



RATIONALE

This reading activity allows children (or any other participants) to experience the story and its language as the reading unfolds.

ADVICE FOR MEDIATORS

- Choose a picturebook which you can present in two different languages.
- Give the children (or the participants to this activity) a piece of clay or any other material that they can mould.
- Go through the story in a language that is less familiar to your group participants. As they listen to the story, the participants can mould the clay in whatever form they want: to represent a character, a feeling, an action - anything that they take away from the story.
- Give your participants a second piece of clay. Go through the story a second time in a language that the participants are familiar with.
- As a group or in pairs, discuss and compare the two pieces of clay that were moulded during the two readings of the same story. Focus on how language, story and matter (the clay) enable participants to make meaning and understand what is going on.

EXTENDED QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE WALKING AND TALKING THROUGH THE BOOK

Questions about the process: What was it like to work with the clay from the version of the story in which the language was less familiar to you, to the version of the story you understood? What was it like to follow the story while working on the piece of clay?

Questions about the artefacts: How did you decide what to do with the piece of clay? How do the two pieces of clay relate to the story? What are the similarities and differences between them? What do the two pieces of clay add to the story?

TAKING NOTES OF THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

When working with a story in a language that is less familiar to them, participants will struggle more with the piece of clay. Some may remain unfinished, others may look torn and contorted as the participants struggle to make meaning. In other cases, the participants may copy images from the book and will try to replicate what they see in the book. All these actions are important because they give the participants insights into what we do and how we respond to situations where language is not the primary channel of communicating. To engage with a story we don't understand, we need to find new and creative ways of relating to the story and we need to build the capacity to negotiate uncertainty and frustration.

Note: This activity was developed as part of the project *Creative Language Practices*
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/creativepracticestranslang>

