



A LONG WAY Teacher Guide

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PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Collect various books and photographs about transportation, including *Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams. For classroom art project ideas, take a look at *Vroom! Vroom!* by Judy Press. Talk with students about how they travel to various destinations such as school, the grocery store, a friend's house.

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

A Long Way is a true picture book. It contains only 32 words of text. To truly read this book, one must also read the pictures. Here are some things to look for as you read:

The story begins with the illustration in the end pages that shows the setting and characters. Take note of the overstuffed chair, typewriter and stack of books that symbolize the role of the author in creating the story. The action starts here too, with the arrival of the delivery truck. Watch for places later in the book that show symbols of the artist hard at work.

Near the beginning of the story, the line of text, "It's a long way," is paired with the scene of the child pretending to be a turtle. Encourage children to think about distances. What might be a short distance for a person may be a long way for a turtle. What might be a sort distance for an adult may be a long way for a child. Think about other such contrasts. Is flying easier for the chicken than it is for the puppy?

The author is a lover of mystery and there's a mystery in this story. Most readers cannot tell what's in the package for Grandma until she unwraps it. This could lead to an interesting discussion of surprises, good and bad that students have had. Do they like or dislike waiting for surprises?

The girl in the story has an active imagination and on the very last endpaper page, as the grandmother presides over the tea party, we see where she gets it. Encourage students to think about their traits and whom, in their families, they resemble. Are their brothers and sisters like them or unlike them and in what ways?

THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

Language Arts — After reading *A Long Way* aloud, explain to children that the story is based on a real trip taken by the author and her daughters. Have students think about how they visit members of their family and write their own stories of travel. What vehicles might they use? How far would they travel? How long would it take to get there? Who would go along? What objects would they take with them? What would they see along the way? Use a U.S. or world map to pinpoint the destinations of the class. After writing their stories, invite students to illustrate the journey as they wish. Older students may wish to make the story into an actual book with illustrations on each page.

Social Studies — The vehicles in the story were all used during a single trip in a single day between Pittsburgh and New York. What vehicles might your students see in a single day in their town or city? Which ones can they ride? Which ones can they see but not use for personal travel?

Art — Read *Galimoto* to the class. In this book, as in *A Long Way*, children create vehicles using found materials and imagination. Have children plan and collect materials to create their own vehicles, either realistic or imaginary. Encourage them to write stories about where they might travel in such vehicles.

Dance/Drama/Creative Movement — This story includes many different ways to travel. Have children retell the story using movement with the words. Then try acting out the story with no words at all.

Celebrations — Have a tea party like the one pictured on the back endpages. Use a watering can to pour juice and put tiny paper parasols on top of cupcakes. Invite children to bring along their favorite stuffed animals.

Science — What can you do with a box? The girl in the story transforms a box in many different ways. Even the endpage and the back cover include new uses. Give each student a box and challenge them to think of five ways to use that box. Can they think of ten ways? (Different sizes in the classroom will provoke many different uses.) Talk about the ways people think of tools, technology and inventions. What might the children invent using a box or several boxes?