

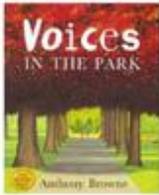
Voices in the park

Ideas for using the book *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne to think critically about how we all live together.

KS2 | 30 Mins | Group

KEY QUESTION: How do we share spaces? Does a shared space mean we live together and see the same story?

Background



Voices in the Park uses story, imagery and even fonts to tell the story of a shared space (the park) through the voices of four different characters.

It is a resource that can be used at a variety of levels with learners young and old. Discussing simply what happens, and what learners notice about each page is an excellent place to start. Reading it several times over a number of lessons, with a different focus, enables learners to gain a deeper knowledge of the story and begin to grapple with more difficult, thoughtful discussion. Some learners will surprise us and jump straight to the complex ideas!

Here are two key themes that you might like to explore using this book:

- Different perspectives
- Community

Activity

1. Get learners to imagine who each character is speaking to, as they share their story. Where are they when they tell it, and what are they doing? This will help to build their ideas about the characters' identities.

2. This story is an excellent starting point for critical literacy activities. We have found that learners quickly come up with their own questions about this book, but here are some you might like to use should you need them:

- What do we know about the four characters? Key words: wealth, language, appearance, mood, home, the way they treat others
- Why don't the adults talk to each other?
- Why do the children talk to each other?
- What experiences have these four people had before their day in the park?
- Would the two groups of people meet if they didn't go to the park?
- Are these people part of the same community?
- What is a community – where does it begin and end?
- How do the pictures tell the story?
- How do the surreal objects link to the story?
- Why does the world look different through each person's 'eyes'?

3. Draw a map of the park and surrounding community. Imagine where and what other community spaces might be. Do you think all the characters would go there?

4. Write the story using a fifth voice, someone who has simply watched what has happened. How will you represent the different voices? How does your fifth voice compare with those of others in your class? How would you illustrate it?

5. Learners could write a newspaper article from four different perspectives. How would you use the narrative voice of the journalist to pull these voices together?