



***Picture Book
Partners***



presents

The Polar Express

By Chris Van Allsburg



Digital Connection:

Build background knowledge about the Christmas holiday with this interactive scrapbook page.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/holidays/christmas>

Online Story:

Students can listen to the story read aloud while viewing illustrations from the book.

<http://safeshare.tv/w/xVVNSciEFu>

Guiding Questions:

1. Why can you infer is the reason the main character was chosen to ride on the train? What is one clue in the story that makes you infer that?
2. Why do you think the main character's parents did not wake up and get on the train with him? What is one clue from the story that makes you infer that?
3. Pause the story at 6:45. Why do you think the main character's friends and sister can no longer hear the bell? What is one clue from the story that makes you infer that? (If reading the book, pause before reading the last sentence.)
4. How do the illustrations contribute to the story?
5. Why do you think the author chose the setting of the entire story to be in a snowy location?

Extension Idea:

Encourage your students to explore the real arctic with this interactive habitat explorer:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/crittercam/arctic/arctic.swf>



Answer Key:

1. The main character was chosen to ride on the train because he truly believed in Santa Claus. The book shares that he was in bed listening for Santa's sleigh bells and that he didn't believe his friend who said it would never happen.
2. There are only children on the train as passengers, so I think the train is only meant for children. It also seems magical so I think that's why his parents didn't wake up.
3. I think they can't hear the bell anymore because they have grown up and don't believe anymore. I think that because when he first received the bell, his parent's couldn't hear it.
4. The illustrations contribute to the magical feel of the story because they are soft and use dark colors. They also contribute to the setting by showing scenes that are not described in the story.
5. I think the author chose a snowy setting because it is a Christmas story and that makes us think of winter and snow. I think the setting was also chosen because Santa lives at the North Pole, and it is snowy there.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.7 Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text



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Pause the story at 6:45. Why do you think the main character's friend and sister can no longer hear the bell? What is one clue from the story that makes you infer that?

How do the illustrations contribute to the story?



Why do you think the author chose the setting of the entire story to be in a snowy location?

