

# ***Noah Chases the Wind* by Michelle Worthington and Joseph Cowman — Teacher Notes**

Redleaf Lane, 2015

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Recommended for 3 years and up

Pre-school to lower primary

## ***About Noah Chases the Wind***

*Noah knew he was different. He could see things that others couldn't, like the patterns in the dust that floated down on sunbeams.*

Noah is different. He sees, hears, feels, and thinks in ways that other people don't always understand, and he asks a lot of questions along the way. Noah loves science, especially the weather. His books usually provide him with the answers he needs, until one day, there's one question they don't answer—and that is where Noah's windy adventure begins.

Filled with rich, sweeping illustrations, this picture book celebrates the inquisitive nature of all children, including those on the autism spectrum, who cannot stop asking a question until an answer has been unearthed.

The book contains a page of information for parents, caregivers, and educators about the importance of helping children feel good about their differences and know that being different is okay.

Winner of the silver medal in the Moonbeam Children's Books Award in the Picture Book 4–8-year-old category from *Independent Publisher*

Winner of the Gelett Burgess Children's Book Award

## **Themes**

Senses, emotions, weather, curiosity, diversity, difference

## **About the author Michelle Worthington**

Michelle Worthington is an international award-winning author and screen play writer. Two-time winner of the International Book Award and finalist in the USA Best Book Awards, Michelle also received a Gellett Burgess Award and a Silver Moonbeam Award for her contribution to celebrating diversity in literature. Michelle addresses mental health through literacy with her picture books.

Find out more about Michelle Worthington from her website: [michelleworthington.com](http://michelleworthington.com).

## **What Michelle Worthington says of *Noah Chases the Wind***

In *Noah Chases the Wind*, my hope is that children who experience the world in a unique way—including children with sensory processing challenges and children on the autism spectrum—will recognise a part of themselves in Noah.

## **About the illustrator Joseph Cowman**

Joseph Cowman lives and paints in the hills and valleys of suburban Idaho. He is a long-standing member of the Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators. He is the illustrator of six other Redleaf Lane books, including most recently, *The Amazing Erik and Rita and the Firefighters*.

## **Reading *Noah Chases the Wind***

### **Introduce the book**

Show the cover, tell children the title and discuss, for example:

Do you think Noah likes the wind? Why do you think that?

Do you like windy days? Why or why not? What do you like/not like about windy days?

How do windy days make you feel?

How do you think windy days make Noah feel?

How could Noah *chase* the wind? What does that mean? Have you ever chased the wind?

Show the back cover, read the blurb and discuss.

We are told Noah knows where the wind comes from. Do you know where the wind comes from? What do you think Noah wants to find out about in this book? Why will Noah chase the wind?

### **Discussion and prediction prompts during reading**

#### **First spread**

Does Noah look different?

Why does Noah feel different? Why does he think he is different from everybody else?

Have you ever seen dust floating in sunbeams? Have you seen patterns in the dust?

#### **Second spread (ants)**

Have you ever smelled the ants in the grass?

Do you think Noah likes the smell?

### **Third spread (feel a storm)**

The author tells us that Noah could *feel* a storm coming even before the leaves start to tremble.

What would make the leaves tremble? (wind) So he could feel the storm before there was wind. What do you think helped him feel/know a storm was coming before there was wind?

How do you know when there is a storm coming? What happens just before a storm?

### **Fourth spread (how things work)**

Do you like to find out how things work? What do you do when you want to find out? What do you think Noah does?

Why would his *head* hurt when he can't understand?

Why would his *heart* hurt when he can't understand?

How do you feel when you don't understand something?

What feeling words could we use instead of saying that his head and heart hurt?

### **Fifth spread (Noah's room)**

Before reading the spread, discuss:

Look at the illustrations on this page. What do they tell you about Noah? What do you think Noah likes to do? What do you think Noah is interested in?

Read the page.

Who here, like Noah, is interested in the weather?

What aspect of weather are you mostly interested in?

### **Sixth spread (the wind)**

If books can't tell Noah where the wind goes, how else could he find out?

**Seventh spread — first page (Mother)**

How else could Noah find out?

What does your Mum usually say when you ask her about something?

Do you think Noah's Mum's answer was a good one? Why or why not?

**— second page (waiting)**

How will he find out when the wind comes?

**Eighth spread (the wind is coming)**

Let's find out how Noah chases the wind.

**Ninth spread (street)**

How could Noah tell if he is chasing the wind?

**Tenth Spread (fountain)**

How far will Noah have to go to find out where the wind goes?

**Eleventh Spread (beach)**

What is a gale?

What is going to happen now?

Will Noah find out where the wind goes?

**Twelfth spread (rainbow wind)**

What is Noah experiencing? What is he feeling?

What do the colours tell you?

### **Thirteenth spread (back home)**

How is Noah feeling now that he's back home on the familiar grass? What do you think Noah is thinking about as he watches the sun set?

### **Last page (sitting with mother)**

What do you think Noah will tell his mother?

### **Returning to the book**

#### **Other discussions and activities**

##### **Windy days**

How do you feel on windy days?

What happens on windy days?

What is your favourite thing to do on a windy day?

Do you know it's going to be windy before it starts to blow? How do you know?

##### **Favourite weather**

Do you have a favourite kind of day? Tell us about it. Why is it your favourite kind of day?

What do you do on those days? What do you wear?

##### **Solving the problem**

What was the problem in the story? (Noah wants to know where the wind goes.)

How is the problem solved? (Noah reads books, asks his Mum and follows the wind.)

## **The senses**

We experience the world by using all our senses, just like Noah did in this story.

We use our senses to see, hear, taste, smell and touch.

We also have ‘heart’ feelings or emotions.

Some people also have an extra sense, an ability to feel things that most people don’t notice.

This is often because they take more notice of their surroundings. Noah has this extra sense for knowing the wind.

Reread the story, thinking about and discussing the senses and emotions that Noah uses to experiences the wind.

Sight: dust floated down on sunbeams, rain clouds looked angry

blustering around buses and bicycles

whipping wrappers from the gutter

Hearing: air buzzed before lightning struck

whistled down the street

Smell: the green tang of the ants in the grass

Touch: the whooshing wind build and blow his hair into his eyes

a brush of Noah’s cheek for good-bye

Emotions: his head and heart hurt

Noah took a deep breath. He was ready to chase the wind.

Extra sense: He could feel when a big storm was coming before the leaves on the trees even started to tremble.

Noah felt a stirring deep inside.

## **Thinking about difference**

Noah thought he was different from everybody else. In what ways is he different? In what ways is he the same? Do we have more or fewer things in common with Noah?

You could:

Make a list of things ‘About Noah’, for example:

### **About Noah**

He is a boy.

He can see patterns in dust in sunbeams.

He can smell ants in the grass.

He knows when a storm is coming.

He likes to know how things work.

He feels confused and upset (or similar) when he doesn’t understand things.

He loves books.

He would rather read than play with toys.

He likes to find out information.

He loves science, especially the weather.

He is curious. He likes to ask questions to find out things.

He is brave.

He is adventurous.

He knows stuff.

He loves his mother.

When the list is made, you could discuss which of these characteristics the children share.

They will realise that the similarities are greater than the differences.

If you wish, you could also explore in which ways each child is different.



## **Alliteration**

The author has used some examples of alliteration in the book. Think about how its use adds to the meaning as well and the flow of language.

He followed the **w**ind as it **w**histled down the street,

**b**lustering around **b**uses and **b**icycles

**w**hipping **w**rappers

**b**uilding with the **b**reeze from the **b**each

**h**eat from the **h**ighway

**g**rowing into a **g**ale

**b**lue **b**illowing **b**reeze

**w**inds **w**hirled and **w**irled

**r**ibbon of **r**ainbow

## **Thinking about how words and illustrations combine to tell the story**

The author's words and the illustrator's images combine to tell and show us about Noah, his feelings and the wind. Look at and discuss the ways in which the author has illustrated the wind. Can we actually see the wind?

## **Investigating the wind through our senses**

Look out the window on a windy day. Can you see the wind? How do you know it is windy?

We can see the effects — leaves trembling, trees bending

We can hear the wind — whistling through tight spaces, lifting things and banging them down or against other things, knocking things over

We can feel the wind — blowing our clothes and our hair

Sometimes we can taste the wind. At the beach, the wind may taste salty. In a dust storm, it might taste dusty.

Sometimes the wind brings us smells from further away; e.g. the smell of someone's barbecue or the smell of the sea.

### **Related resources**

You may like to read and discuss the poem *Who Has Seen the Wind?* by Christina Rossetti (see below). Children could illustrate the poem or add their own verse.

You could compare the story, especially the techniques for illustrating the wind, with *The Wind Blew* by Pat Hutchins and *The Magic Hat* by Mem Fox.

What other stories and poems about the wind do you or the children know?

**Brainstorm**

How do you know when a storm is coming?

What happens just before a storm?

**Draw/Paint/Collage**

A windy day by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Write and Draw**

On windy days,

I like to \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On windy days,

I don't like to \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Who Has Seen the Wind?

by Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?

Neither I nor you.

But when the leaves hang trembling

The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?

Neither you nor I.

But when the trees bow down their heads,

The wind is passing by.

## **Links to the Australian Curriculum**

### **English**

#### **Language**

(ACELA 1429) Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes

#### **Text structure**

(ACELA 1430) Understand that stories and informative texts have different purposes

#### **Expressing and developing ideas**

(ACELA 1786) Explore the different contribution of words and images to meaning in stories

(ACELA 1453) Compare different kinds of images in narrative and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning

(ACELA 1437) Understand the use of vocabulary in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school

#### **Phonics and word knowledge**

(ACELA 1439) Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliterative patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words

### **Literature**

#### **Literature and Context**

(ACELT 1575) Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences

#### **Responding to literature**

(ACELT 1577) Respond to texts, identifying favourite stories, authors and illustrators

(ACELT 1783) Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts

(ACELT 1582) Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences

## **Literacy**

### **Interacting with others**

(ACELY 1646) Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations

(ACELY 1650) Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently

## **Science**

### **Earth and space sciences**

(ACSSU 004) Daily and seasonal changes in our environment affect everyday life

(ACSSU 019) Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape