

Hot Air

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Illustrator : Emmanuelle Houssais

Translator: Sarah Ardizzone

Publisher: Phoenix Yard Books, 2013

Hot Air is a modern fable in picture book form. It can be read on different levels, so please select the activities that best work for the age and ability of your pupils.

Curriculum Context

With the subject of global warming and climate change, *Hot Air* is an engaging book to support cross-curricular work on sustainable environment. It avoids didacticism and provides an interesting comparison with other books on the subject.

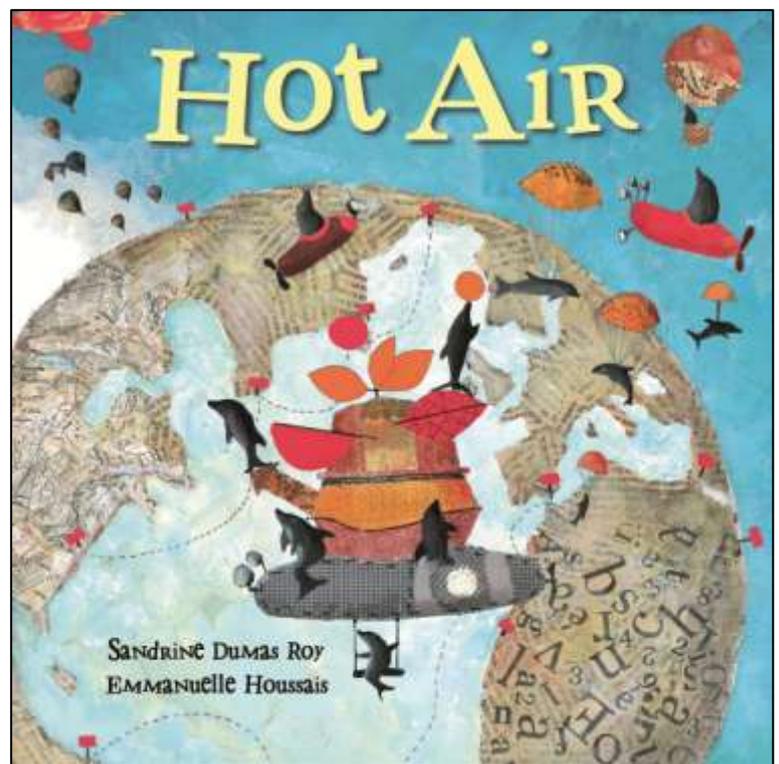
Before Reading

1. What does the title *Hot Air* suggest to you? Have you ever heard the phrase 'talking hot air'? What does it mean?
2. How does the title relate to the images on the front cover? What else can you see on the front cover? Is there anything that looks strange or puzzling?
3. Look carefully at the pictures. How do you think they have been made?
4. What can you see on the back cover?
5. What do you think this book is going to be about?

During reading

Invite the children to comment and ask questions as you read the book together. Some points to reflect upon. This is not a check list of questions. Avoid asking too many questions and leave space for children to generate their own questions and comments.

1. Why do you think the ice is melting even faster than usual?
2. What is unusual about the polar bear's clothes?
3. How is the weather affecting the animal's behaviour?
4. On the double page spread depicting the animals' conference, many of the animals are holding banners and placards, what do you imagine they might say?
5. Is 'What's wrong with the weather?' a good title for the animals' conference?
6. On the double page spread, 'dolphins were dispatched around the world', read the names of different places the dolphins visited. Can you locate all of these places on a globe or in an atlas?
7. What do you think about the explanation given for the changing climate? Do you think that gas emissions from cows is an unbelievable or a believable explanation? Why do you think that?
8. What do you think about the choice of words 'the debate was **red-hot**? And their roast beef was at **stake**?



9. What do you think about the different animals' suggested solutions for the cow problem? Are some solutions more sensible than others? Why are the solutions not acted upon? Do you think the porpoise's idea is preposterous? Can you think of any other solution to the problem?
10. What do you think of the bigwigs proclamation. 'Didn't we find a tip-top solution?' what is happening in the illustrations on this double page spread?
11. Why do you think animals rather than human beings are the characters in this story?
12. The final thought in the book invites you to think of good solutions to the problem. Share your ideas with a partner.

After reading

Research:

This activity is designed to give children an opportunity to research different theories about climate change and global warming and to use the information gathered to begin to form opinions. It provides an opportunity for them to express and clarify a point of view and listen to the points of view of others.

Make notes on the IWB about the children's prior knowledge about global warming. What have you read or heard about global warming? What do you think causes it?

What evidence is there to suggest that the gas emissions from cows are damaging to the environment? Use the internet and other sources to find out the news story which was the see for 'Hot Air'. Are the sources for this story trustworthy?

See for example BBC Newsround

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/world/global_warming/newsid_1575000/1575441.stm

What other causes are there for global warming? What is the difference between a fact and an opinion? What facts can you find? What opinions are expressed?

What solutions are proposed for combating global warming?

After researching the topic, divide the room into half. One half is for the children who agree that emissions from cows are the biggest contribution to global warming. The other half of the room is for those that disagree. Ask the children to stand in the half of the room that reflects their opinion.

Invite children from each half of the room to explain why they have chosen to stand in that half of the room. encourage them to ask each other questions. After a short discussion allow the children to choose again. Did any change sides? Ask children who changed sides to explain what made them change changed their minds.

Fact or fiction?

This activity is designed to encourage children to think about the different ways in which ideas and messages can be conveyed. Encourage an open exchange of ideas and opinions.

Is *Hot Air* fact or fiction? Why do you think that?

Compare *Hot Air* with a contrasting book on the same subject such as *The Future of The Earth* by Yann Arthus Bertrand, which conveys its message principally through photographs and explanation.

In pairs or small groups, invite the children to complete the following table as an aid comparison of the different ways in which books can communicate messages. You can populate the grid with your own prompts and tailor them for different book choices.

	Hot Air	The Future of the Earth
What sorts of pictures are used?		
How have the pictures been made?		
How do the pictures make you feel?		
Does this book have a story?		
Does this book have any facts?		
Do you read this book from beginning to end or can you dip in anywhere in the book?		
Does this book have any humour?		
Do you think this book has a message?		

Once the children have compared *Hot Air* with another book, invite them to talk about their preferences. Which book did they enjoy most? Which book do they think conveyed a message most effectively?

Mural: The Animals Protest

This activity provides an opportunity for children to look more closely at the illustration techniques used in Hot Air and to apply them in creating a mural for the classroom. They will also think about what makes a good protest slogan and create banners for the mural.

Look at and discuss the picture of the animals protest. What animals can you identify in the picture? What parts of the world do they come from? What do you imagine their banners say?

Using photographs, books and other sources have the children draw and collage pictures of animals.

Cut out and assemble to create a large mural.

In pairs, discuss the impact of different protest slogans e.g. Save Our Futures, Ice is Nice Brainstorm some good slogans

Adaptation

This activity provides an opportunity for children to synthesise what they have learnt and transform their understanding by adapting the story as a play script for performance.

After re-reading, discuss with the class how this story could be rewritten as a play for performance. Decide what the different scenes would be and which characters would appear in the play. Is there the need for a narrator, or not? Should actual words from the story be included in the script, or not?

Once decisions about the structure of the play have been agreed, revise the conventions of scriptwriting with the class. Remind them that only the words actually spoken are written down with some directions for action and some description to set the scene. Show an example of how this is set out.

You could also write a song for you play. For instance, the page 'what a racket' could be rewritten as an animal chorus in musical theatre style. If writing an original song is too challenging, try adapting a well known one using the tune but writing your own lyrics. For instance, 'Food beautiful Food' could be re written as 'Ice beautiful ice'

In pairs or small groups ask the children to write the different scenes for the play. Assemble the script and read through to check that it makes sense and flows.

Assign parts, rehearse and perform the play for other classes or parents.

Topic Book Box

Make a collection of books and articles about environment and green issues. Decorate the box with collages images of animals or pages from an old atlas.

Copyright © Nikki Gamble, 2013. Commissioned by Phoenix Yard Books. Nikki Gamble is the founder and Director of Write Away. Formerly a teacher and teacher trainer, Nikki has worked in education and reading promotion for over 25 years. She is now a lecturer, writer and education consultant and is on the current Executive Committee of the UK Literacy Association