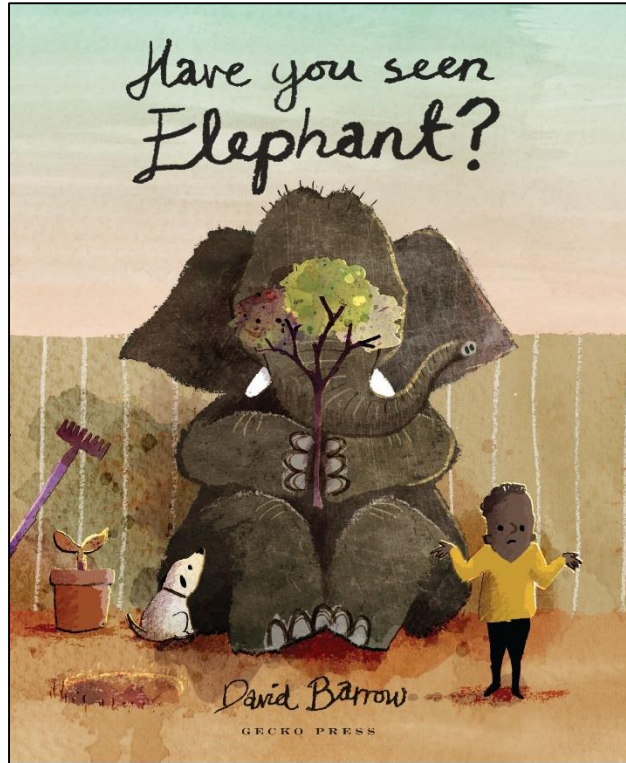




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Teaching Notes

Have You Seen Elephant?
by David Barrow



Synopsis

Elephant wants to play hide and seek. You can play too, but you'll have to try your best – he's very good!

The Author/Illustrator

Davis Barrow is a recent graduate of the Cambridge School of Art where he completed a Master's in Children's Book Illustration and received the top prize, the Sebastian Walker award for most promising children's illustrator. He lives in England with his wife, son and a cat.



Themes

This assured and exciting debut picture book from a top emerging talent, tickles the funnybone. With an absurd story coupled with subdued, beautiful illustrations it also has several themes.

The themes of fun, entertainment and joy are all evident as the boy and elephant delight in playing the timeless childhood game, hide and seek.

Another theme illustrated is that of the importance of confidence and belief in one's own ability. Elephant's belief in his talent shines through and allows him to successfully remain hidden in an assortment of unlikely places throughout an entertaining game of hide and seek.

Other themes explored are the differing powers of the imagination and observation between children and adults. This is seen when the boy's parents seem oblivious to the existence of the elephant, even when it is literally right in front of their faces.

A final theme explored is the ability to appreciate the unexpected, the unusual and absurd juxtapositions, from an elephant who is great at hiding in small places to a tortoise who claims to be an expert at chasing and catching!

Activities

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about.
2. In pairs, or with an adult to help, take turns to read the story aloud to one another. Discuss which is your favourite page and why. Do you agree with your partner's choice? Why/why not?
3. The entire book is in direct speech. Imagine you have been commissioned to write some third person indirect text to accompany each double page spread. Write one or two sentences of text for each.
4. In the book the author used a different font size for the word 'very'. Why has he done this? What does this tell the reader about the speech or action around this word? Has it been used effectively?
5. Exclamation marks, question marks, ellipses, full stops and commas are all types of punctuation found in the book. Find and list an example of each from the book as well as their grammatical purpose.



6. Examine the illustrations in the book. Do you like the style? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Choose your favourite illustration from the book and create your own artistic interpretation of it, for example, a painting, drawing, photograph, model, poem, etc. Or, design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text.
7. Choose your favourite hiding place of the elephant from the book. Imagine you are the elephant in this hiding place. Think about how you would describe the physical scene, as well as your feelings about what is happening during the game of hide and seek. Either describe the scene orally in pairs or write a descriptive paragraph or poem based on what you can see.
8. In pairs, discuss the ending of the book. Was it a surprise, funny, etc? Did you like it?
9. The tortoise warns the elephant and the boy that he is 'very' good at tag. Use this claim as inspiration to write a story about the game of tag that they play. Illustrate, bind and publish your own children's picture book of your story.
10. In groups, think of other animals and games they might wish to play and be unexpectedly 'very' good at, for example, a running race with a sloth or balloon-twisting with a hedgehog.
11. Using a search engine find the author's contact details. Then write a letter or email to the author reviewing the book. Mention what you like or what you dislike about the book and why.
12. In groups, adapt the book for a performance in your classroom. Devise a script, create scenery, choose music and make costumes or puppets to represent each character. Act your adaptation out for your class. If you have access to a video camera, tape it.