

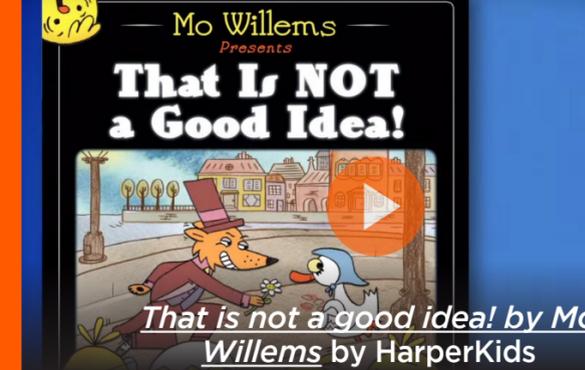


A tale of two beasts

Using quality literature springboard

English

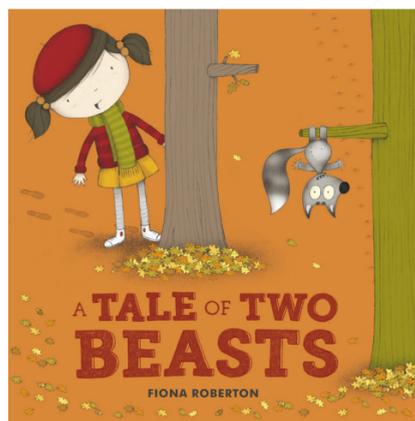
Stage 1
Years 1-2



Review:

A tale of two beasts

ROBERTSON, Fiona
Hodder Children's Books,
UK, 2016
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USER LEVEL: Stage 1
Stage 2

KLA: English

SYLLABUS: English K-10

SCIS 1750189 Paper
\$14.99

What is it about?

Visual literacy elements and playful language combine in this artful picture book to tell parallel stories. The child's narrative, told in the first person, is of finding, rescuing and caring for a strange little beast. The same story, told from the creature's viewpoint, is that he was ambushed by a terrible beast, dressed up and shown off to even more terrible beasts. Two complete stories are presented, each with its own version of the same events altered to reflect the character whose voice is being heard. The illustrations echo the two different *points of view* through focalisation and this invites the reader to experience each character's perception of the same events.

S. Rasaiah & K. Hodkinson

Why is this important? Why does it matter?

Students in Stage 1 are beginning to recognise the way that composers use creative features and imaginative plots to engage an audience. In this book, the clever juxtaposition of text and illustrations enhances enjoyment through humour. The cover alludes to the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* through the visuals of a little girl wearing red, travelling alone through the woods and a slightly wolf-like creature, which could lead students to predict the tale. The first page text, *I was walking home from Grandma's house, through the deep dark woods, when I spied a strange little beast* appears to confirm the prediction but then changes abruptly to *He was stuck up a tree, and whining sadly ...* From here on the *intertextual* qualities diminish and the new story is formed. Students learn that expectations are developed through the composer's choices and create interest when they surprise us. *A tale of two beasts* allows students to learn about the power of *point of view* in written text and how it acts to focalise our view of events and images.

Related texts:

- First person video game images
- *Gorilla* by Anthony Browne
- *That is not a good idea!* by Mo Willems
- *The three little wolves and the big bad pig* by Eugene Trivizas & Helen Oxenbury
- *The true story of the 3 little pigs* by Jon Scieszka & Lane Smith

Resources:

Learning and teaching activities in this springboard are centred on outcomes and content from the [NSW English K-10 syllabus](#) and the [English Textual Concepts](#) resource.

How do I use the text to teach the textual concepts of point of view and intertextuality?

Predicting and the use of intertextual references

A tale of two beasts provides opportunities for students to understand that some texts are connected with other texts via *intertextuality*. Before reading the text, direct students to the title and the visual clues on the front and back covers. Ask students to predict why the characters are both called beasts and what the relationship is between the characters on the front cover and then on the back cover. Ask them to explain why they think this way. Does this book's cover hint at any stories or characters they already know? Read the first line of the first page and again ask students if it reminds them of another story and if their

prediction was right or has changed. Then read the next few pages and ask if their predictions were correct. After reading the whole story and discussing the text generally, ask the students about why the author may have used the intertextual references to the fairy tale. Who does it imply is the intended audience of this book? Go back to the first page and draw attention to the little sign with a quote from the famous writer, Mark Twain: *There are two sides to every story, and then there is the truth.* Ask students what this adds to the story? Why would the author/illustrator have included it? What does it tell us about them? Students can then copy the style of this text by choosing a different fairy tale to base the opening of a story and characters on. Who could be in the same situation as

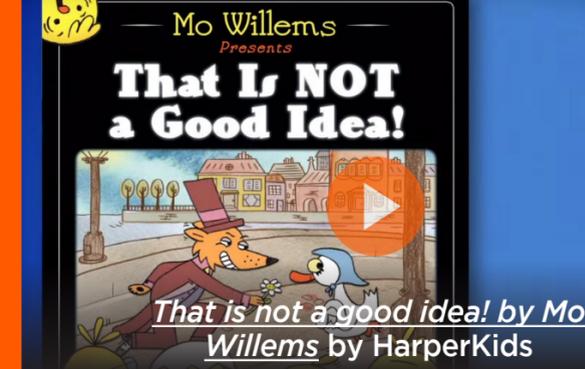


A tale of two beasts (continued)

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the beast and the girl? e.g. The princess and the frog; Goldilocks and Baby Bear. How could these stories be changed? As a whole class or individually, rewrite a familiar narrative/or opening based on these discussions. (*Understanding* and *experimenting*.)

EN1-8B

- understand that texts can draw on readers' or viewers' knowledge of texts to make meaning and enhance enjoyment, e.g. comparing fairy tales

EN1-8B

- Discuss possible author intent and intended audience of a range of texts

EN1-10C

- recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586)

Point of view activity

It is important to explore the two characters as focalisers of this story. The dual storyline allows readers to see the two contrasting points of view which are expressed through the first person accounts. The visual images are shown from a third person perspective and this allows us to feel as though we are watching the action and we can make our own determination of what is happening. But the use of the first person narration actually focalises our viewing of the image from that character's *point of view*. For this reason, our first reading of the text is likely to be different to further readings of the text. Explore this idea with students by asking them questions about what the image tells us is happening and what the words tell us. Do they say the same thing? Are there clues as to another way we could see this event? Why do you think the illustrator chose to represent the story this way? Adds humour, engages readers etc. More formally analyse a page of the text and compare the visuals with the words spoken. Provide students with some images from other picture books such as Anthony Browne's *Gorilla* that show events from a character's *point of view*. Students will most likely know first person visuals from video games and these could be explored to help students better understand the differences. Discuss the differences between these images and this book. Ask students to make a new drawing for their favourite page which actually shows the event through the character's eyes. (*Understanding*, *experimenting* and *connecting*.)

EN1-4A

- Identify visual representations of characters' actions, reactions, speech and thought processes in narratives, and consider how these images add to or contradict or multiply the meaning of accompanying words

EN1-8B

- Discuss possible author intent and intended audience of a range of texts

EN1-10C

- recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication. (ACELT1586)



What the text says	What the picture says	What we think/feel. Do they match?
<i>...so I decided to rescue him.</i>	The girl has pulled him from the tree (<i>FEEPI!</i>) and holds him upside down. The animal looks startled and scared	It's humorous as it doesn't look like a rescue
<i>'I will call you Fang!' I told him,</i>	The girl is holding him out and talking to him	It looks like she owns him. He looks small and cute, not ferocious enough to be called Fang
<i>And I wrapped him warmly up in my scarf,</i>	She is wrapping him up and you can hardly see him anymore	He looks scared and can't get away. We feel sorry for him/think she is caring
<i>And carried him safely home.</i>	The girl is walking, holding onto the animal in front of her	He looks worried with his big eyes, wondering what will happen next