

One Red Shoe

Author: Karin Gruss

Illustrator: Tobias Krejtschi

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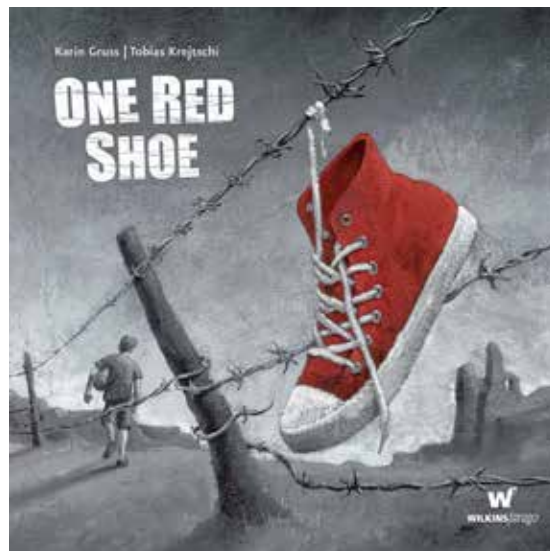
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Teachers' notes compiled by Ian McLean

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1. About this book

An international photojournalist, working from a small office in the Gaza Strip, is summoned to report on the bombing of a bus containing young children. One boy, Kenan, has seemingly lost a leg (or foot) in the explosion, and the journalist attempts to cover the story of his rescue and treatment without intruding too much on the triage being performed by medics. The boy's similarities to his own nephew, safely away from such unrest, leads the journalist towards a more personal sense of empathy for the innocent victims of war, and the seeming futility of the quest for peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in the region.

The sometimes-confronting artwork is rendered in black and white, with only the use of spot colours (mainly to highlight the imagery and symbolism of the victim's remaining red shoe). The art complements the written text in many satisfying ways, and deepens the emotional resonance of the creative whole.

2. Discussion points, questions and Activities for Teachers and Parents

As persuasive text

In recent years, students undertaking the NAPLAN tests in English have been expected to demonstrate their understandings of the power of persuasive texts, and how authors, illustrators and designers can manipulate the emotions of their target audience. This picture book's creators have made excellent use of many literary and graphical devices to challenge the reader about the concept of war, specifically recent events in the Gaza Strip area of the Middle East.

By analysing the art and written text of this picture book, students may gain new insights into the conflict. It is a useful resource for researching class debates in English, designing performance pieces for Drama, or for investigations of recent Middle Eastern unrest in Modern History.

Teachers might encourage their students to consider the effectiveness of the blurb on the back cover as a piece of persuasive text.

- How successfully does this blurb tempt casual browsers to select this particular book over others?
- Compare this blurb to other blurbs on picture books with strong themes, such as *Home and Away*

by John Marsden & Matt Ottley, or *The Enemy* by Davide Cali & Serge Bloch. (A list of other Picture books featuring strong themes is in Further resources below.)

The narrative is told in the first person.

- How effective is this authorial choice?
- As a writing exercise, students might rewrite a section of the book in the third person.
- What changes need to be made to do this?
- Are certain scenes more effective when viewed/witnessed this way?

Discussing war

With Australian schools currently phasing in a National Curriculum, secondary teachers would need to consider how they might best use this resource, noting which History syllabus is being currently implemented in their school. In New South Wales, the Israeli/Palestine conflict is covered as a Modern History topic for Years 11-12 (Stage 6). It may also be useful for Revolutions in the Years 9-10 (Stage 5) elective and future optional units. The work may be suitable as a resource for schools in Victoria addressing VCE Twentieth Century, but its range does not extend beyond 2000. Currently, there is a VCE subject called People and Power, but this will be superseded by the upcoming Modern History course.

- Identify the location of the Gaza Strip on paper maps, a globe, or via the interactive whiteboard.
- Discuss the countries of the Middle East and note their current borders, and the distances from Australia, USA and Europe.

Teachers may choose to do this orientation before reading the book, although it can be effective to read the book first and then to encourage the students to look for the visual and text clues that will assist them to establish the locale.

Keep in mind that Australia has many students whose families have emigrated from this region, and that the book's strong themes may be disturbing for some.

- Conduct an Internet search (eg. Google) using terms such as "Gaza Strip" teamed with "reasons". The teacher should preview the search and preselect useful websites. Use caution if the online public comment sections are still activated, as new public comments may have been added since the teacher's original viewing. (Note that individual accusations of political bias may appear in the comments, but these can be very informative as to how balanced the original text appears to other readers; sometimes these accusations even conflict with each other.)
- Make print-outs from a range of blog entries and online newspaper articles, such as:
 - AL-AMIN, Ibrahim. Gaza: Questions for Egypt and Hamas [MuslimVillage.org, 2012]: <http://muslimvillage.com/2012/11/17/31731/gaza-questions-for-egypt-and-hamas/>
 - FISHER, Max. 9 questions about Israel-Gaza you were too embarrassed to ask [The Washington Post, 2012]: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2012/11/21/9-questions-about-israel-gaza-you-were-too-embarrassed-to-ask/>
 - NOURAEI, Andisheh. Why is Israel bombing Gaza? [Creative Loafing Atlanta, 2009]: <http://clatl.com/atlanta/why-is-israel-bombing-gaza/Content?oid=1277161>
 - WEISBLOOM, David. Gaza conflict: the key questions [Channel 4 News, 2012]: <http://www.channel4.com/news/gaza-conflict-the-key-questions>

The literacy demands of visual texts

Throughout the book, the illustrator often positions the main character, ie. the photojournalist, so that we see him as one of the book's characters, the observer/narrator of events, some of which occur off the

page. In other sequences, we see exactly what he is witnessing, through his eyes. In the coloured pages, we see what the journalist believes he is witnessing through the viewfinder/screen of his camera.

A variety of “camera angles” and other “film techniques”, such as lighting, are used. In the written text of Pages 15/16 there is specific mention of the narrator taking his photographs from different angles. The double-page spreads feature “bird’s eye views”, “high angles”, “eye-level angles”, and so on. Investigate storyboards for motion pictures or animated cartoons (the “bonus scenes” of DVDs will sometimes feature them). A useful summary of film techniques can be found at:

Camera shots, angles and movement, lighting, cinematography and mise en scene [Skwirk Interactive Schooling, 2014]:

http://www.skwirk.com/p-c_s-54_u-251_t-647_c-2411/camera-shots-angles-and-movement-lighting-cinematography-and-mise-en-scene/nsw/camera-shots-angles-and-movement-lighting-cinematography-and-mise-en-scene/skills-by-text-type-film/film-overview

Page-by-page analyses:

Endpapers: For readers and viewers, the endpapers of picture books can be an insightful introduction to the themes and tone of the resource. The book creators’ choices are limited only by their own imaginations. eg. Do they intend to tantalise, foreshadow events or just set a mood?

For this particular book, the two sets of endpapers are identical.

Encourage students to make predictions about the career and personality of the person who might occupy the room depicted. Is it a home, a hotel room or a work office? What decade do the furnishings and equipment indicate? Are they expecting a happy/sad/hopeful ending? Are the endpapers of picture books always illustrated? Identical?

If informed that the featured character/narrator of this story is a professional photojournalist, what visual clues as to his career/personality are evident? (Camera bag, camera, mobile phone, coffee and alcohol both on the desk, shelves of file boxes, piles of newspapers, laptop, corded mouse.) If the story were to be set in a different era, how could the artist achieve this? (Ericofon, dial telephone, standalone computer, cordless mouse, gas lantern, etc).

Pages 5/6: This double page spread features the photojournalist narrator at his office window. What does he see through the slats of the Venetian blinds?

Revisit this page, in particular, for the activity, Through My Window. Students can use their powers of observation, and develop skills in using descriptive language. The teacher may coordinate with another school and, using Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs (weblogs), wikis or Edmodo, or even email, one team jointly describes a scene “through my window” to the team at the other school, who makes and uploads a detailed graphic representation of the scene, and vice versa. The results can be evaluated by swapping digital images of the actual scene that was described at the beginning of the task.

For explicit instructions and syllabus links for this activity, go to:

Through my Window [Centre for Learning Innovation, NSW Department of Education & Training, 2014]: <http://www.cli.nsw.edu.au/window/>

Pages 7/8: On this double page, readers and viewers get their first glimpse of the outside world. First impressions? Is this a safe “area”? Note that the power lines seem to be intact.

Pages 9/10: Here we see our first view of the street outside the photojournalist’s office. It is perhaps “life as normal” for these children. What does their engagement in a game of hopscotch suggest to us? Note

that the art on the back cover expresses similar ideas.

Pages 11/12: In this double page, we get our first clear indication of what part of the world this story is taking place (ie. Gaza Strip in the Middle East). Note the bilingual signage on the ambulance, the less-than-modern stretcher, and the Palestine Red Crescent Society patches on the paramedics' uniforms. In many Christian countries, students may have only been exposed to Red Cross. They have perhaps not contemplated that the familiar cross insignia has Christian associations, hence the use of a red crescent logo in other regions of the world. The Red Crescent Movement is a humanitarian agency, part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Its work is guided by seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. Useful websites:

ICRC (International Committee of Red Cross):

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

<http://www.ifrc.org/>

Palestine Red Crescent Society:

<http://www.palestinercs.org/en/>

Pages 13/14: Here we catch our first new glimpse of the titular "one red shoe" since the book's dramatic cover art, and the first use of red "spot colour" ink since the bloodstains on the title page. (A list of Picture books featuring spot colours/restricted palette for emphasis is in Further resources below.)

Note that the paramedic's shoulder deliberately blocks our view of the young patient's damaged leg, perhaps leaving the actual extent of his injuries to viewers' fervent imaginations. The illustrator's choice to feature a US-style basketball shoe leads us to consider the complications and implications of American political and cultural influences in this region of the world. Note that one hospital orderly is also wearing lace-up shoes of a similar style.

Colour blind students? Keep in mind that some students (usually male) may be red/green colour blind and will not necessarily notice the limited use of the red spot colour on this page until it is specifically pointed out to them.

The photojournalist's colleague is looking quite weary and bedraggled. What has his working day been like so far?

Pages 15/16: Interestingly, the illustrator has chosen not to colour the blood on the boy's facial injuries with the red spot colour ink.

Pages 17/18: The text refers to "smashed windows" and the hospital windows visible in this illustration are intact, but this could be an internal wall.

Pages 19/20: Discuss how the faces and body angles of the supporting characters highlight their emotional states in this spread.

Pages 21/22: This double page spread is a representation of what the photojournalist sees through his camera's viewfinder/screen. The boy's leg and shoe are inexplicably shown to be intact. The scene, with its fantasy elements, is reminiscent of the storytelling style of the classic television drama series, *The Twilight Zone*.

Pages 23/24: Now the double page spread switches from b/w to colour. Suddenly, a vibrant orange American-style basketball is featured in Kenan's hands, and the medical staff is shown to be wearing their green medical scrubs. The seemingly-healed boy's head bandage has become more turban-like. Is the boy having an out-of-body experience? Are the book creators suggesting that the boy has almost succumbed to his injuries?

Note that some red/green colour blind students may not notice the subtlety of the green scrubs, as this colour is extremely close in tone to the greys used in previous pages.

Pages 25/26: The written text accompanying this double page describes the photojournalist moving to a corner of the hospital room to better view the images of the injured boy in his viewfinder/screen. The illustration, however, shows one of the printed-out images pinned to the noticeboard, back in his office. We realise here that the majority of the story has been told in flashback, another powerful storytelling feature common in movies and television drama. This realisation will be confirmed by our next glimpse of the final endpapers.

Pages 27/28: Now the journalist is seen on the telephone to his nephew. Were the students surprised by this ending? Note that the uncle is holding the photo of the injured boy as he talks to the nephew.

Revisiting the endpapers: We have an opportunity to again examine the information-laden image we saw in the first set of endpapers, and to confirm that the main story has been narrated in flashback. A quick comparison shows them to be identical, but keen eyes will note the photo of the injured boy on the office pinboard, and the completed article about the attack on the bus passengers, as written by the journalist, has made the front page of his newspaper.

Investigating the written text

The written text of this picture book has been translated into English from an original German edition (Cologne: Bastei Lübbe GmbH & Co., 2012). The photojournalist is told to "Keep your head down" (Pages 5/6). Consider the literal meaning of his colleague's suggestion, and the more general meaning of going unnoticed. Similarly, discuss other idioms and phrases used in the text, such as "Given up the ghost" (Pages 7/8), "Ready for anything" (Pages 9/10), "paralysed" (Pages 25/26).

Pages 11/12: What is being suggested about the situation by the hospital staff member using "calm words and clear gestures"?

Pages 13/14: These pages contain several examples of "technical language", words chosen to give a precise meaning in a certain situation: eg. "colleague", "grenade", "shrapnel", "wound", "gurney". Investigate some synonyms of these terms and discuss the effectiveness of the author's choices.

Pages 15/16: In the written text there is specific mention of the narrator taking his photographs from different angles. (See the link to camera angles in the section on The literacy demands of visual texts.)

Pages 17/18: There is a clear example of irony in the written text accompanying this double page spread. (Note also that the text mentions "smashed windows" on the hospital, but the unbroken windows depicted are probably on internal walls.)

Pages 19/20: "I needed the facts: date, place, name." This is a pertinent mantra for a journalist. Younger students will know these as "When? Where? Who?" questions but, of course, in this book about war and unrest, the answers to the question of "Why?" is more complicated.

Pages 27/28: Write a sequel story to this scene. Does the journalist/uncle make it back home for the Championship playoffs to see his nephew participate in the basketball game? Where do they live? Does the nephew's team win or lose the game?

Students may write their sequel as a narrative, or in the form of a newspaper article (with photographs?), or perhaps as a series of letters, in which the uncle must explain the circumstances which will prevent him from seeing the game.

Alternatively, write a conclusion, or a sequel scene, for Kenan's story. Does the photojournalist maintain contact with him?

Photojournalism

Investigate the career choice of photojournalist. In what ways has this job changed over the decades, as the position responds to ongoing changes in printing and communication technologies.

Brainstorm famous fictional photojournalists from comics, television and feature films: Jimmy Olsen (Superman), Vicky Vale (Batman), Peter Parker and Eddie Brock Jr (Spider-Man) and Chuck Allen (Brenda Starr, Reporter).

Explore the work of prominent photojournalists, such as those showcased on online annotated lists, eg.

DEWITZ, Travis, Top 10 modern photojournalists and documentary photographers (Dewitz Photography, 2013):

<http://www.dewitzphotography.com/photography-product-reviews/top-10-modern-photojournalists-and-documentary-photographers/>

Includes: Lynsey Addario, Corey Arnold, Mike Brodie, Edward Burtynsky, Kitra Cahana, John Decker, Tomasz Gudzwat, Tim Hetherington (in 2011, war photographers Tim Hetherington and Chris Hondros were killed by Libyan forces in a mortar attack on the besieged city of Misrata), Steve McCurry and Stephanie Sinclair.

Famous photojournalists | List of the well-known photojournalists (Ranker, no date):

<http://www.ranker.com/list/list-of-famous-photojournalists/reference>

365 Photos Project: An effective way of emulating the role of the photojournalist, and the daily spontaneity, creativity and sheer luck that can come with such a career, is with the 365 Photos Project. An undertaking is made to take one photograph per day for a full year, and to share and annotate the daily results via a blog. For example,

How to do a 365 Days Photography project [Wiki How to Do Anything, no date]:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Do-a-365-Days-Photography-Project>

To modify this activity for a school situation, perhaps plan it to unfold over one month only (eg. 30 Photos Project), as an ongoing activity to accompany a unit of work. Perhaps 30 photos (29 students plus teacher?) taken by photographers on a roster. The school digital cameras could be sent home with two trusted students on weekends, or they may use their own. One "news story" must be immortalised each day. Keep each photograph and accompanying story in a scrapbook (paper copy or blog or wiki page.) Through group discussion, students consider their developing observation skills, the need to seize opportunities as they are presented, and how they may come to realise that important/urgent news stories often have to replace "feel good" or "filler" stories. A variation to the project to reflect this particular

book would involve converting colour digital photos to b/w, or adding spot colour in Photoshop to b/w images.

Exploring symbolism

The creators of this book selected a red shoe as the central symbol of their narrative. Each reader and viewer will bring their own perspectives and experiences to any analysis. The shoe is a red canvas lace-up style, popular as basketball shoes in the USA since the early 1900s, and now much of the Western World and beyond. The shoe style is often called "hightops", or variations of the original brand name: Chuck Taylor All-Stars, Converse All-Stars, or sometimes simply "Chucks" or "Cons". A "low-cut" version emerged in the 1950s, commonly known as Oxfords or "sneakers". In Australia, in the 50s-70s, the original ankle-height boots were often called simply "gym boots" and were usually only available in black and navy blue. Today, the shoes come in many variations, and a multitude of colours, patterns and rival brands' lookalikes. The use of a shoe style popular in the Western World could be symbolic of past American interference in the Gaza Strip region.

The restricted but prominent use of the colour red also opens up numerous discussion points that could extend the use of this resource with younger students. For example, interpreting meanings and associations from the red colour of the shoe on the book's cover enabled a Year 3-4 class (Stage 2) to compile the following list in an oral group brainstorm: Uluru, blood, Chinese lanterns (lucky colour), mosquito bites, fire ants, dingoes, hot colour, lava, rubies, cochineal insects (for colonial soldiers' red uniforms), love hearts, tired eyes, Australian desert, royal robes, red apples, Remembrance Day poppies, roses, waratahs, bottlebrushes, love, anger, danger, superhero costumes, foxes, Rudolph's nose, Clifford, bulls hate red...

Creating a digital slideshow: Use MovieMaker, PowerPoint, or one of the many suggested Web 2.0 creative tools at:

Raps and book raps - Technology tips and Cybersafety,
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/raps/fearless10/technopage.htm>

PhotoPeach, for example, is a free Web 2.0 tool that enables the joint-construction of digital slideshows, complete with easy uploading of images, and a selection of public domain music tracks. ie. PhotoPeach: Fresh Slideshows to Go! [Nota Inc., 2014]:
<http://photopeach.com/>

After viewing the cover art of One red shoe, and brainstorming some meanings/associations of the colour "red" (which were scribed by the teacher), suggestions for accompanying images were suggested.
eg.

Surrounded by RED:
<http://photopeach.com/album/10pdjt3>

Transcription of the final script, as brainstormed by Class 3/4L, Penrith Public School, NSW:

Surrounded by RED.
We are surrounded by red.
"Red is a hot colour: the colour of lava."
Red gets you noticed.
Red is a waratah.
Red is the colour of autumn.
"Once I annoyed my brother so much his face went red."
"My mother hated the colour of her hair so now she dyes it red."

"Red can mean 'Danger'."

Storybook characters are often red: Clifford the Big Red Dog, The Little Red Hen...

Little Red Riding Hood, Ruby the Red Fairy...

Red is also a "super" colour.

Foxes are red.

And so is Rudolph the Reindeer's famous nose.

Ladybugs are red.

"People say that bulls hate red, but they are actually charging at the matador's cape because it is moving."

Valentine's Day hearts are red...

and so are your luscious lips.

Red can add a little touch of magic.

Red is the lucky colour.

A few important points to consider with PhotoPeach: Please use it as judiciously as you would a series of Youtube clips. Do not permit young students to do open browsing of public slideshows; PhotoPeach is a Web 2.0 facility that is open to anyone, and the slideshows are "unrated". As this online tool may be blocked to students by a firewall, use your teacher username and password. Jointly-constructed group activities are preferable to encouraging individual student responses. The students will develop negotiation skills as they reach consensus over what responses should be included in the final product. Also, if you notice that new comments have been added to a slideshow you've made, please preview the slideshow again before using it with students so you can monitor (and moderate/remove) unwanted comments. (Or close off public comments altogether.) Consider an annual subscription to PhotoPeach, which enables you to add your own or Creative Commons music, a wider range of transitions, and the capacity to download slideshows to your hard drive, web space or a CD.

3. Further Resources

Picture books featuring spot colours/restricted palette for emphasis:

LAMORISSE, Albert. *The Red Balloon* (London: Unwin, 1980)

LEBLANC, André & BARROUX. *The Red Piano* (Albert Park, Vic.: Wilkins Farago, 2009)

MATTHEW, Tina. *Out of the Egg* (Newtown, NSW: Walker, 2011)

PALMER, Helen & EASTMAN, P.D. *A Fish out of Water* (London: HarperCollins, 2009)

SEUSS, Dr. *The Cat in the Hat* (London: Collins, 2003)

SPAULDING, Norma. *The Little Blue Parcel* (Gosford, NSW: Scholastic, 1998)

TAN, Shaun. *The Red Tree* (Port Melbourne: Lothian, 2001)

WORTHINGTON, Michelle & NORSA, Sophie. *Yellow Dress Day* (Frenchs Forest, NSW: New Frontier, 2012)

Picture books featuring strong themes:

CALI, Davide & BLOCH, Serge. *The Enemy* (Albert Park, Vic.: Wilkins Farago, 2007) – Human rights, War

COTTIN, Menena & FARIA, Rosana. *The Black Book of Colours* (London: Walker, 2010) – Visual impairment

GREDER, Armin. *The Island* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2007) – Discrimination

KANE, Glenda & ALLEN, Lisa. *Anzac Day Parade* (North Shore, NZ: Puffin, 2010) – War

LEBLANC, André & BARROUX. *The Red Piano* (Albert Park, Vic.: Wilkins Farago, 2009) – Chinese Cultural Revolution

M is for mates: animals in wartime from Ajax to Zep (Canberra: Dept. of Veteran's Affairs, 2009) – War

MARSDEN, John & OTTLEY, Matt. *Home and Away* (Melbourne: Hachette Livre, 2008) – Asylum seekers, War

MATTINGLEY, Christobel & LACIS, Astra. *The angel with a mouth-organ* (Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984) – War

O'NEILL, Mary & WALLNER, John. *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* (New York: Random, 1989) – Colour, Senses

TAN, Shaun. *The Red Tree* (Port Melbourne: Lothian, 2001) – Emotions

THOMPSON, Colin & Save the Children Australia. *Dust* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2007) – Human rights, World hunger.

Ian McLean is a teacher-librarian at Penrith Public School in Sydney, NSW. He is a former editor of Scan professional journal (NSW Department of Education and Communities).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karin Gruss, born in Wuppertal, was a German teacher and bookseller and oversaw the picture book program at publishing house Peter Hammer Verlag. She currently works as a consultant and instructor on children's and young adult literature in Düsseldorf. *One Red Shoe* is her first picture book, based on impressions of the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tobias Krejtschi, born in 1980 in Dresden, studied illustration at HAW Hamburg and is now a lecturer there. His first picture book, *Crafty Mama Sambona*, with text by Hermann Schulz, received several awards (nominated for the German Children's Literature Award, Troisdorfer Picture Book Prize) and has been translated into multiple languages.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Founded in 1998, Wilkins Farago is an independent book publishing company based in Melbourne, Australia. We don't publish a lot of books, so we care about the ones we do publish. In recent years, we have developed a reputation for publishing acclaimed and awardwinning children's books from around the world, many of them translated into English for the first time.

Through publishing the finest international children's books, we hope to expose children (and their parents and teachers) to new cultures, new perspectives, and new styles of illustration.

More of our titles can be seen at www.wilkinsfarago.com.au, we hope you enjoy reading and learning with our books.