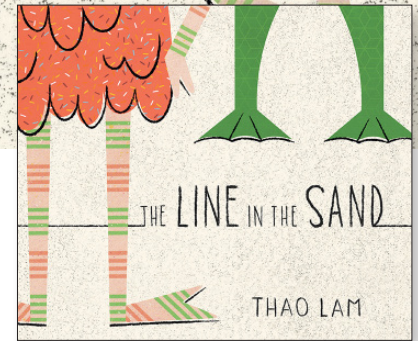


The Line in the Sand

Discussion Guide by Vicky Timmermanis
For Kindergarten to Grade 2

About the Book

A monster meanders down a beach, dragging a stick behind them and leaving a line in the sand. Meanwhile, a group of friends is at play—flying kites, building sandcastles, tossing a ball—until two of them become curious about the line that now seemingly divides them. What does the line mean? Should the line be crossed? Can it be crossed? This powerful wordless story, told in panels and illustrated in striking collage art, is at once simple, relatable, and profound and will encourage readers to think about conflict, communication, and the meaning of the lines we all draw, whether intentional or not.



Written and illustrated by Thao Lam

About this Guide

Children's perspective taking abilities begin to develop at a young age, though initially in a simplistic way. Discussing the characters in books can support the development of early perspective taking skills. These conversations expand emotional vocabulary, which helps students identify and understand feelings in themselves and others. Books allow students to put themselves in someone else's shoes and to see another's viewpoint on a situation. Students who can understand that others may act, think or feel differently than them are better able to solve social problems. Wordless books in particular provide an opportunity for students to practice using facial expressions, body language and situations to understand others' perspectives.

SECTION ONE: Exploring a wordless picture book

A wordless book allows students to create their own story. Everyone will interpret the pictures in a unique way. The following ideas might be helpful for exploring this book with your students:

- Go through the pictures in the book multiple times.
- At first, focus on exploring the pictures. This can happen silently or by asking students to make observations about what they see in the pictures.
- Keep initial discussions general so your students don't get "locked in" to one interpretation.
- Next, encourage students to develop their own stories based on what they see.
- Students can share or record their stories in different ways. For example, by writing them down or telling them to a buddy or small group. Help students recognize there is no right or wrong story.

ISBN
978-1-77147-570-9

CURRICULUM LINKS
Language Arts: Reading
Comprehension
Character Development: Social-
Emotional Learning; Conflict Resolution

READING LEVELS
Grade: 1 and up
Fountas & Pinnell: E
Lexile® Measure: NP
Reading Recovery: 8

COMMON CORE
RL.1, W.1, SL.1, L.1



SECTION TWO: Social-Emotional Learning Discussion Topics

Topic 1: Understanding others' emotions and thoughts

Aim: To help students interpret the perspectives of others, including understanding their thoughts and emotions.

Guiding Questions: Choose a picture in the story. Tell us what you think one of the characters is feeling or thinking. What makes you guess that (e.g., facial expressions, body language, the situation)? Why do you think they are feeling that way?

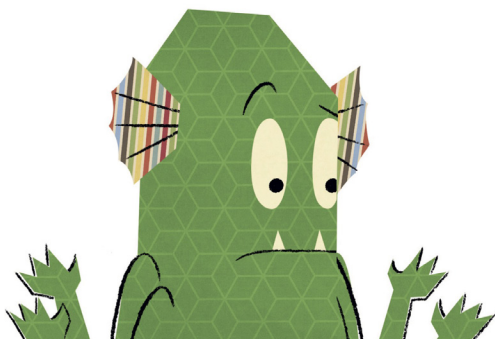
Prior to this discussion, introduce the terms thoughts (what someone is saying to themselves in their mind) and emotions (the feelings someone is having in their body/mind). It can be helpful to use concrete examples and visuals. For example, share your own emotions and thoughts related to a recent event in your class. You can also post a feelings chart that combines emotion words with facial expressions.

During the discussion, look for opportunities to highlight the following ideas:

- We can make guesses about what others are thinking and feeling based on:
 - Their facial expressions (e.g., happy because smiling/laughing)
 - Their body language (e.g., angry because arms crossed, confused because scratching head)
 - The situation (e.g., ... thinks orange monster is mean for stomping on green monster's toe)
- There isn't one "right" way to think or feel.
 - Two people can feel different things in the same situation.
 - You can have multiple feelings at the same time.
- When we talk about the feelings and thoughts of others, we are just making guesses. We may guess one thing, but they are thinking or feeling something very different. This can lead to misunderstandings – ask students to find examples of misunderstandings in the book.

Activity: Younger students may have difficulty understanding that different people can feel different things in the same situation. To demonstrate this idea, put a card with a happy face on one side of the room and a sad face on the other. Read out scenarios that would likely elicit different emotions from different children (see below for examples). Students should walk to the emotion they would feel. For older students, try three or four emotion choices (e.g., worried, angry).

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • Having indoor recess | • Being outside when the weather is bad |
| • Seeing a spider | • Listening to loud music |
| • Eating carrots | • Seeing a big dog |
| • Math class | • Doing crafts |
| • Talking in front of the class | |



Topic 2: Social problem solving (conflict resolution)

Aim: To help students interpret the perspectives of others, including understanding their thoughts and emotions.

Guiding Question: What is the problem?

Based on one of the students' stories, choose a conflict that occurs between two of the characters. Discuss the problem and the viewpoints of each character.

Guiding question: What are some ways that the characters could solve this problem?

Example student responses:

- Using your words
- Asking for help from a trusted adult (particularly helpful if feeling scared or hurt)
- Taking a break/walking away

Activity: Using role-play to practice social problem solving skills can make it easier for students to use these skills “in the moment”. Have student pairs act out some of the potential solutions. For example, encourage students to act out what it would look like to “use your words”. Discuss that this means talking through a situation by saying your own point of view and listening to the other person’s. If students are struggling with this, you may wish to be part of a role-play to provide an example.

Guiding question: Which solution should the characters choose? Why do you think that is the best solution? How would each character feel about that solution?

Highlight the importance of trying to find a solution that would work for all characters involved.

To continue this learning, students will benefit from modelling of these skills on an ongoing basis. For example:

- Use emotion words frequently. Label your own emotions and make guesses about your students' emotions or the emotions of characters in books.
- “Think aloud” when solving day-to-day problems. This allows students to hear you use the problem-solving steps they learned in real-life examples.

About Vicky Timmermanis

Dr. Vicky Timmermanis is a school and clinical child psychologist who works with children, adolescents, families and educators. She currently works at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). As part of her work at the TDSB, Vicky collaborates with educators and caregivers to help students develop skills in identifying and managing emotions, making friends and navigating social conflicts. She believes that ongoing education and discussions about topics related to social and emotional well-being are important for people of all ages.

