

Guided Reading Resource

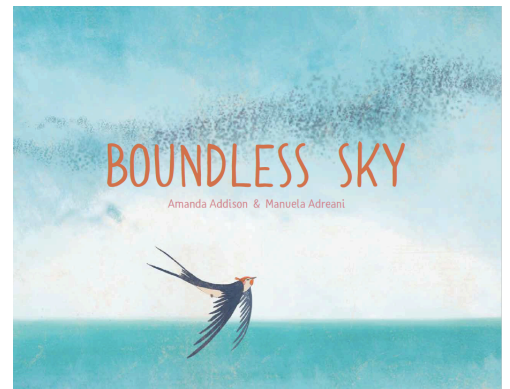
A step-by-step teacher's guide for reading *Boundless Sky* as a class reader. These questions could also be used to prompt discussion in small groups or for independent readers approaching the text on their own.

Before sharing *Boundless Sky*:

- The title of the book is *Boundless Sky*. What might the story be about?
- What does boundless mean? (without limits or restrictions)

Cover Image:

- Based on the cover, what do you think *Boundless Sky* is about? Has your prediction changed?
- Who is the author? Who is the illustrator?
- What bird is on the cover? (swallow)
- What is in the background? (Sea, sky and a flight of swallows – share endpapers to demonstrate that the black cloud is made out of birds)
- How are the endpapers different? What does this imply?
- What are swallows known for? (seasonal migration) Does this affect your prediction?



Migration Path:

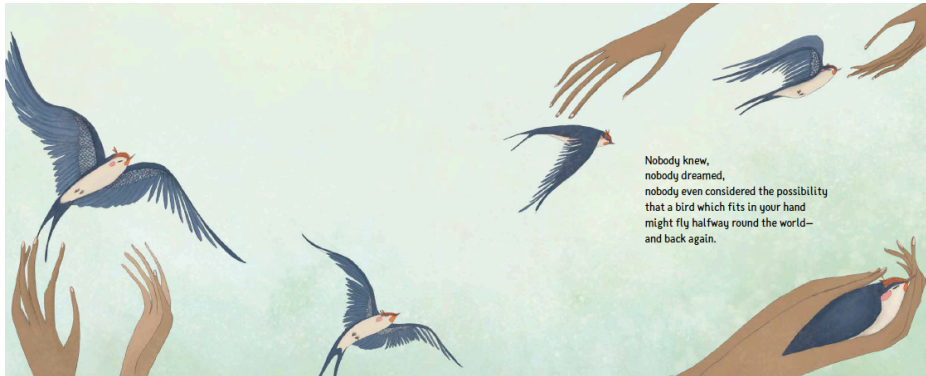
- What's happening on this page?
- Where is the bird traveling from? (U.K. to southern Africa)
- How long do you think this journey takes? (about six weeks)



Share the blurb:

“This is a story of a bird that fits in your hand flying halfway round the world looking for a place to nest. This is the story of a young girl from northern Africa fleeing halfway round the world looking for a place of peace. This is a story of Bird. This is a story of Leila. This is the story of a chance encounter and a long journey home.”

- How does the blurb change your predictions about *Boundless Sky*?
- Who do you think the main character(s) are and why?
- Why might Leila be fleeing her home?



Pages 1-2

- How many characters do you think are on this page? Why?
- The word “nobody” is used three times on this double page spread. Why might the author do this?
- How do you feel about a bird that fits in the palm of your hand flying halfway round the world and back again?
- What does it tell you about the bird that it’s able to travel so far?

Pages 3-4

- Where do you think Bird and Alfie are?
- What clues are there that it is time for Bird to migrate?
- How might Alfie feel about Bird leaving?
- Where do you think Leila is?
- How might Bird feel about leaving?



Pages 5-6

- Where is Bird now? What words help us work this out? (Sand and shore imply the seaside)
- What is the weather like at there? How can you tell? (Kites tell us that it’s windy. The child in coat, hat and scarf tell us that it’s cold).
- Would you race Bird along the sand? How might the kite runners feel racing Bird?

Pages 7-8

- Using the migration path, where do you think Bird might be now?
- What would the sight of migrating birds mean for the fishermen?
- What does the number birds tell you about migration?
- How would you feel if you had to migrate every winter?
- Have we met Leila yet? Where do you think she is?



Pages 9-10

- How often do the children get to see Bird in a year?
- How do you think the children feel about this?
- How would you feel if you only got to see someone important to you that many times a year?
- What hazards or difficulties might Bird face during her journey?

Pages 11-12

- Why is going across the desert the hardest part of the journey?
- What is an 'oasis'? (a fertile place in a desert where water can be found)
- What do Leila's actions tell us about her?
- What would you do if you were in Leila's position?
- Where might Leila live?
- This is the first time that Bird speaks in the story. What does that tell us about what Bird is feeling?



Pages 13-14

- How do you think Bird is feeling in the jungle?
- How do you think Bird would behave differently in the jungle compared to in the desert?
- What do you think Leila would think of the jungle?
- Would you rather live in a jungle or in a desert? Why?

Pages 15-16

- When you are home how do you feel?
- Do you think this is similar or different to how Bird feels? Why?
- What do you think Bird was thinking while journeying home?
- What would it be like to only visit home once a year?

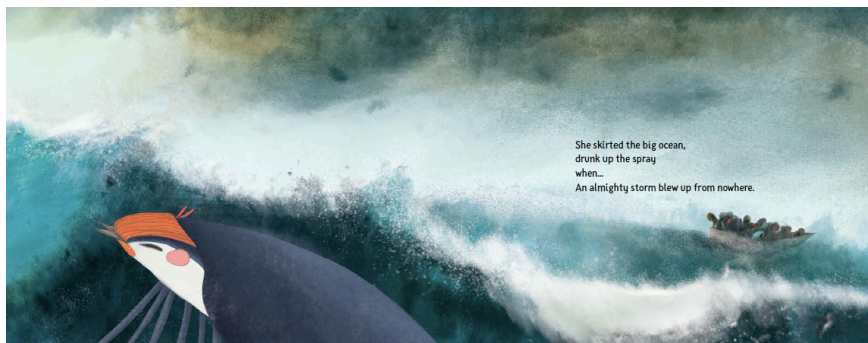


Pages 17-18

- How do you think Bird feels about having to leave home?
- How are the children in Africa similar to Alfie in the U.K.? How are they different?
- If you had to leave home how would you prepare?
- How do you think Bird has prepared to leave?

Pages 19-20

- Why is it significant that bird is thirsty?
- Where do you think Leila has gone?
- What clues are there that tell us why Leila may have gone?
- What hazards and difficulties might Leila face leaving home?
- If you were Bird, what would you think of this situation?



Pages 21-22

- What is happening on this page?
- What would you be thinking if you were on the boat?
- Why might the people be traveling despite the dangers of the storm?
- What similarities might there be between Bird and the people?

Pages 23-24

- How have the people in this country helped Bird?
- If the people in this country are helping bird, what does that tell us?
- Where might Leila be now? How would she be feeling compared to Bird?
- Would the people of this country treat Bird and Leila similarly or not? Why?

Pages 25-26

- The word “back” is used three times on this page. Why might the author do this?
- Using the migration path, where might Bird be now?
- Now that Bird’s journey is coming to an end, how do you think she feels?
- Africa might be Bird’s home, but what do you think Bird thinks of the U.K.?



Pages 27-28

- How do you think Leila got here?
- What might Bird think about meeting Leila here?
- How might Leila feel when she sees Bird here?
- What are the similarities and differences between Bird’s and Leila’s thoughts?
- What are the similarities and differences between Bird’s and Leila’s feelings?
- What might Leila think of the U.K.?
- How long do you think it took Leila to get to the U.K.?



Pages 29-30

- How might Alfie feel about his new neighbour?
- How might Leila think about her new neighbour?
- How does Bird connect Leila and Alfie?
- Would you rather make Bird’s or Leila’s journey? Why?
- How are Bird and Leila similar as characters? What do their journeys tell us about them?

At the end of the story

- How would you describe Bird's character?
- How would you describe Leila's character?
- Do you think this story has a message? If so, what?
- How is Leila's life different to yours?
- What was your favourite page? Why?
- Were your predictions about the story correct? How similar was your prediction to the story?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What might the title *Boundless Sky* mean in the context of the book?
- Who do you think was the main character? Why?
- Whose story do you think *Boundless Sky* is? Why?
- Do you know anything about anyone like Leila in the real world? What?
- In this story Leila is a refugee. Does this story change what you think of refugees?

Key Topics

- Migration
- Birds
- Refugees
- Journeys
- Africa
- Friendship
- Empathy



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A bank of comprehension activities

Prediction:

Begin by showing children images related to the locations that swallows might pass while migrating from the U.K. to Africa. Images could range from geographic landmarks to cultural elements representative of cultures that swallows might encounter on their journey. Ask the children how the images are linked (potential for discussion around comparing and contrasting the images). Follow up the discussion with the prediction activities presented in the Guided Reading Resource when initially introducing the text. This would also be a good opportunity to investigate the broader concept of migration in the natural world, either focusing on birds or applying the idea to other species.

Guided Reading:

For questions that stretch the children's comprehension skills see the Guided Reading Resource. The questions go beyond literal interpretation and build on the children's ability to inference by asking them to consider different perspectives and the reasoning behind them.

Vocabulary:

Knowledge of specific vocabulary that would greater facilitate discussion during initial readings of *Boundless Sky* include: refugee, refuge, migration, oasis, boundless, continent and empathy. Children should define the words, find synonyms and antonyms. The words can then be combined into a crossword or word-search and illustrated. What the children produce can then be shared between them, put on display or used in peer-to-peer teaching, in a carousel fashion.

Inference:

Children pick a page from *Boundless Sky* and annotate it, answering the questions:

What is happening on the page?

What does the choice of language imply?

What does the image communicate?

What does the colour scheme of the image imply?

What are the characters thinking? Why?

What are the characters feeling? Why?

Based on what's happening on the page, what might have happened previous? What might happen next? Why?

Children could also sequence images from the book, producing a narrative and justifying their chosen structure.

Identifying Themes:

Children can explain and summarise the message of *Boundless Sky*, either by writing a short paragraph or drawing a short comic strip. They can extend their explanation by adding why it is sometimes necessary for people to leave their homes and travel far away. The pupils could also research real cases of migration, drawing comparisons to *Boundless Sky* and using key points to further underlie their work. Themes in *Boundless Sky* include migration, journeys, friendship, empathy, home and displacement.

Discussion

During a class reading of *Boundless Sky* use the headings: “Likes”, “Dislikes”, “Patterns” and “Puzzles” to analysis the book. Children can contribute ideas and categories them under the four headings, thus forming a basis for discussion. Go through *Boundless Sky* page by page adding thoughts under the four headings. Children can also take notes during the reading themselves.

Extending discussion ideas:

- How does the character of Bird act as a metaphor? Why do you think Bird is a swallow?
- What is home? Does it have to be a place? Can your home change?
- What reasons might people have to migrate? Social? Environmental? Financial? Political? Other?
- If Alfie had to migrate and became a refugee, would he have a similar experience to Leila? Why? Why not?
- Why might understanding factors behind why people are sometimes displaced and forced to become refugees important?

Migration Research

In *Boundless Sky*, Bird migrates from the U.K. to South Africa, and while this is accurate of how some swallows migrate the truth is actually slightly more complicated!

The character of Bird is a British swallow and would likely spend her winter in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert. However, swallows from different parts of Europe might winter elsewhere, for example in the Arabian Peninsula or across the Indian sub-continent.

British swallows spend their winter in South Africa. They travel through France, across the Pyrenees mountains, down Spain, across the Mediterranean Sea, over Morocco and then across the Sahara.



Research swallows and their migration!

Starting with the information above find out further information about swallow migration. Information should include:

- A description and diagram of a swallow
- How far, fast and high swallows fly
- The distance swallows migrate, how long the journey takes, and the countries that they travel through
- Risks and challenges that swallows encounter while migrating
- Interesting or surprising facts

Useful sites:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/swallow/migration/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/swallow/population-trends/>

<http://justfunfacts.com/interesting-facts-about-swallows/>

<https://eurobirdportal.org/ebp/en/#home/HIRRUS/r52weeks>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/swallow/>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/swallow/swallow-predators-and-parasites/>

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Swallow>

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Join the Flock

Make your own bird and become part of a worldwide flock! Print out the bird templates or draw a bird from the screen.

Here are some ways you could decorate your bird. You can make it realistic or you can have fun with your imagination! Whatever you decide to do, your bird will be one-of-a-kind – just like you. Cut it along the lines, attach a lollipop stick or similar and fly!



