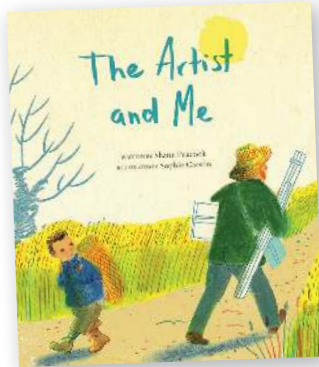


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Classroom Discussion Prompts



978-1-77147-138-1
HC \$18.95 CDN / \$16.95 US

The Artist and Me

By Shane Peacock, Illustrated by Sophie Casson

Grades 1–5

Reading levels Fountas & Pinnell: O
Lexile® Measure: AD 480L

Curriculum links **Language Arts:** Reading Comprehension
Visual Arts: Forms; Cultural Contexts

A letter from the author

Dear Reader,

There are many picture books about bullying, and so there should be. But *The Artist and Me* is different. Bullying is just part of this story and even when it is, it's presented in a unique way. The target in this book just happens to be one of the greatest artists who ever lived. And he isn't bullied by another adult, but by a child. As well, the story is told by the bully, and not when his crimes are actually being committed, but many years later when he fully understands how horrible his actions were ... and when his victim has achieved fame and respect.

The Artist and Me gives children, and parents and teachers who read to them, the opportunity to explore many things—bullying, art, Vincent van Gogh, perspective, learning from one's actions, and history. The story itself, matched with extraordinarily beautiful art that exudes a sense of another time, van Gogh's rich colors, and southern France, pulls the reader along from page to page with a developing plot line that leads to a dramatic moment and then an educative and heart-wrenching conclusion.

My hope is that kids and adults alike will not only feel compelled to read on from the opening sentence right to the end, but will finish the last page filled with emotions, and want to be better to each other from that moment onward.

Shane Peacock
January 2016



Classroom discussion prompts

1. Who is the artist in *The Artist and Me*? Did you know that he sold just one painting in his entire lifetime? Take some time to learn a little more about him and about his art. Do you like his paintings? Are they like other paintings you've seen? Why do you think they are considered so great?
2. Did you notice how the colors the illustrator uses in the book are like those van Gogh used? Are there things you see in the art that aren't described in the text? How does that help you better understand the story?
3. There are two contrasting words in the very first sentence of the book: words that we might say are the opposite of each other. Can you find them? Why do you think the author used those two words?
4. Why does the narrator keep doing mean things to the artist? Do you think he likes doing those things or is he a little concerned that he might be wrong? Why does he sometimes pause to look at this crazy man's paintings? Do you think that, deep inside, he respects the artist, but can't admit it to himself?
5. Why did the author tell the story from the point of view of the bully? Wouldn't it have been better to tell it in a more old-fashioned way, with just the victim talking about how awful he felt when he was being bullied, or someone else telling the story about the two of them? Why did the author also have the bully tell the story as an old man? At what point in the story did you realize that the narrator was telling the story when he was an old man?
6. This story is about many things – bullying, history, art, perspective, Vincent van Gogh, etc. Were you aware it was discussing those things? Do you like stories that have meaning in them as well as being good stories? Why?
7. How did you feel during the scene where the boy encounters the artist when he is all alone out in the field? Were you a bit afraid? Were you afraid of the artist and what he might do? Why did he offer the boy his painting? Did that surprise you? What happened to the boy during that scene?