

WINSTON AND THE INDOOR CAT

Themes

Friendship



Differences



Acceptance

Exploring the Story

Look at the colour palette that Leila Rudge has chosen throughout the book. Ask the group if they can see a difference between the indoor cat and the outdoor cat? What about the indoor and outdoor environments? Why do they think Leila has chosen to illustrate in this way? How do the different colours make them feel? What do the colours tell them about the characters and their surroundings (i.e. do they feel a sense of adventure looking at the autumnal colours of the outdoor cat's environment? Do the blues portray a sense of calm for the indoor cat and his surroundings?)



Illustrations are such an integral part of picture book storytelling. Ask the children to consider if there were no words in this book, do they think they would still be able to understand all of what is happening in the story? Do the illustrations tell the whole story or do they think there would be important parts missing without the text? Is there any part of the story that is only told in the illustrations? What can be learnt from the illustrations that cannot be learnt from the text? Do both illustrations and text combine to create a deeper understanding of the characters, their environments and the events that happen in the story?

Ask the class if they noticed at the end of the story that Winston has a collar even though he is still an outdoor cat (most of the time)? What do they think this means?

Sometimes it can be difficult to understand why somebody lives a certain way, thinks a certain way or does things a certain way, especially if it's very different to our own ways of living, thinking or doing. Winston and the indoor cat show us that it is important to be curious and even brave, to try new things that we might not have seen or done before. This can allow us to make new friends and better understand others, even if we don't always like the same things or have the same interests. Ask the class to consider if they have a friend that has a different home life, culture, or interest to them? What do they do to show interest in these differences? What do they do when they are together with this friend? What things have they learnt through this friendship and what new things have they been able to introduce to their friend? Do they also have lots of things in common with this friend?

Activities

Warm and Cool Palette

Break the group into pairs and ask them to choose an illustration from a picture book (alternatively, you can assign them a picture or give them a pre-printed outline to colour in depending on their age level and abilities). Ask one child in each pair to replicate the illustration in a warm palette and the other child in each pair to replicate it in a cool palette. Once they have finished, bring the pairs back together to compare their illustrations. What is noticeably different about each pair of illustrations? Do the colour palettes make them feel differently about the illustrations? Do they tell different stories?

To extend on this activity, bring the group back together and have each pair present their warm/cool illustrations to the other children, ask them if they have any other observations they'd like to share.

Colouring Sheet

Winston's Rube Goldberg machine

Winston is a very intelligent cat and creates a Rube Goldberg machine to release the indoor cat from his home, quite a difficult task when you don't have hands! Examine the illustrations closely to see how he did it. As a group, can you fashion your own Rube Goldberg machine to open a door without your hands? Try to use items that you already have on hand. You may like to do some research on Rube Goldberg machines to get some ideas.

Cat-pture Yourself

Using the template provided, illustrate yourself as if you were a cat. Are you an adventurous cat, an indoor cat, or somewhere in between? Do you have a collar? Scruffy or smooth fur? Are you clean and glossy or shabby and dirty? To help you decide what kind of cat you might be, have a look at different breeds of cats in books or online. What colour fur and eyes do you have? Are you patterned, or patchy or plain? Once you have finished your cat-pture explain your masterpiece to the group.

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Gary
Leila Rudge
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