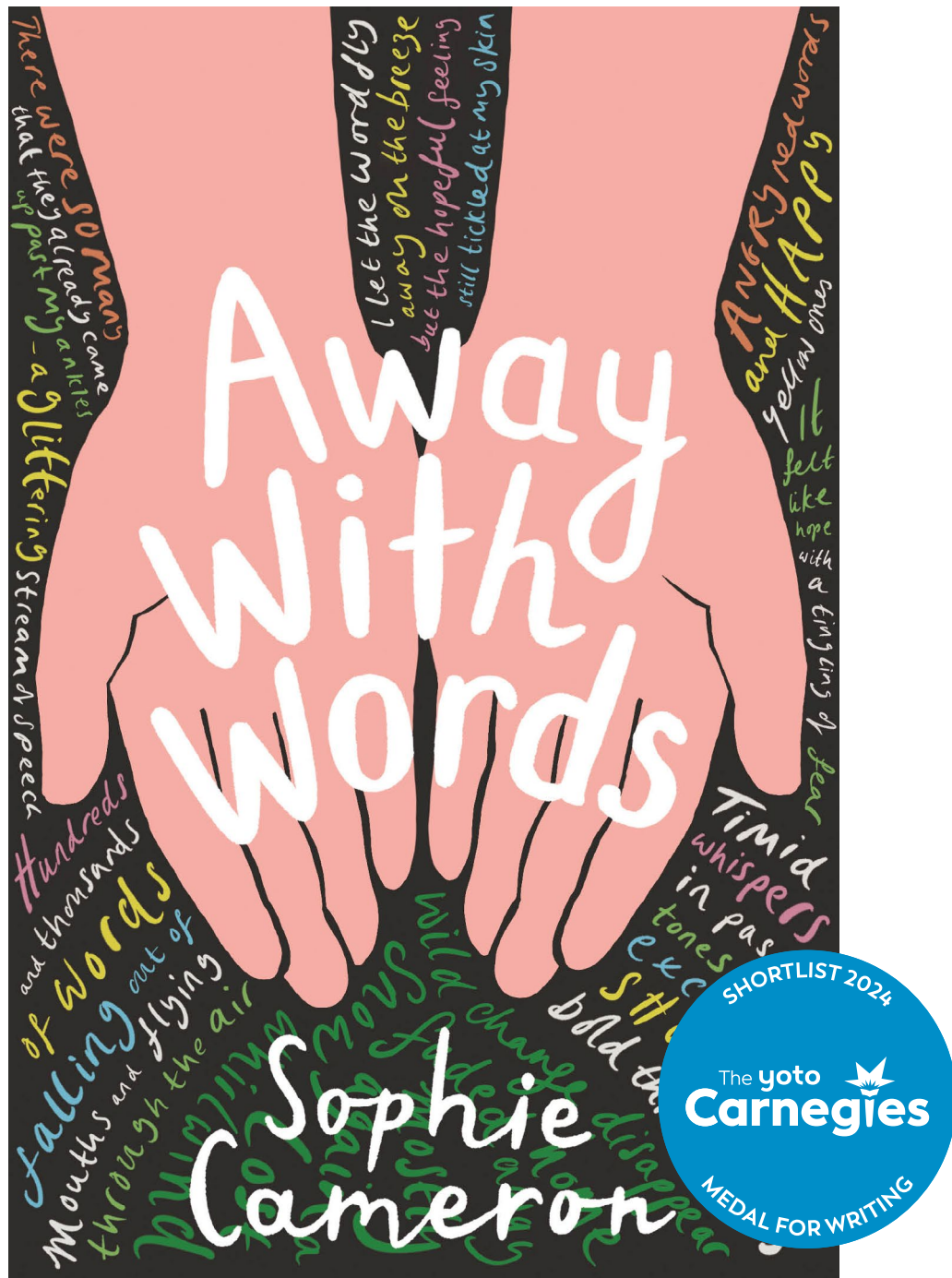
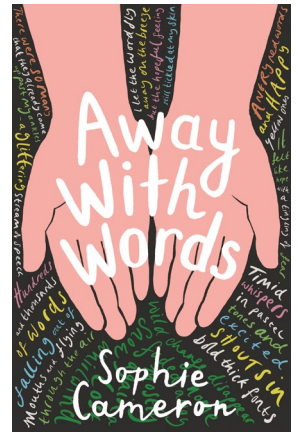


The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2024 Shadowing Resources

Activities for Away With Words by Sophie Cameron



Content warning
Bullying

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. When Gala first arrives in Scotland, people speak quickly and because she is still learning English she can only understand a few words in every sentence. *"Everyone had kept saying that once I was here I'd soak up the language like a sponge. I felt more like a stone, having buckets and buckets of words thrown over me without any of them seeping in."* Choose a language that no one in your group speaks fluently but in which a few words are familiar. Find a recording online of a native speaker of your chosen language, talking at a conversational speed and play it for the group. How did you feel whilst you were listening to it? How many words did you understand?
2. In *Away With Words*, words have a physical presence after they are spoken. They are different colours, sizes and fonts, depending on who has spoken, what the word means and how it has been said. Have fun thinking about what font and colour you might speak in if your words were tangible. What about words spoken by your friends and family? Create a poster featuring some of your favourite words in your favourite fonts. Can you write a short sentence or poem where the words change colour, size and font as the meaning changes?
3. Gala and Natalie make poems for people by collecting words and attaching them to paper. Collect some magazines, newspapers and leaflets and use them to build your own poems in the same way.
4. English is a complicated language to learn and one of the things that Gala finds difficult is using idioms. An idiom is a phrase that means something that is not obvious from looking at the meaning of the individual words. Some examples are:
 - I could eat a horse
 - use your noodle
 - cool as a cucumber

What other idioms can you think of? Do you know any from a different language?

5. Natalie has selective mutism. What do you know about the condition? Do some research and find out how you might help someone who is selectively mute and what you should avoid. Make an information poster, leaflet, or presentation to share all the things you have learned.
6. The poem that Gala and Natalie write for Eilidh makes her feel better about her operation. Do you have a poem, piece of writing or quote that makes you feel better about things? Talk to your friends and family members - do they have favourites too? Collect them in an anthology or use them as the basis for a piece of artwork. If you are able, you could use them to decorate the space you use for your shadowing meetings!
7. Gala's chocolate-bar-in-bread sandwich surprises her classmates. She misses the churros from her hometown but learns to love Scottish-style strawberry tarts. What other foods did you encounter while reading the shortlisted titles? Are you able to try any of them? If you had to move to a different country what local foods would you miss?
8. At the end of *Away With Words*, Gala creates "The Dictionary of Gala" where she collects words that she likes or wants to remember. Create your own dictionary for interesting words that you discover while reading the shortlisted titles. They could be words that are new to you or simply words that you like. Share the words with the rest of your group or collaborate and make your dictionary together.

Before Reading

These tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done on your own too. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

The Opening

Read the extracts below from the opening of the book and discuss your ideas about what is going on.

- A. The head teacher had slugs on his face. Lime-green, right in the middle of his chin.

Not the animal – the word.

The word slugs stuck to his chin in lime-green letters.

- B. My old school was filled with words too. Back there I never paid them much attention. Sometimes my friends and I would flick them across the desk to each other when we were bored in class, but I'd never thought about how many there were around us.
- C. Seeing words in our own language and Papa's familiar ochre shades felt like a lifebelt, but it was quickly pulled away when Mr Waytson said a loud white 'Oh!' He went to reception, spoke to the woman standing behind the desk and came back holding a sheet of paper.

'Your _____, Gala,' he said, handing it to me. 'Eilidh and Eilidh will _____':

Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.

During Reading

WARNING: DON'T READ THE QUESTIONS BEFORE READING EACH SECTION!

All page numbers refer to the Little Tiger Press paperback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2023.

Read the chapter and then answer the questions. You will probably need to spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions.

Chapter 1

- What do you notice about the way people's words appear?
- Starting a new school can be hard for anyone. What factors make it even harder for Gala?

Chapters 2&3

- Gala mentions several contrasts. How does she compare Spain and Scotland, Scotland in the summer and Scotland in the winter. What other contrasts do you notice and why do you think they've been included?

Chapter 3&4

- What are some of the frustrations and difficulties Gala experiences because of her level of English?
- Why does Gala shout at Ryan?
- Why is the word 'encourage' important to Gala?

Chapters 5&6

- What do you think about the different ways Ryan and Papa handle her homesickness and frustration?
- If Gala was in your class, what would you do, if anything, about Craig and Abigail's behaviour?

Chapters 7&8

- Why do you think Gala feels a connection with Natalie?
- Why do you think Natalie collects words?

Chapters 9-14

- Why do you think the ensaimades make Gala upset?
- What does Eilidh O find out in her research about people saving spoken words?
- Why is Natalie worried that Ryan will tell people at school about the poems?
- How do you think Craig will react to his poem?

Chapters 15-18

- Who do you think is writing the mean poems and why?
- Would you agree with Iaia that Gala is 'settling in well?'. How do her feelings about Fortrose seem to be changing?

Chapters 19 - 22

- What do you think about the different ways people respond to the accusations against Gala and Natalie? Think about: Ryan, Mr Watson, Eilidh O, Papa, Iaia, Craig, the rest of Gala's class.
- Why is Gala angry at Natalie? Do you think she is justified?
- What do you think Natalie and Gala are planning to do to clear their names? How do you think Iaia can help?

Chapters 23-25

- How does Sophie Cameron build up the tension in Chapter 23?
- What do you think Gala means when she says 'Like the last few flakes of a shaken snow globe, my mixed up feelings about Fortrose and Cadaques finally fell into place.'?
- What do you think of the girls' new plan?

Chapter 26-29

- Were you surprised about Eilidh C? What do you think about her reasons for doing what she did?
- Why do you think Gala and Natalie chose the metaphor of a snow globe for their story? What do you think it symbolises?
- What do you think of the way Gala, Natalie and Eilidh O behave towards Eilidh C?
- What do you think of the ending of the book?

After Reading

Initial thoughts?

- Now that you have finished reading, take a moment to think on your own about the novel as a whole, before discussing some of the questions below in a pair or small group.
 - What do you like about the book?
 - What do you dislike about the book?
 - Which moments most stick in your memory?
 - Do you think Sophie Cameron does a good job of presenting difficult emotions (like loneliness and anger)?
 - Who do you think should read this book?

Take up to 20 minutes for this activity.

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *Away With Words* further.

How words appear

In an interview about *Away With Words*, Sophie Cameron said:

Pip Johnson, the Senior Designer at Little Tiger who designed and illustrated the wonderful cover, has also done an amazing job getting creative with the layout of the text and it looks brilliant – so while I can't take credit for that, I can't wait to see what readers think of it!

<https://littletiger.co.uk/away-with-words-a-ga-with-author-sophie-cameron>

- Flick through the book, noticing some of the places where Pip Johnson has been creative with the layout. Choose one or two places that you like or that interest you.
- Think about which words have been presented in different fonts or pulled out of the text in the examples you've chosen. How does the page or double-page spread look? Discuss how this element of the book adds to the story.

Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.

Selective mutism

The charity iSpeak represents people like Natalie. Read the two quotations below from a book they have produced called *Selective Mutism in Our Own Words*.

Selective Mutism is commonly defined as the 'failure to speak in certain social situations.' However, to me, it is so much more than that. On the surface, it appears as though the sufferer is choosing when and where to speak, however the truth is that rather than being deliberately silent in certain situations, it feels as though you physically can't talk, like the words will not come out. – Danielle

Selective Mutism is like having your voice trapped inside your own mind. It's feeling as if your throat is physically locked when you're put in a position in which you are expected to speak and want to speak, but can't. It's feeling alone, because you're 'that kid who doesn't talk' and most people have never encountered anyone like you before, and they don't understand why you can't speak. It's not being able to explain why you don't talk, because even if you were able to speak to answer them, you don't fully understand it yourself. – Alison

- With a partner or small group discuss the questions below:
 - How well do you think Sophie Cameron has presented selective mutism through the character of Natalie?
 - What do you think it would be like to be unable to speak in certain situations? If you have experienced this, either because you did not know the language everyone else was speaking or because, like Natalie, anxiety sometimes makes it hard for you to speak, you could share if you are able and wish to do so.
 - In *Away With Words* the visibility of everyone else's words highlights the difficulties Gala and Natalie have. What seems to be similar and different about their difficulties?

Take up to 10 minutes for this activity.

Favourite words

At various points in the book, particular words or phrases are important to a character.

- Choose a couple of the examples below and discuss in a pair or small group the importance of this word at this point. You could think about: why it is important to a particular character; how it links to the main themes of the book, such as finding your voice, friendship, not giving up, the power of words, bullying and so on.
 - Page 20: perro
 - Page 32 encourage
 - Page 62 frustrating
 - Page 67 we live here now
 - Page 72 faith
 - Page 77 brave
 - Page 96 creepy
- Think about a word that is important to you. If you said it aloud, what colour and font would you choose? Share your ideas with a partner or small group.

Take up to 20 minutes for this activity.

A bully with a backstory

Rosh, reviewing the novel on GoodReads, wrote:

The book offers a somewhat different perspective on bullying, one that I am still undecided about whether to agree with or not. I get what the author was trying to do, but I am not convinced by the rationale. Can't reveal more as I don't wish to go into spoilers. But just want to say: a bully with a backstory is still a bully unless he/she stops being one. There's no justification for bullying others.

- Discuss what you think about the way bullying is presented in the book through Craig, Abigail and Eilidh C.
- Choose one of these three characters:
 - Write a few sentences from their point of view explaining their behaviour.
 - Write a few sentences from the point of view of one of the characters they bully, explaining the impact of the bullying.

Take up to 20 minutes for this activity.

Reading the Reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Read all of the reviews and discuss which comes closest to your own view.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph expressing your views about the novel. If possible, share your reviews with a group.
- Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12668

Give yourself 30-60 minutes to complete this activity.

A.

As someone who has lived outside of my birth country for many years and in many different places, needing to learn new languages and finding your own voice in that language is so difficult. Gala's struggles with adapting to her new home, life, and language in particular were very relatable, and I loved the friendship with Natalie, someone who has selective mutism, and I found her struggles with language to be nuanced and balanced well with Gala.

Did I mention this is also basically magical realism, where words take physical shape in different fonts and colors when said aloud? BRILLIANT. I also loved when the text got a little "experimental" with swashes of words in corners and margins or went out of order or upside down - I wish we'd gotten even more of that, the book felt very fresh and creative every time it played with the text.

Cameron approaches big topics in her stories and handles them with extreme care, which is why I think her books read so well for adult readers...I loved seeing a pair of gay men as caring parents, and one kid in school comes out as non binary and no big fuss is made of it. Middle grade is great for creating cozy, comfortable worlds, but queer-friendly spaces in literature for younger readers is so necessary and there is so much love and compassion to be found here.

Chris, www.goodreads.com

B.

I found this a bit strange at first, but once I just accepted it and went with the flow I loved it.

The characters of Gala and Natalie are great. I love their friendship. I love the fact that both of them in different ways are struggling to talk but are still able to communicate with each other.

The way that words are described in this story is great. Depending on how the person who is saying them feels or says them makes the words change font style and colour, some of them even being glittery.

The story is a really good one too, basically saying that it is a good idea to watch what is going on around you and notice things, because things aren't always what they seem and everyone has their own stories and things going on in their lives. It talks about school lives and addresses bullying in different ways and how it can make people feel, but not just the bullied person, the bully themselves as well, which I don't think gets talked about enough. There is usually a reason for someone's actions.

Lily O'Dwyer, young reviewer, www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk

C.

The problem with having a first person perspective for this book was that we read all of Gala's thoughts and apprehensions in English, a language she wasn't fluent in and yet voicing her thoughts so well in. This created a jarring contradiction between what was being said and the language it was being said in.

The story goes mostly as expected, with no surprises along the way. This is why it didn't work better for me.

Rosh, www.goodreads.com

D.
Words hold such power – the power to hurt and to heal, to blame and to free, and to hide and reveal. The courage and strength that both girls show as they unite to fight to have their truth heard brought tears – I found the imagery used beautifully poignant and it is something I will never forget. This is a powerful, thought-provoking and moving story that certainly does have a magical way with words.

Review, www.bookcraic.blog

Writing Activities

On your own, or with a partner, complete one or more of these writing activities to help you develop your thoughts about *Away With Words* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

- Flick through the book and collect around 15 of the words that are either in a different font or pulled out of the text. If possible, write them on different pieces of paper so you can move them around. Experiment with putting the words in different orders and then use these as the basis for writing a poem.
- Write your own story in which speech is visible. You can use ideas from *Away With Words*, come up with your own concept, or use a mixture of both.
- Write a letter to the author, Sophie Cameron, explaining how her book affected you and why you are glad she wrote it.
- Write a short speech to give in assembly about something you feel passionately about related to the book. Some ideas to get you started:
 - Bullying
 - Schools understanding and including everyone, especially those with extra challenges
 - Support for students arriving in a new school, particularly when they don't speak the school's main language
 - Raising awareness of selective mutism (make sure you do some research, for example by looking on the iSpeak website)
 - The importance and the difficulty of finding your voice and speaking up for what you think is right.