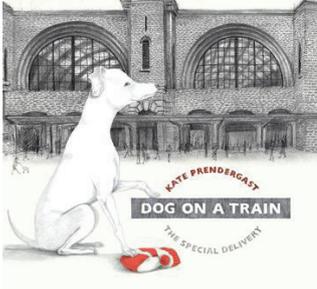




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## Dog on a Train

By Kate Prendergast  
 ISBN: 9781910646083  
 ARRP: \$24.95  
 NZRRP: \$27.99  
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\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Charming and humorous, this is a book that will delight young dog lovers and tired commuters alike.

A young boy drops his hat as he's rushing out of the house. His faithful friend picks it up and follows and so the adventure begins!

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Kate Prendergast worked for many years in the transport industry. After raising a son and a daughter, Kate's growing interest in illustration led her to an MA degree in Children's Book Illustration at Cambridge School of Art. *Dog on a Train* is Kate's first book and brings together her love of observational and narrative drawing and her belief that magical stories can take place in the urban or suburban world in which so many children live.

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

<b>These notes are for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary years F-2</li> <li>• Ages 3+</li> </ul>	<b>Key Learning Areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Art</li> </ul>	<b>Example of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wordless Picture Book</li> </ul>	<b>Themes/Ideas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship</li> <li>• Helping Others</li> <li>• Kindness</li> <li>• Pets</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>
<b>National Curriculum Focus:*</b>			
<b>English</b> Foundation ACELA1430 ACELT1575 ACELT1577 ACELT1783 ACELT1578 ACELT1785 ACELT1580 ACELY1646 ACELY1647	<b>Year 1</b> ACELA1443 ACELT1581 ACELT1582 ACELT1583 ACELT1584 ACELT1586 ACELY1656	<b>Year 2</b> ACELA1460 ACELT1587 ACELT1589 ACELT1590 ACELT1591 ACELY1667	*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Discussion Questions and Activities:

### Reading as a Class

Go through the book as a class and without trying to “read” the story, discuss what is happening on each page. Discuss the setting, the people, the actions characters are taking, the use of colour and composition.

Read through as a class with the teacher or librarian creating the story. Afterwards, ask students if they agreed or disagreed with the reader’s interpretation.

Go through the book and write words that could appear on each page on post-it notes. These words could be dialogue between characters, actions/verbs, thoughts or feelings of characters, descriptive words/adjectives and descriptions of events taking place. Use these words as a starting point to write your own text to accompany the illustrations.

There are several instances where the dog sets a good example for young readers. Examine the illustrations mentioned below and discuss why the dog does this and what readers can learn from it:

- Dog stops at a pedestrian crossing
- Dog reads the warning signs at the train station and asks for help
- Dog gives up his seat on the train for an elderly passenger

Discuss the phrase “a dog is a man’s best friend.” Why do you think this is a common phrase? What do you think it means? How does it relate to this book?

### Reading in Small Groups

In small groups, have one student “read” the story to the group. The reader should interpret what is happening in the illustrations and tell the story creatively when reading to the group, rather than merely explaining what is happening on the page. Allow several members of the group to do the same. Follow this with a class discussion on how there is no right or wrong interpretation of the illustrations.

### Illustrations

Examine the use of colour in the book. Why do you think Kate Prendergast has created the illustrations in mostly black and white with certain items in red? What items has she coloured? Why do you think she picked those items?

Draw a picture using a black pencil/crayon/pen and choose one part of the drawing to highlight with a bright colour in a similar style to the boy’s red shoes or hat. Why did you choose that part to highlight? Do you think drawing this way is an effective way to draw the viewer’s eye to a certain part of the picture?

### Further Activities

Visit your school library and find other wordless picture books (e.g. *Footpath Flowers* by JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith, *Journey* and *Quest* by Aaron Becker or *Mirror* by Jeannie Baker). Compare these books to *Dog on a Train* and discuss how the stories are similar and different. Which style do you prefer? Why?

Find other picture books about a dog in your school library. Compare and contrast these books with *Dog on a Train*. How are they similar or different? Are they for a similar audience? Which do you prefer? Why?

How do you think Kate Prendergast created this book? Do you think she wrote a story first, then illustrated it? Or do you think she just started drawing the illustrations? Use the following two activities to trial different methods of creating a wordless story:

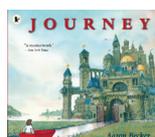
Activity 1: Ask each student to write a short story (i.e. just a few simple sentences) and then swap their story with a partner. The partner can then create illustrations to tell the story without using any words. After the activity is completed, have a class discussion about if students thought this task was easy or difficult.

Activity 2: Each student draws illustrations to make a wordless story without writing a plan first. Students can then present their story to the class and explain whether they found the process easy or difficult and if their story turned out the way they originally intended.

## Other Wordless Picture Books From Walker Books:



**Mirror**  
Jeannie Baker  
9781406309140 HB  
Classroom ideas available



**Journey**  
Aaron Becker  
9780763660536 HB  
9781406355345 PB  
Classroom ideas available



**Quest**  
Aaron Becker  
9780763665951 HB  
9781406360813 PB



**Footpath Flowers**  
JonArno Lawson  
Sydney Smith  
9781406362084 HB  
Classroom ideas available