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Ages 3 to 5 • F&P Text Level Gradient: H

Lexile® Measure: AD310L



About the Book

"The cat walked through the world, with its whiskers, ears and paws . . . and the child saw A CAT, and the dog saw A CAT, and the fox saw A CAT. Yes, they all saw the cat." In simple, rhythmic prose and ingeniously stylized pictures, Brendan Wenzel takes young readers on a walk alongside a cat. But is it really a story about the cat, or is it about the creatures who see it? This is a glorious celebration of observation, curiosity, and imagination.

"I walked through this delightful book, with its imaginative illustrations, alongside a cat and discovered an insightful look at perspective. Wenzel has created a must-share picture book for classrooms of all ages to see and discuss." —Jillian Heise, National Literacy Consultant, Custom Education Solutions

"A creatively illustrated book that highlights the power of perspective. The vivid illustrations will have readers captivated as they follow the cat from page to page. Enchanting!" —Nancy Jo Lambert, librarian, Texas Library Association Children's Round Table Chair 2015-2016

About This Guide

This guide contains discussion questions and activities aligned with the Common Core State Standards. See inside for reference to the Reading and Writing strands and grade-specific standards.

Note to teacher: Some of the activities are more complex than others to accommodate all learners. Select the activities that best suit the educational level of your students.



Dramatizing the Story

Try creative drama with the class when reading the story aloud. Assign each child an animal role to play. Begin by using animals from the book and introduce new animals as needed to ensure each student gets a part. Read aloud the text and ask the characters to enter on cue. Instruct students to display the emotions their animal characters experience upon seeing the cat.

Correlates with CCSS RL. K.9, RL.1-3.9.

Visual Literacy Analysis

Explain to the class how artists use shape, line, space, texture, and color to communicate a story through pictures.

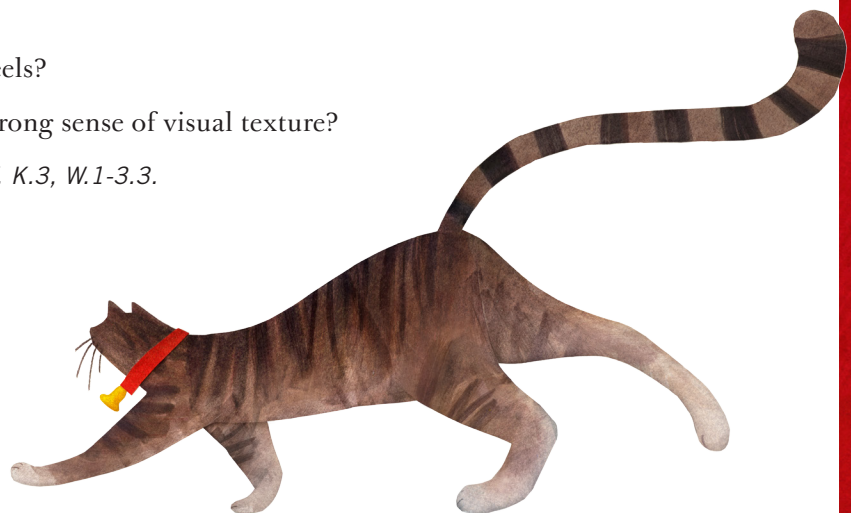
- Review the following shapes: circle, square, triangle, and rectangle. Discuss the various shapes used on the page with the illustration of the child and the cat. Point out that the cat's eyes are circles and the cat is a rectangle. Ask children to look for other examples of circles or squares in the picture. Allow students to work with a partner and write down at least three examples of how Brendan Wenzel uses each shape in his illustrations. Allow time for students to share their discovery.
- Explain to students that lines in illustrations may be long or short as well as straight, curvy, rounded, or wavy. Show how sometimes lines are used to point the way to the next page. Have the class look at the very first illustration in the book. Ask students to describe the types of lines used and explain what the lines represent. Then instruct children to find examples of other ways lines are used in the book.
- Inform the class that positive space comprises the object (or objects) of interest in a picture, while negative space comprises the area around that object. Direct students to look at the spread in which the worm and the bat see the cat. Ask them to identify which areas are positive space and which are negative space. Then allow students to demonstrate their understanding of this element of illustration by recreating this page from *They All Saw a Cat* using different amounts of positive and negative space. Have each child explain how making the object of interest much bigger or much smaller in their new version changes the picture.
- Explain to students that artists sometimes use color to express feelings. Discuss why the negative space is red on the page with the illustration of the mouse and the cat. Ask students to describe which emotion is elicited by the color red. Then have them locate other examples of color conveying emotion in the book.

Correlates with CCSS RL. K.7; RL. 1-3.7; L. K.1, L.1-3.1.

- Tell the class that visual texture is the way something looks like it would feel if touched. Instruct children to look at the picture of the flea and the cat. Ask them to describe what they think the cat hair feels like to the flea. Further explore visual texture by presenting objects with various textures. Have students select an object, place a white sheet of paper over it, and rub it with a crayon. Make sure they cover the entire sheet. Use the following questions in a classroom discussion:

- o What does it feel like?
- o How does the crayon rubbing look like it feels?
- o What other spreads in the book convey a strong sense of visual texture?

Correlates with CCSS RL. K.7. RL. 1-3.7; L. K.1, L.1-3.1; W. K.3, W.1-3.3.



Creative Writing Ideas

Ask students to pick a favorite page in *They All Saw A Cat* and imagine what the cat is thinking when he meets that particular animal. Instruct them to think about the words or pictures that might best express what is on the cat's mind, and record them in a journal entry. Allow time in class for students to share their work. Older students may write a short story from the point of view of the cat. Younger children may need a simple template:

The cat saw _____.
(Name the animal.)

He is _____.
(Name how the cat feels. Is he afraid, surprised, or curious?)

Because _____.
(Give a reason: The snake may bite.)

Correlates with CCSS W. K.2, W.1-3.2.

By now, the students know the story of *They All Saw A Cat*. Talk about the patterns of language in the story. Use a projector to display the entire text of the story, or write the text on the board:

The cat walked through the world,
with its whiskers, ears, and paws....
and *the child* saw **A CAT**.
and *the fox* saw **A CAT**.
Yes, they all saw the cat.

The cat walked through the world,
with its whiskers, ears and paws....
and *the fish* saw **A CAT**.
and *the mouse* saw **A CAT**.
and *the bee* saw **A CAT**.
Yes, they all saw the cat.

Lead a discussion about why the animal names are in italics. Direct students to look at the bold print and share when and why "a cat" is in bold print. Then ask the class to share how many times the first line of the story is repeated. Next have children try their hand at poetry. Allow them to choose their favorite animal and use it as inspiration for their own version of *They All Saw a Cat*. Kindergartners may need special guidance.

Example:

The bird _____ through the world,
with its _____, _____, and _____.
and the _____ saw a _____.
and the _____ saw a _____.
and the _____ saw a _____.
Yes, they all saw the _____.

As an extra activity, have the children illustrate their stories and create their own picture book, titled *They All Saw a* _____.

Correlates with CCSS RL. K.5, RL. 2-3.4; W. K.3, W. 1-3.3.

Research Extension Activity

When reading this book, children will ask: What do animals really see? How do we know? Tell them we don't yet know exactly how the world looks through each animal's eyes, but that scientists have studied how wide and how far animals see, and what colors they can see.

Team up with your school librarian to choose nonfiction books and research material that will help students find out what the world looks like through several animals' eyes. The following books may be helpful:

- *Eye to Eye: How Animals See the World* by Steve Jenkins (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014)
- *EyeOpeners! All about Animal Vision* by Monkia and Hans D. Dossenback (Blackbirch, 1998)

Bring students to the library to conduct research into how animals see.

As a follow-up to the library visit, line up various crayons on a table and ask children to note the colors various animals see. Hold up a vivid image such as an illustration of a garden filled with colorful flowers. Ask students to pick an animal and to color a picture that shows how the animal sees the garden. In a written response, or as an informal class presentation, have each child describe what the animal sees.

Correlates with CCSS W. K.2, W. 1-3.2; SL. K.4, SL. 1-3.4.

After the research activity, have children look at each spread in the picture book once more. Explain that some spreads represent a more scientific perspective, while other spreads represent how an animal sees the cat through a more emotional lens (remind the class of the usage of the color red in the spread with the mouse). Review each spread in *They All Saw a Cat* and discuss whether it is a scientific or an emotional interpretation of the animal's point of view.

Correlates with CCSS SL. K.1, SL. K.4, SL. 1-3, SL. 1-3.4.

About the Author



Brendan Wenzel is an illustrator based in upstate New York. His work has appeared internationally in children's books, animations, and magazines. An ardent conservationist, he is a proud collaborator with many organizations working to ensure the future of wild places and threatened species, especially within Southeast Asia. Brendan is a graduate of Pratt Institute. You can find more of his work at Brendanwenzel.info.

This guide was prepared by Pat Scales, a children's literature consultant, free speech advocate, and a retired school librarian.

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