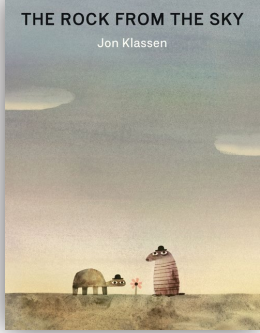




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Rock from the Sky

Jon Klassen
ISBN: 9781406395570
April 2021

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Turtle really likes standing in his favourite spot. He likes it so much that he asks his friend Armadillo to come over and stand in it, too. But now that Armadillo is standing in that spot, he has a bad feeling about it...

A hilarious meditation on the workings of friendship, fate, shared futuristic visions, and that funny feeling you get that there's something off somewhere, but you just can't put your finger on it. Merging broad visual suspense with wry wit and existential silliness, celebrated picture-book creator Jon Klassen gives us a wholly original comedy for the ages.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Jon Klassen is the creator of the New York Times bestselling *I Want My Hat Back* and its companions *This Is Not My Hat*, which won a Caldecott Medal and a Kate Greenaway Medal, and *We Found a Hat*. He is also the illustrator of *Extra Yarn*, *Sam and Dave Dig a Hole*, *Triangle*, *Square and Circle*, all by Mac Barnett, and *House Held Up by Trees* by Ted Kooser. Originally from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Jon Klassen now lives in Los Angeles. Find him on Instagram as @jonklassen and Twitter as @burstofbeaden

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.

These notes are for:

- Ages 4+
- Years F-1

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:

- Friendship
- Fate
- Suspense



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story with the title *The Rock from the Sky*.

Part 1: The Rock

Foreshadowing means when a writer gives a hint or a warning about a future event to come in the story. What foreshadowing can you see in 'The Rock'? You could consider both the dialogue and the illustrations.

Do you feel like you know more about what's going to happen than the characters? Does it create tension or suspense for you as a reader? Did you think the rock was going to fall on the characters? If so, where and why? How did you feel when the rock landed?

Consider the pacing of 'The Rock', with spreads of the rock in the sky interspersed with spreads featuring the characters. How many times do we see the rock before it lands? How might the story feel different if we had more or less spreads of the rock?

Part 2: The Fall

How is the pace of this story similar or different to 'The Rock'?

Do you believe what Turtle is saying? What clues in Turtle's expressions, dialogue and in the illustrations (including on the 'The Fall' title page) might betray him?

What does the dialogue and action in this story tell us about Armadillo and Turtle's personalities? How might they approach problems similarly or differently?

Part 3: The Future

Picture an outdoor spot you see regularly. It could be at school, at home, or a park you like to visit. Now imagine how that spot might look different in the future. How could the time change that spot? How might it be different, and how might it stay the same?

How are the characters interacting with the rock? How has it become normal and ordinary to them?

Where do you think the creature has come from? What might it want? Write a short story about its origin.

Part 4: The Sunset

How has Jon Klassen used colour to indicate the changing time of day across each spread?

Read *We Found a Hat* by Jon Klassen. How is it similar or different to 'The Sunset' in *The Rock from the Sky*?

Armadillo and Snake are watching the sunset together before Turtle comes on the scene. How do you think they feel about Turtle's arrival? How could Turtle have been more aware of their actions and how they affected Armadillo and Snake?

Part 5: No More Room

Consider the three characters as a friendship group. Do you think Turtle feels left out by Armadillo and Snake? What more could they do to help Turtle feel included?

While his style is simple, Jon Klassen makes his characters very expressive. Choose a spread in 'No More Room', and discuss how you think Turtle, Armadillo and Snake are feeling, using clues in the illustrations.

Were you surprised by the second rock at the end? Why or why not? Which rock do you think is the rock in the book's title?



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

General Discussion Questions and Activities

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

What do you think makes a good book title, and why do you think the author chose to call the book *The Rock from the Sky*? What are some other titles the book could have been called?

Is *The Rock from the Sky* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

The Rock from the Sky is told in five parts, and is much longer than most picture books at 96 pages. How would the book be different if it was shorter? How was your reading experience different compared to shorter picture books?

What do you think the characters said to each other after the second rock fell? Write a short story featuring Turtle, Armadillo and Snake set after the events of *The Rock from the Sky*.

How are the stories similar or different to each other? Do you think they connect to tell one complete story? If so, write your summary of the larger cohesive story in *The Rock from the Sky*.

How is repetition used in the dialogue throughout *The Rock from the Sky*? What does it achieve and why do you think Jon Klassen chose to write it this way?

Do you think the characters (especially Turtle) were lucky to not be crushed by the rock or burnt to a crisp by the creature, or was it fate? Have a class debate with one side arguing it was luck that saved them, and the other saying it was fate. Remember, there may not be a right or wrong answer!

Put on a performance of *The Rock from the Sky*. Get creative in how you represent the rock! Perform your play for other classes.

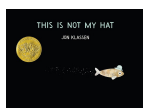
What other books has Jon Klassen written and/or illustrated? Have you read any of his other books? Can you find any in your school library? Which is your favourite Jon Klassen book? Why?

Compare *The Rock from the Sky* to another picture book written or illustrated by Jon Klassen in your library. How is it similar or different?

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



I Want My Hat Back
Jon Klassen
9780763655983 HB
9781406338539 PB
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This Is Not My Hat
Jon Klassen
9780763655990 HB
9781406353433 PB
Classroom ideas available



We Found a Hat
Jon Klassen
9781406347517 HB
9781406373820 PB
Classroom ideas available



Circle
Mac Barnett
illus. by Jon Klassen
9781406384222 HB
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