

Reflect and Respond

My Strange Shrinking Parents: A Tall Tale by Zeno Sworder

Author: Zeno Sworder
Illustrator: Zeno Sworder
Storyteller: Trystan Go
Publisher: Thames & Hudson

Themes: Immigration, Migrants, Family, Belonging and Acceptance,

Love, Hope, Sacrifice, Culture, Diversity, Milestones

Year levels: Upper Primary Learning Areas: Humanities



Discussion questions:

- Before reading the story, look at the front cover. What do you think this story might be about? What clues does the title, subtitle and illustration give us? What is a 'tall tale'?
- The story is dedicated to the author Zeno Sworder's "immigrant parents". Discuss the term 'immigrant' (a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country). How do you think it would feel moving to a new country that is not familiar to you?
- Who is narrating the story?
- What do you think is meant by the phrase "They had old shoes and empty pockets"?
- What do you think the baker meant when he asked the boys parents for five centimetres?
- What is happening to the boys parents throughout the story?
- What do you think the theme of 'shrinking' represents in this story?
- How do your parents help you to 'grow'?
- What happens when the boy has his own family?
- "Our hearts are just as big. Our love is just as good." Discuss this scene and phrase. What does the boy's mother mean? Why do you think she is telling him this?
- Why do you think boy wants his parents to stop shrinking?
- Discuss the significance of the song at the beginning and the end of the story. What does 'humble' mean. How can they be 'giants'? What are the key messages the author is trying to convey?

Story response ideas:

a. Immigrating to Australia -estories to explore

Did you know that almost 30% of Australia's population were born overseas? Explore stories of peoples experiences moving from other countries to live in Australia.

1. Using a **KWL chart**, start by noting down what you already **know** about the experiences of immigrants moving and settling in Australia.





Story response ideas continued...

- 2. Next, note down questions that you would like to find out about this topic in the **Wonder** section.
- 3. Use the following websites to explore stories and information about the experiences of immigrants. Make a note of any interesting new facts or understandings that you have gained after exploring the stories. These can be written in the **Learn** section of the KWL chart.
 - Immigration Museum: Immigrant Stories: https://museumsvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/resources/immigrant-stories/
 - National Archives of Australia: Migrant Stories: www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/migrant-stories
 - ABC: BTN Video Clip: Australia's Waves of Migration: www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/migration-history/10910880

B. Explore an illustration

Revisit the illustrations in the book and discuss how they help to tell the story. Look particularly at how visual techniques such as colour, perspective, angle, size and symbols have been used.

Invite students to select an illustration to explore. They can use the prompts on the **Visual Analysis template** to help them delve deeper into their chosen image.

C. Dear Journal...

Select one of the characters from the story and write a diary entry from their perspective. They may be reflecting on a particular event in the story. What might they be thinking and feeling? What do they hope for?

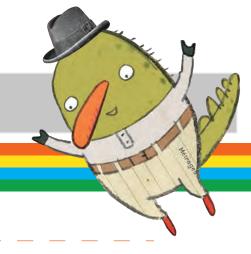
Use the **Dear Diary** template.





KWL-CHART

NAME



Date

Topic

WHAT I WHAT I WONDER

WHAT I LEARNED



Visual detective

Author: Illustrate	or:
Start by describing the illustration you have chosen	n to analyse:
Who and what is in this image?	
What is happening? What are the different	
participants/objects doing?	
What is the purpose of the image?	
Does it remind you of anything?	
How does the image make you feel?	
Select some of the relevant prompts below to help y	you analyse your selected illustration:
Colour	Size:
What do you notice about the use of colour?	 How big or small are things compared to one
 How has colour been used to set a mood or tone? 	another?
	Why has the author chosen to use size like this?
	What might this mean?
Gaze:	Movement:
Is the character looking directly at you or away	How has movement been shown?
from you?	
Where are their eyes looking?	
How does their gaze relate to what is happening in	
the story?	
,	



Visual detective continued

Salience:	Reading path:
What do you notice first?	How does your eye move from one point to anothe
What is your eye drawn to?	across the image?
How has the illustrator drawn your attention to this	What has the illustrator done to help guide this?
part of the image?	
Symbols:	Perspective:
Symbols could be objects or a choice in the	 Is the image in the foreground or background?
illustration that represents an idea or concept.	What might this choice of placement be important
Are there any symbols in the image? If yes,	this part of the story?
describe this/these.	
 Why has the author chosen to use these symbols? 	
What might this mean for what is happening in this	
story?	
Park law was and free law was a	
Body language and facial expressions:	
What does the characters facial expressions,	
gestures, stance or position, tell us about their	
attitude, personality or how they are feeling?	



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	D	ate:	
Dear Diary,			
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Student Task Sheet

Print this page for your students to use during Literacy Rotations

Today, you will be viewing and listening to:

My Strange Shrinking Parents: A Tall Tale by Zeno Sworder

Author: Zeno Sworder **Illustrator:** Zeno Sworder **Storyteller:** Trystan Go

Publisher: Thames & Hudson

Year levels: Upper Primary



Learning tasks:

After viewing the story, choose one of the following three activities to complete.

A. Plotting the boys journey through childhood to adulthood

Use the **Timeline** template to plot key events from the story that tell us about the boy and his experience growing up. Include a description about how he might be feeling at these different stages of his life.

B. Weighing up the pros and the cons

The parents made many sacrifices for their son throughout his life. Use the **T-Chart** to identify the positives and negative aspects of their efforts. Consider these both from the perspective of the son and the parents.

C. Exploring messages in the story

"I had learned from their examples to wear my differences with my back straight and my head high. Their belief in me had grown into my courage."

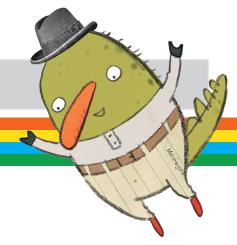
What does the boy - now grown into an adult, mean by this? What might those differences be? How had their belief given him courage?

Use the **Quote Analysis template** to note down your thoughts and ideas about these lines from the story.



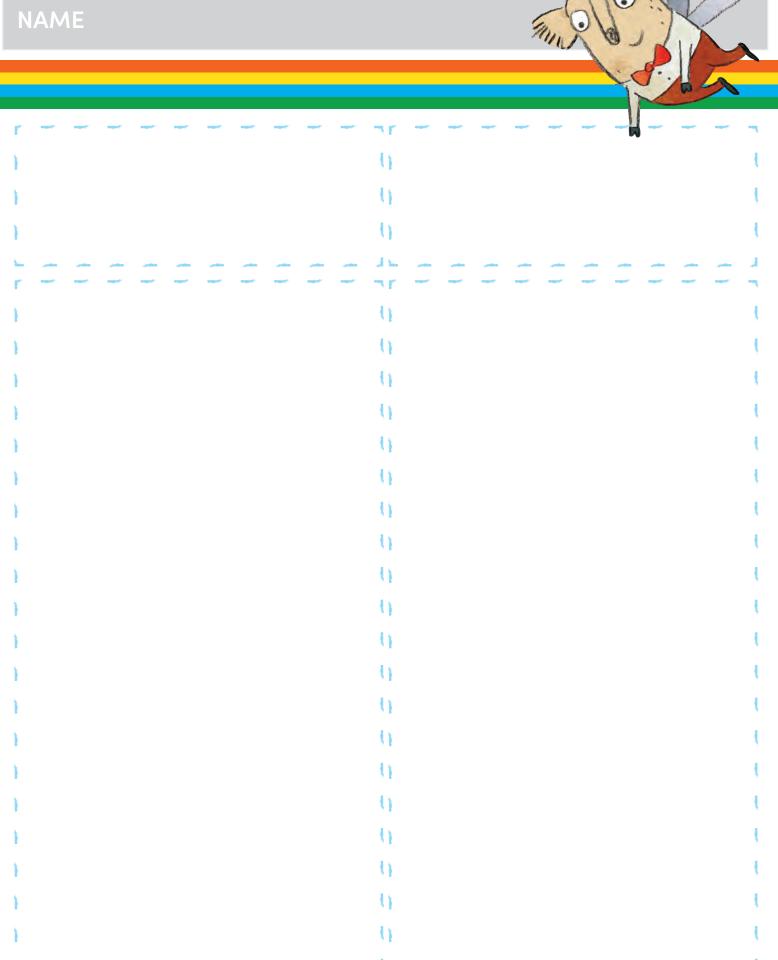
Scan the QR code to view the story!





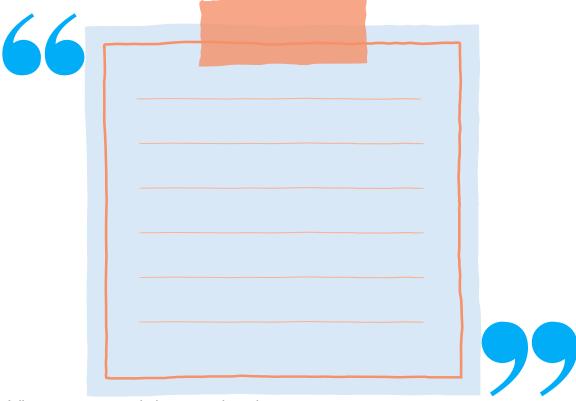


T-CHART



Quote Analysis

Select a quote from the story to analyse:



Use the following prompts to help you analyse the quote:

- In your own words, explain what the quote means.
- Why did this particular quote stand out to you?
- How does it make you feel?
- How has the author used language in an interesting way?
- Have any particular language devices been used?
- How is this important to the story?

What do you visualise when you hear or read this quote?					

