

The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2024 Shadowing Resources



Activities for April's Garden Illustrated by Catalina Echeverri



General Activities for all books

- Lego Fun: Create a scene from one of the books using Lego or other building materials/toys.
- Shadowing Scrapbook: Document your journey through the 2024 Shadowing period. This can be used to record books and activities discussed in each session, as well as offer a creative space for reviews, reflection and anything else you might like to add.
- Take the title or first line from each of the shortlisted books and create a poem or story by combining them with words and phrases of your own.
- Carnegie Washing Line: Cut out shapes of clothes (e.g. socks, tops, trousers etc) using cardboard and write quotes from the Medal for Writing books and pictures from Medal for Illustration and hang on a washing line with pegs to display. Group members could do this as an activity in the session if time allows or asked to do at home and then to bring to the next session.
- Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- When Worlds Collide: Select two characters, each from a different shortlisted book. Imagine what they would say to each other, if they met. How would they behave? You could improvise this, or write a script or short story that describes the encounter. E.g, Erik from Crossing the Line meets Growls from Steady for This.
- Carnegie Touch and Taste:
 - Touch: Curate a selection of items inspired by the shortlists, place them into a drawstring bag and have shadowers try to identify each item using touch. As time goes on, and shadowers become more familiar with the shortlisted books, you can expand the game to include guessing the title of the book based on the collection of items in the bag.
 - Taste: Mine the shortlisted titles for references to food and use this to spark discussions about food they like and dislike. You could encourage everyone to bring a snack each week, focusing each session around one of the titles. Alternatively, you could throw a shortlist celebration party and have everyone contribute a dish inspired by one of the shortlisted books. and then offer them to try different foods from the shortlisted books. Make sure you have a conversation about allergies and dietary requirements well in advance!
- The Shadowing Tree: ask shadowing group members to write very short reviews or info about characters on leaf shaped cutouts or sticky notes. The cutouts could be hung on an artificial tree, or a real one, depending on your setting, whilst sticky notes could be arranged on a poster and displayed in the library.
- Think about who would play the main characters in a film or TV adaptation of one or more of the shortlisted titles. Create a cast list and explain your choices.
- Rewrite the ending of one of the shortlisted books. What have you changed, and why? Does it alter how you feel about the story?

- Have a go at creating spine poetry by using the titles of the shortlisted books as phrases/words. Share your creations online using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies24**
- Create your own playlist to accompany a shortlisted book - you might want to highlight a particular theme, tap into the geography or time period of the book or create a playlist that reflects a particular character.
- Choose a character from one of the shortlisted books and reinvent them in the art style of your choosing. You could create your character digitally, draw them by hand, paint them or even make a sculpture. You could try creating the same character in a variety of styles - Manga, Pop Art, Disney - using different materials.
- Create your own book trailer for one of the books, or work together to make a trailer for the entire shortlist. This could be a TikTok style 'sell' of the book or a more traditional thematic video.

Book Activities

1. After April moves to the new house, her mother suggests that she should 'draw the garden of your dreams'. Using whatever media you like, can you do the same? Consider what plants you will have in it, the size and shape of it, secret doors or passageways, statues, places to play or read or hide. It's your design so the only limit is your imagination.
2. Patterns are used frequently throughout the book - in the endpapers and on the walls of the rooms in the story. Where else can you identify patterns? Have a go at making a potato print to design your own patterned wallpaper. What other methods could you use to create your own patterns?
3. This book is full of emotions and feelings. Can you create an empathy map to chart the different feelings that April and her mother experience as the story progresses? When do their feelings mirror each other's and when are they different? Can you see that in the illustrations? How does the illustrator communicate this?
4. On p.35, there is one word on the page: Happy. How do the colours, shapes and composition of the illustration support this? Draw a picture to illustrate what Happy means to you. Think about who or what you want to feature, how you intend to arrange people and/or objects, and what colours you will use.
5. Put together a collaborative notebook where each of you can contribute notes, drawings and magazine cutouts of things which April may have in her garden when she and mum move to a place of their own.
6. Gather some cans/pots or jars and plant some seeds. Watch daily to see what happens and note your observations on paper to share with the rest of your group.
7. Draw a grayscale muted picture of April in a garden. Then, using a tracing paper overlay, add flowers and ornaments in bright colours.
8. Create your own self-portrait in the style of Catalina Echeverri. You can draw from memory or use a photograph or even your reflection for reference.

Title: *April's Garden*

Illustrator: Catalina Echeverri

Author: Isla McGuckin

Publisher: Graffeg

These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools and settings with ideas to develop comprehension and extended provision around Yoto Carnegie-shortlisted picturebooks and illustrated texts for children of all ages. They build on our work supporting teachers to use high-quality texts to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. We hope you find them useful.

These notes have been written with children aged 5–11 in mind. However, this is a sophisticated picture book which has scope for it to be interpreted in different ways with pupils of different ages.

Reading the book and close reading of illustration:

- In *April's Garden* text and illustration combine to address life changes and themes of patience, resilience and hope in a deceptively simple, disarmingly powerful picturebook. The text explores issues that some children may find triggering, so it is important to consider your children before sharing the text. The text will need extended time to read and discuss, with an enabling adult who can sensitively address issues portrayed and questions that may arise from the children.
- Look together closely at the front cover, inviting the children to share their first impressions. *What ideas do the title and illustration give you about the story? Who do you think this character might be, what do you think you know about them from their facial expression and body language, the setting and the props around them? What might be the significance of the pot on the windowsill? How might the text relate to the illustration you see? Look at the illustration on the back cover, but without reading the blurb. What do you see here? How does this connect with what you saw on the front cover? What might all this suggest about the book you are about to read?*
- Share the endpapers, ownership and title pages: What do you see here, and how do these images connect or build on your predictions about the story? Then share the opening spread of five frames. *What do you think is happening here? Why might April and Mamma be leaving at night, in someone else's car, in such a rush that they leave with no luggage, dropping a favourite doll in their haste? What do you think Mamma might be thinking, as you see her face in the mirror? Where might the 'new place' be? Who do you think the lady unlocking the door to let them in might be? It is not clear why the mother and daughter are fleeing, and sensitivity will be needed if children raise issues around family break-up, refugee experience, or domestic violence, particularly if children have experienced this themselves.*
- Share the next four illustrations, showing Mamma and April's new home and how settling in makes April feel, but without yet showing April's drawing on page 11. *What do you notice in the first two spreads about the place April has moved to, and how do you think she feels being there? How does the image of April looking out at the rainy garden make you feel? What makes you feel this way? Do you think April and Mamma are feeling the same? Does the kindness of the lady who has fetched and settled them in, and the mention of 'neighbourhood ladies', give you any clues to where they are staying? What do you think April might draw when Mamma asks her to 'draw the garden of your dreams'?*
- Now go on to share and discuss April's drawing. *How does April's drawing compare with the spreads we have seen so far? Children might notice the colour, the smiles, the sunshine and flowers. Then go on to read up to, but stopping before the double-page spread on page 24–25, and invite the children to reflect on what they see happening and how April might feel. How do you think April feels about her new home - the well-meant but hand-me-down toys and clothes, the limitations of her new life? How does the illustrator use April's body language to capture her*

mood, e.g., her impatience in the vignettes on pages 20–21? Then share the explosive double-page spread ‘This is not fair!’ How does this spread make you feel, how does it capture April’s mood? Children may raise the way the dismal rain mirrors April’s crossness.

- Read on to the end of the book, allowing time and space for the children to closely read the illustrations. *How does the reuse of April’s drawing on page 27 make you feel? Discuss the scene where Mamma unpacks, the friend cleans and April is bathed in light from the box, then the close-up on the following page. How does the growth of the flowers echo other changes in April’s life? What else has changed over time, how do you think April might also have grown?*
- After reading, encourage the children to share their thoughts. *What did they like and/or dislike? What did it make them think about? Do they have any questions about the book? How did it make them feel? How do the illustrations deepen their engagement with and understanding of the story?*

Engaging in illustration:

- Revisit the final spread of Mamma and April in their new home, old friends playing and new ones visiting, looking at the interplay between the text and words — ‘And April was... happy. (‘Happy’ in handwritten font)’ — and how the illustration takes us beyond the words to show the resolution of the story with a wealth of different possibilities hinted at.
- Look back through the book, focussing on particular spreads, such as the safe house, April in her oversized coat, the packets of seeds alongside the comforting meal, exploring together how the illustrations go beyond the words. Look at the distinctive palette with vivid colours for the pots, seeds, April’s own drawings. Encourage the children to look closely at the illustrations and talk about these and other spreads in more depth, looking at what is happening and how the emotional journey is conveyed.
- Everyday objects like the pots, dolls, and comforting meals with tea and toast take on special significance in the story. Invite the children to track every time they see one of these to see the role it plays in the unfolding narrative and emotional journey, then invite them to create some artwork in the style of Catalina Echeverri, inspired by a special object of their own. Model how to use soft drawing pencils (2B-4B are ideal) to draw the object, drawing alongside the children as they work. When their drawings are complete, allow the children to use oil pastels or crayons to add colour and bring their drawings to life, concentrating on the shades and tones seen in the setting.
- Give space for the children to pin up and share their drawings, allowing them to look at the similarities and differences in their work and to talk about what is effective in their own work and that of others.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE, 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.