to the page turn, but without turning over. *What do you think might be on the next page?*
- Read on to the next spread, allowing time and space to reflect on what the children see and hear. Let the children comment on how they feel about the fox as they see this image. Encourage them to look at the way the fox is positioned on the page and again at its facial expression and body position. *What is it doing? What do you think it is thinking? How can you tell?*
- Now come back to the words on the page. *Do you know what the word 'sly' means? Do you think it is a good description of the fox?*
- Finally, focus — like the fox — on the feather. *Why do you think the fox is so fascinated by the feather? What kind of a feather do you think it might be? What kind of bird might it have come from?*
- Now, read on to the next page and look closely at the next double-page spread. *What do you see first as you turn the page? What clues did the previous spread give us to the hen's appearance?* Turn back and remind the children of the feather. *Which hen might this have come from? Why do you think this?* Focus your attention on what the hens are doing. *What is happening here? Look at the facial expression of the worms too — how are they feeling?*
- Now, look at the words on the page; the hens are described as '**plump**'. *What does this word mean? Why do you think the author has chosen this particular adjective to describe the hens?*



- Invite the children to consider what might happen next. *What makes you think this? Do you think the hens are aware of the danger they may be in?*
- You could look further at the example of the food chain presented here in a wider science session or as a springboard for discussing food production and different diets of animals and humans.
- Reread the first three spreads and ask children if they can summarise the situation and predict what might happen next. *What do you think the next number will be, and what will it correspond to? What do you think will appear on the next page when we turn over?*
- Turn the page and read the next spread for '4', then discuss. *Was this spread what you expected? Why do you think we can only see the fox's paws here? What do you imagine the upper part of its body and its head look like?* Now think about the words on the page. *What does the word 'padding' mean? Can you demonstrate what 'padding' looks and sounds like?* Investigate the alliteration, as we saw in 'famished fox', *can you think of other alliterative phrases about the fox?*
- Now, look at the background. *Where do you think the fox is 'padding'? How do you know?* Think with the children about when the fox might be out on the prowl. *Do you know anything about foxes that might tell you what time of day this might be?*
- Now turn over to the next page. *Where is this? What is happening here?* Now look at the words on the page. *What does it mean to be 'snug'? How does the illustration show you what this word means? How do you think the hens are feeling? Do you think they will continue to feel like this? Why or why not?*
- Think about which character can't be seen in this spread. *What do you think has happened to the fox? What do you think we might see when we turn the page?*
- Turn the page and compare the spread with the children's ideas. Now look at the image more closely. *What do you think is happening here, and how does it relate to what you have seen in previous spreads?* The children might notice the fencing from the background of the 'four padding paws' spread and the night sky that confirms the nocturnal nature of the fox. *How does this illustration make you feel? Why does it make you feel this way?* The children might talk about the pawprints leading from the fence to the henhouse; the way the fox's face, body and tail wrap all the way around the henhouse, and the size of the fox on the page in relation to the henhouse. They might also look at and explore the facial expression of the fox and may even notice the facial pattern in the craters of the moon.
- Now, turn the children's attention to the words on the page. Re-read the text: 'six silent steps'. *What does silent mean? Can you move without making a sound? Why do you think it is important that the fox moves without a sound?*
- Come back to thinking about the word 'thriller'. *What do you think will happen in the next spread? What might connect with the number 7 and lead the story on?* Gather children's predictions around a copy of the illustration.
- Now, turn the page and compare with the children's predictions. *Was this what you were expecting? What do you think is happening in this illustration? What do the size, body position and facial expression of the fox make you think and feel about what is going on and what is about to happen? Does this remind you of any other stories you know?* Children may see similarities with traditional tales like *The Three Little Pigs* or *Red Riding Hood* or modern retellings of these.



- Look at the text on the page. *How do you think these seven taps sound?* Encourage the children to experiment with different rhythm patterns, using call-and-response to see if children can tap back a rhythm to you; they could then go on to play this with a partner, making up different patterns from the seven knocks, e.g.,
  - TAP! TAP! TAP! — TAP! — TAP! TAP! TAP!
  - TAP! TAP! — TAP! TAP! — TAP! TAP! — TAP!
  - TAP! TAP! TAP! TAP! TAP! TAP! TAP!
- Consider the way the book has slowly built up to this point. *How much further do you think the counting will go? What does this make the children think will happen in the next spread, and even the spreads after that?*
- Turn the page to reveal the **'eight beady eyes'** and share the words and illustration. *How does this image make you feel? What makes you feel this way?* The children may pick up on the facial expressions of the fox and hens, the fact that the illustrator has chosen the colour red for the number 8, which in many situations represents danger and is also the colour of blood.
- Read on to the next spread. *Was this what you expected to happen? What changes do you see in the turn of the page, and how does this make you feel?* The children may talk about the shift from darkness to light and the stillness to a flurry of movement. *What do you think this page might sound like if you could hear what was going on? How would it compare to the previous spreads?*
- Look at the fact that we are now on number 9 and are reaching the end of the book. *How do you think this counting thriller will end? What makes you think this?* Now, turn the page to share the next spread for **'ten sharp teeth'**. *What do you think is happening here? Have the hens escaped or has something else happened?* Now, discuss whether they think this is where the story will end and why they think this.
- Now turn the page to reveal the next spread. *How would you describe the scene? What do you think you can hear here? How do you think it would feel to be surrounded by all the hens? Where do you think the fox is now? What do you think it is thinking or feeling?* Look at the fact that, for the first time in the text, there are no accompanying words. *Why do you think the illustrator chose to leave this spread wordless?*
- Now share the next spread. *Are you surprised by what has happened here? What do you think about the fox now? What do you notice about how it has changed from the way it has been shown in the rest of the book?* The children may notice how tiny the fox is on this page, compared with how dominating it has been in the other images. And, for the first time, it is the one being pursued rather than being the pursuer.
- Turn to the final counting spread and share the illustration and text. *How does the **'one frightened fox'** return you to the **'one famished fox'** where we began the story? Why do you think we can only see the fox's tail here? What do you think the rest of its body and face look like now?* You could give the children appropriate sketching materials here and ask them to draw out their ideas and then compare and contrast their representations. Some children may pick out the word **'frightened'** and draw a representation of this, others may look at the position of the tail and see something else — perhaps that the point of the tail represents curiosity, and wonder if the fox will return to the henhouse again. Ask the children if they think this experience will have changed the fox. *Do you think the fox will leave the hens alone or do you think it will return?*



- Now look at the spreads that follow, with the prints of the hens' feet and the hens nesting soundly. Some astute children may notice the one hen that has one eye open. *What does this suggest about their view of the fox's behaviour?* Compare these spreads with the pawprints we saw at the start. *Why do you think the illustrator chose these spreads to place at the end of the book? What message does this give us about the end of the story?* Read the words chosen to accompany the spread: '**No hens or foxes were harmed in the making of this book.**' *What do you think this means and why do you think the author has chosen to put these words here?*
- Think about the book as a whole and the story contained within it. *Do you think the story might have a message or moral like many traditional tales and fables? What do you think this might be?* The children might suggest things like, the fox learned not to use his power to harm others, and the hens learned that they are defenceless on their own but powerful when they act together.
- Re-read the entire book from the beginning to the end. Allow the group to begin to explore their responses to it through booktalk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls 'the four basic questions'. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
  - *Tell me... was there anything you liked about this story...?*
  - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*
  - *Was there anything that puzzled you...?*
  - *Were there any patterns... any connections that you noticed...? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen...?*
- The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.
- As children reply it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings 'likes', 'dislikes', 'puzzles' and 'patterns'. This written record helps to map out the group's view of the text and the important themes and ideas around the story from the children's perspective and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favourite parts or spreads in the story, and why this was.
- Extend the children's thinking through more evaluative questions, such as: *Do you think the description of the book as a 'counting book thriller' was a good one? Did it work on both levels? Who do you think would like this book? Why?*
- Leave copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.

### To continue work around the book:

- In this book, the illustrator, Kate Read uses a mixture of collage, printing and drawing. Collect together a range of art materials that will allow the children to engage in exploring illustration, for example: cartridge paper, sketching pencils 2B-4B and coloured pencils, oil pastels and wax crayons. Children could be invited to experiment with creating images with layers, with other predators and prey, imitating some of the texture and detail they have seen here.
- Returning to the cover, children could explore pairings of colours: those that complement, contrast or clash, those that make each other stand out or 'pop', as the fox does against the background.



- You may also like to visit the Kate Read’s website at <https://www.kateread.co.uk/> to see her other work and gain insights into her artistic process and other activity. The **‘three plump hens’** spread is a particularly good example of how she uses cut paper to create different textures: note how the beaks and eyes of each hen can be seen to stand out from their foliage. Children could experiment with drawing their own outlines of a hen and filling it in with different papers to create the effect of plumage, and emulating her use of shadow to anchor and add reality to the image she creates in this way. Children could also experiment with stamps and repeated patterns in the style of the endpapers. Children could also draw animals from photographs or from life to explore how they look and experiment with representing their movements.
- You can watch a video of Kate Read talking about the book and how she works here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBG4YpNZGTg&list=PLfSmrJ\\_1qvzCef56lw4P4UrhslxoH-IG&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBG4YpNZGTg&list=PLfSmrJ_1qvzCef56lw4P4UrhslxoH-IG&index=1)
- The children could turn the text of the story into a performance piece with simple costumes — perhaps masks or fox ears from Kate Read’s website — considering how they will bring out the thriller in the counting story that they have read.
- You may want to support the children to make up their own story counting books with a different setting. *What have you learnt from reading Kate Read’s counting book thriller that could help you make your own counting book in words and pictures?* Allow time and space for children to come up with initial ideas, to draft and create their own stories, to reflect on these with an appropriate response partner and to publish these in handmade books using appropriate art materials. More information about following an authentic writing process in the classroom can be found at: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/teaching-approaches/following-authentic-writing-process>.

**This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: [www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk)**