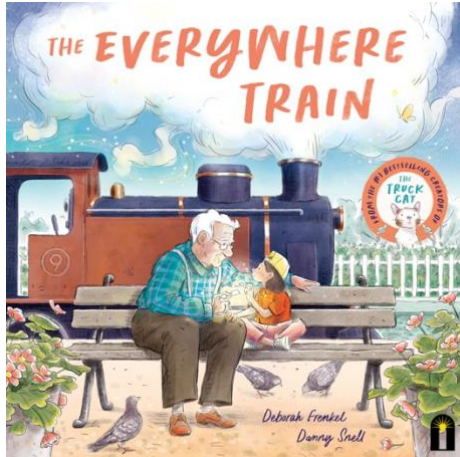


Teacher's Notes



The Everywhere Train
Written by Deborah Frenkel

Illustrated by Danny Snell

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

primary-aged readers (ages 4-8, grades Prep+)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English (AC9E1LA08, AC9E1LE02, AC9E1LY02)
- General capabilities:
 - Personal and social capability – emotional awareness
 - Literacy – reading and viewing
 - Literacy – writing

THEMES

- Traditions
- Trains
- Families/grandparents
- Change
- Memory/remembering loved ones
- Imagination

SYNOPSIS

On Fridays, Scout goes riding on the train with Pop. They look at the world ribboning past, hello-goodbye-hello-goodbye ...

When Pop moves into an aged-care facility, it seems their train-riding tradition is over, but Scout and Pop make a plan ...

They build a station by his bed, make the tickets and board a train that can take them anywhere – to yesterday and tomorrow, to here and there, and all the everywhere in between.

From the beloved creators of *The Truck Cat* comes a story about trains and traditions, children and their grandparents, and the everlasting power of memory and imagination.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Deborah Frenkel is a Melbourne-based writer of everything from books to billboards and even the words on the back of cereal boxes. Her writing for children includes picture books about nature, imagination, and different kinds of belonging. She is the author of the bestselling, multi-award-winning picture book *The Truck Cat*.

Danny Snell lives in Adelaide and has been working as an illustrator for over 20 years. He has illustrated over a dozen children's picture books, including *The Truck Cat*.

THEMES

This book uses the relationship between Pop and Scout to explore the way things change as we age. In Pop's case, he moves into the home to access support, however this means he can no longer visit the train station with Scout. By creating the Everywhere Train, Pop and Scout are able to travel wherever and whenever they want, and the line of people waiting to board suggests that everyone else wants to take a trip in time too.

The book explores themes of aging and loneliness and suggests that sharing memories can help people to stay connected. Discuss the ways that you stay connected to older members of your family and community. What are some of the ways we can value their lives and experiences?

WRITING STYLE

The writing in this story is simple and realistic. The author uses the simple routine that Scout and Pop follow at the beginning to recreate the train after Pop has moved into the home.

The text gives us the opportunity to think about the difference between **literal** and **hypothetical** or **imagined** events.

At the beginning of the book, Scout and Pop ride a real train. This is a literal journey – the text is describing what is actually happening.

But when Scout and Pop recreate the train at the home, they don't really leave the building. Instead, they use their imaginations and memories to take them to other times and places. This is a hypothetical journey – the text is describing what they imagine is happening.

Discuss other examples of literal and hypothetical events and experiences.

COMPREHENSION

- What does Scout usually do on Fridays with Pop?
- What are the steps in their routine?
- Why does Pop move into the home?



- What's missing from Pop's room in the home?
- How does Scout build the train in Pop's room?
- Where does the train allow them to visit?
- Are they really going to these places? Where is the train really taking them?
- Why do you think so many other people at the home want to ride the train? What is it giving them?
- What do you think the writer of this story wants you to understand about memories?

WRITING EXERCISE

Think about a tradition you share with someone you love. Break it down into six, simple steps, and write each step out into a single sentence. Draw an illustration to accompany your sentence. Now imagine that, like Pop and Scout in the story, you move away. How could you recreate this tradition somewhere else? Use the same steps, but draw new illustrations to show how you might recreate your tradition in an unfamiliar or limited environment.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

The illustrator initially uses frames to reflect the steps of the real routine that Scout and Pop follow when they catch the train. Later, when Scout and Pop summon the imaginary train to the home, the illustrator introduces a cloud, which breaks out of the frame and swirls across the page. Perhaps this cloud represents memory, and allows Scout and Pop to be transported to other times and places. Do you agree? What else might the cloud represent?

Discuss the other differences and similarities between the frames representing literal events (sharp corners and thin borders) and the frames that show remembered events (rounded edges and thicker borders)

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Where would you travel if you could ride the Everywhere Train? Who would you take with you, or visit? Write a short story describing your journey. Draw a series of images to accompany your writing.
- Imagine that you are creating the Everywhere Train with Scout and Pop. Design and make tickets and a sign for your train. Where would you set up your station and why?
- This book celebrates the special relationship between Scout and Pop, and allows them to connect by sharing memories. Interview an older person in your life and ask them to share a memory with you. Write it down and bring it into class. Add all of your memories to a class Everywhere Train so that you can visit them anytime you like.



RELATED READING

The Truck Cat

By Deborah Frenkel and Danny Snell (illustr)

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge

By Mem Fox and Julie Vivas (illustr)

Hundred Years of Happiness

By Thanhha Lai

Holding On

By Sophia N. Lee and Isabel Roxas (illustr)

The Garden We Share

By Zoë Tucker and Julianna Swaney (illustr)

The Garden of Broken Things

By Freya Blackwood

