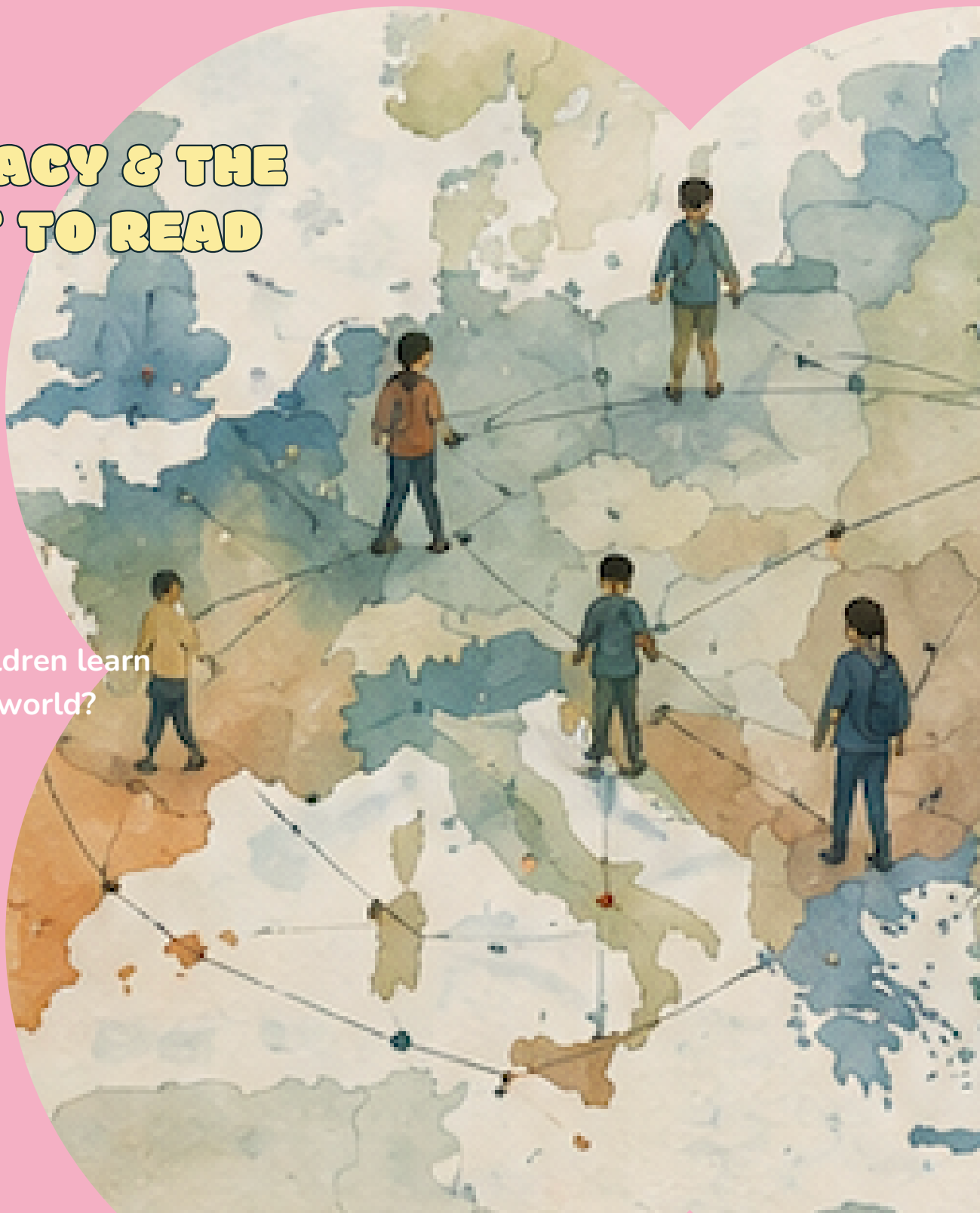
THE EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

LITERACY & THE RIGHT TO READ



How do children learn to read the world?

SEP 2026

ISSUE 01

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THE EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

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IMAGE, MEDIA & PRODUCTION CREDITS

1. Book Cover Images

- Grogne dragonne!

Sandra Le Guen & Stéphane Nicolet - France.
La Poule qui pond, 2026. Published 24 June 2026.

- Kje si?

Marta Bartolj - Slovenia.
Dob pri Domžalah: Miš, 2018.
Publisher: Miš Založba

- Le refuge

Sandra Le Guen - France.
Illustrated by Stéphane Nicolet.
Orso Éditions, 2019. Published 4 April 2019.

- Akim court

Claude K. Dubois - Belgium.
Éditions L'École des loisirs (EDL), 2012.

Book cover images reproduced for editorial and review purposes.

2. Design & Layout

The journal was created and designed in Canva, which served as the principal design and layout tool throughout the production of this issue.
Original Canva design: https://www.canva.com/templates/EAF5Hb5qwuE/

A Note on Translation, Design & Technology

This issue was created across languages and through a combination of human and digital tools.
For selected texts, artificial intelligence was used as editorial support during translation and language refinement, helping bring ideas expressed in the authors' native languages into English while preserving their voice and meaning. All such material was reviewed and shaped through human editorial judgment.
The journal's visual design and layout were created in Canva, which served as the principal design tool throughout the production of this issue.
We see technology as a bridge: something that can help languages, stories and images travel further, while authorship, interpretation and editorial responsibility remain human.

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From the Editor

Learning to Read the World Together



A child first learns to read words.

Then they learn to read pictures, faces, silences, gestures and places. They begin to read other people's experiences, lives that may look different from their own, voices they may never have heard before, worlds they may never have imagined.

And gradually, reading becomes much larger.

The European Children's Book Review can carry a child into another language, another country, another history or another way of seeing the world without requiring them to leave their classroom.

A story can introduce a place they have never visited.
A picture can communicate something words cannot.
A character can make an unfamiliar experience feel suddenly close.

But this raises another question:
Who gets to read?
Who has access to books?
Which languages are represented?
Which stories are translated and which remain unheard?
Which children see themselves reflected in the books they read?

Reading begins with words, but it does not end there.

These questions are at the heart of The European Children's Book Review.
Because ***reading begins with words, but it does not end there***.

This first pilot issue begins with one question:
How do children learn to read the world?
Perhaps they begin by learning to read a story.

Jonisa Dionysia Litsi

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

From the Editor



When Stories Become Windows

As an educator, I have come to see reading as much more than learning words.

A child first learns to read stories, but slowly begins to read people, places, emotions and experiences that are different from their own.

A book can introduce a child to a language they have never heard, a culture they have never encountered, or a life they could never have imagined.

And sometimes, it can do something even more important: help them recognise something familiar in someone else.

For me, this is where education and literature meet. We learn to understand the world by learning to understand each other.

Eleni Papandreou

CO-EDITOR

First, children learn to read words. Then, they learn to read the world.

SEPTEMBER IN EUROPE

5 SEPTEMBER
International Day of Charity
Solidarity · generosity · caring for others

8 SEPTEMBER
International Literacy Day
Reading · education · access · opportunity

15 SEPTEMBER
International Day of Democracy
Voice · participation · fairness · responsibility

21 SEPTEMBER
International Day of Peace
Peace · dialogue · understanding · coexistence

26 SEPTEMBER
European Day of Languages
Multilingualism · identity · translation · cultural exchange

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER
European Heritage Days
Memory · traditions · places · shared cultural heritage

OCTOBER IN EUROPE

1 OCTOBER
International Day of Older Persons
Ageing · dignity · inclusion · intergenerational solidarity

2 OCTOBER
International Day of Non-Violence
Peace · compassion · human rights · non-violence

5 OCTOBER
World Teachers' Day
Education · teaching · learning · inspiration

10 OCTOBER
World Mental Health Day
Well-being · awareness · empathy · access to care

11 OCTOBER
International Day of the Girl Child
Equality · education · empowerment · opportunities

16 OCTOBER
World Food Day
Food security · sustainability · hunger · solidarity

OCTOBER IN EUROPE

17 OCTOBER
International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
Equality · social justice · human dignity · inclusion

24 OCTOBER
United Nations Day
International cooperation · solidarity · human rights · global peace

27 OCTOBER
World Day for Audiovisual Heritage
Culture · memory · storytelling · preservation

29 OCTOBER
International Day of Care and Support
Care · equality · dignity · social protection

31 OCTOBER
World Cities Day
Sustainable cities · inclusion · urban life · community

STORIES CAN BE A CHILD'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THESE IDEAS

Because children encounter many of these ideas for the first time not through political speeches or policy documents, but through stories.

A child learns what fairness feels like when a character is treated unfairly.
A child encounters another culture through a story.
A child discovers another language through a word.
A child learns about conflict when two characters disagree and perhaps discovers that disagreement does not have to end in violence.

A child begins to understand community by imagining life beyond their own experience.

Literacy is therefore **more than the ability to read words. It is also an invitation to read the world.**

And children's books can be one of the places where that learning begins.

This Issue's Question

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN TO READ THE WORLD?

WHY READING MATTERS

Literacy, imagination and the right to read

Learning to read changes more than the way a child understands a page.
It changes what becomes possible.

A child who learns to read can enter a story independently. They can follow a character into a different place, encounter a life unlike their own, discover a new word, ask a new question or imagine a different ending.

Reading gives children access to information.

But it also gives them access to possibility.
Through books, children encounter people they may never meet, places they may never visit and experiences they may never have themselves. They learn that the world is larger than the room they are sitting in.

This is where literacy becomes more than a technical skill.

Reading is participation.
It allows children to find information, understand instructions, navigate institutions and express themselves. But it also allows them to participate in conversations about their communities, their societies and the world around them.

And reading is also imagination.

A child reading a story does not simply receive a world. They build one in their mind.

They imagine voices.
They imagine faces.
They imagine places.
They wonder what might happen next.

They ask:
What would I do?
What would I feel?
What if things were different?

This imaginative space matters because children are not only learning to understand the world as it is.

They are also learning that the world can be imagined differently.

But the right to read cannot be separated from the question of access.

Not every child grows up surrounded by books.
Not every child finds their language represented on the shelves.

Not every child sees families, communities or experiences like their own reflected in the stories available to them.

So the question is not simply whether children can read.

It is also:
What are they able to read?
Which languages are available to them?
Who gets to see themselves in a book?

A meaningful culture of reading must make space for all of these questions.

Because a child's right to read is also a right to discover, imagine, question and belong.

And perhaps this is why children's books matter so much.

A book can be a first classroom.
A first journey.
A first encounter with difference.
A first glimpse of another language.
A first invitation to ask:
What might the world look like from someone else's point of view?

Reading begins with words.

But it can lead almost anywhere.

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN TO READ THE WORLD?

Perhaps they begin with a word.
Then a picture. A face. A story. A question.

A book can show them something they have never seen, introduce them to someone they have never met or take them somewhere they have never been.

They discover that pictures can speak without words, that silence can tell a story and that another person's experience can change the way we see our own.

Little by little, reading becomes more than understanding a page.

It becomes learning how to look, listen, wonder and imagine another point of view.

So perhaps the question is:
How do children learn to read the world?

And perhaps the answer begins simply:
With a story.

BOOK REVIEW



GROGNE DRAGONNE!

BY SANDRA LE GUEN & STÉPHANE NICOLET • FRANCE

The Child Who Discovers Reading
What makes a child want to read?

THE BOOK

In Grogne dragonne!, Sandra Le Guen and Stéphane Nicolet invite young readers to look beyond an intimidating exterior and to wonder what might be hiding underneath.

The dragon may appear frightening.

But children's stories often remind us that what we see first is not always the whole story.

LOOK CLOSER

What does the illustration tell us before the words do?

Look at the dragon.

What do you notice about:

- its face?
- its body?
- its expression?
- the space around it?
- the way other characters respond?

What changes when we look more carefully?

READ THE FEELING

The dragon's growling may make us think of anger.

But anger is rarely the only feeling underneath.
Perhaps there is fear.
Perhaps loneliness.
Perhaps frustration.
Perhaps the feeling of not being understood.

The story gives children an opportunity to think about something we all experience:
Can someone look frightening when they are actually frightened?

THINK TOGETHER

- Before judging someone, what could we ask ourselves?
- Have you ever misunderstood someone's feelings?
- Can an angry person also need help?
- What helps you when you are angry?
- Can someone be different from us and still become our friend?

AFTER READING

Ask the children to imagine that the dragon could speak directly to them.

What would you ask?

And then:
What do you think the dragon would ask you?

Can we understand someone before we judge them?

A QUESTION FOR CHILDREN

Can we understand someone before we judge them?

A QUESTION FOR ADULTS

What do we teach children to see when someone behaves in a way that frightens or frustrates us?

A EUROPEAN CONNECTION

Children across Europe may grow up speaking different languages, living in different places and encountering different traditions.

But emotions travel easily across borders.
A growl needs no translation.
Neither does fear.
Or laughter.
Or the feeling of wanting to be understood.

This is one of the quiet powers of children's literature: ***a story can begin in one language and still create a conversation somewhere else.***

Cover of Grogne dragonne! by Sandra Le Guen & Stéphane Nicolet, published by La Poule Qui Pond, 4 June 2026. Reproduced for editorial/review purposes

BOOK REVIEW



KJE SI?

BY MARTA BARTOLJ • SLOVENIA

A story about searching, absence, connection and belonging

THE BOOK

Sometimes a story begins with a question.
Where are you?
Marta Bartolj's Kje si? / Where Are You? invites young readers to follow a search through images, movement and small details.

The story reminds us that pictures can carry meaning even when words are absent or limited. A child can look closely, notice a detail, make a connection and build a story of their own.
Reading, here, becomes an act of **looking and discovering**.

LOOK CLOSER

Before explaining the story, simply look.
What do you notice?

- Who is looking?
- What are they looking for?
- What changes from one image to the next?
- What details might be easy to miss?
- What do the characters' faces and bodies tell you?
- What can you understand without being told?

There may not be only one way to read what you see.

READ THE FEELING

Searching for someone can bring many feelings:
curiosity • worry • loneliness • hope • relief

Sometimes we understand what a character feels before we can explain why.

This is one of the first ways children learn to "read" other people: by noticing what is not always said.

THINK TOGETHER

- What does it feel like when someone is missing?
- Can you understand a story without knowing every word?
- What can pictures tell us that words cannot?
- Have you ever looked for something or someone important to you?
- What makes a place feel like home?
- Can you belong to more than one place?

AFTER READING

Ask each child:
If you could ask one character in the story one question, what would you ask?

Then ask something bigger:
What makes someone feel that they belong somewhere?

Can you read a story without knowing all the words?

A QUESTION FOR CHILDREN

- Can you read a story without words?
- What did you discover by looking closely?

A QUESTION FOR ADULTS

What happens when we allow children to interpret a story before we explain what it means?

READING BEYOND WORDS

Kje si? gives us an opportunity to think about what literacy can mean.
Literacy is not only the ability to decode written language.
Children also learn to read: *expressions, gestures, images, relationships, places, silences.*
Before children can explain everything they see, they are already making meaning from the world around them.
A picture book gives them a space to practise.

A EUROPEAN CONNECTION

A Slovenian children's book can travel beyond Slovenia. Its story can be read in another country, another classroom and another language.

This is one of the beautiful things children's literature can do across Europe: a story can travel, while every reader brings their own language, memories and way of seeing the world to it.



Cover of Kje si? by Marta Bartolj, published by Miš, 2018. Reproduced for editorial/review purposes.

The Wordless Book

READING BEYOND WORDS



Can Children Read Without Words?

When we think about reading, we usually think about words.
Letters become sounds.
Sounds become words.
Words become sentences.
Sentences become stories.
But children begin reading long before they can decode a written sentence.
They read faces.
They read gestures.
They read expressions.
They read distance and movement.
They notice what is happening around them.
They learn to understand a picture before they can explain it.
This is what makes the wordless picture book so fascinating.

A wordless book does not remove reading from the story.
It makes the act of reading visible.

A VOCABULARY OF IMAGES
Without written text telling them what to notice, children begin to discover the visual language through which a story is built.

GAZE • BODY LANGUAGE • DISTANCE • FRAMING • MOVEMENT • SEQUENCE • SPACE
These are not simply artistic details.
They are part of the story's language.

Can Children Read Without Words? Yes

But perhaps the more interesting question is:
What else can children learn to read when we give them the time to look?

Because reading begins with words.
But it does not end there.

READING OTHER LIVES

Books That Teach Us to Live Together

Empathy, fear, refuge & belonging

A child does not need to have lived every story in order to encounter it.

A book can introduce them to a person they have never met, a place they have never visited, a language they have never heard or an experience they cannot yet imagine.

Children's literature allows us to meet lives beyond our own. It makes us **pause, notice and ask questions.**

EMPATHY BEGINS WITH ATTENTION

We cannot always know exactly how another person feels. But we can choose to listen, to notice and to try to understand.
Stories can create that space.

They can help children encounter differences with curiosity and respect, without assuming that every experience is the same.

WHOSE STORY ARE WE HEARING?

When we read about lives different from our own, we can ask:

- Whose voice are we hearing?
- Who wrote the story?
- Who illustrated it?
- Who translated it?
- Whose perspective is centred?
- And whose perspective might be missing?

Reading widely means making room for **different voices**.

A European bookshelf can become a meeting place:
one language beside another,
one childhood beside another,
one story beside another.

Not because these stories are the same, but because they can begin a conversation.

Because we do not learn to live together by discovering that everyone is the same.

We begin by discovering that other people's lives matter too.

BOOK REVIEW



REFUGE

BY SANDRA LE GUEN • FRANCE

A story about refuge, safety and the courage to welcome

What does it mean to have a safe place?
For some children, the answer may be simple: *a bedroom, a home, a classroom, a person they trust.*
But not every child experiences safety in the same way.

Le refuge / The Refuge invites young readers into a story where refuge becomes more than a physical place. It becomes a question about what we owe one another when someone is vulnerable, frightened or unfamiliar.

- Who do we welcome?
- Who do we protect?
- And what happens when someone who needs safety arrives at our door?

LOOK CLOSER

Look carefully at the characters and their surroundings.

- Who seems safe?
- Who seems uncertain?
- Who is outside?
- Who is inside?
- What changes when the characters meet?
- How do the illustrations show distance or closeness?
- Can you see a moment when someone begins to feel safer?

Sometimes an illustration can tell us something before the character says a word.

READ THE FEELING

The word refuge can mean a place of protection.
But a refuge can also be a feeling.
A person can become a refuge.
A classroom can become a refuge.
A community can become a refuge.
A story can even become a small refuge — a place where a child can encounter something difficult at their own pace.
This makes the book an opportunity to ask a deceptively simple question:
What makes a place feel safe?

THINK TOGETHER

- Where do you feel safe?
- Who helps you feel safe?
- How can you tell when someone else is afraid?
- What could you do if a new child came to your classroom and felt alone?
- Does welcoming someone mean agreeing with everything they do?
- Can a classroom become a refuge?

AFTER READING

Ask the children to imagine that a new child joins your class tomorrow. They don't know anyone yet.
What three things could we do to welcome them?

Create together: OUR WELCOME LIST
Three things every new child should be able to expect in our classroom.

Then ask:
What does it really mean to make someone feel welcome?

A QUESTION FOR CHILDREN

What could you do to make someone feel welcome?

A QUESTION FOR ADULTS

What does a child need before they can feel ready to learn?

FROM REFUGE TO WELCOME

We often talk about welcoming people as though it were a single action: "Come in."
But belonging takes longer.
A child arriving somewhere new may need someone to learn their name, explain the rules, sit beside them, listen or simply say:
You can be here.

This is where a children's story can help us think about what welcome really means in our classrooms, libraries and communities.

A EUROPEAN CONNECTION

Across Europe, children grow up in places shaped by movement.
People cross borders for many reasons: work, study, family, safety or necessity.
A children's book cannot explain every experience.
But it can help children ask a fundamental question: ***What should happen when someone needs a place to feel safe?***
Perhaps the answer begins not with nationality or geography, but with something universal: *human dignity*.

Cover of Refuge by Sandra Le Guen, published by Les P'tits Bérets, 2020. Reproduced for editorial/review purposes.

BOOK REVIEW



AKIM COURT

BY CLAUDE K. DUBOIS • BELGIUM

THE QUIET BOOK - A Story About Something Difficult

Akim court / Akim Runs tells the story of a child caught in war.

Through spare text and expressive illustrations, the story stays close to Akim's perspective.

This is what makes the book so powerful.

War is often discussed through borders, armies and numbers. Akim experiences it through fear, separation, movement and the loss of an ordinary childhood.

Akim experiences it as a child, trying to understand what is happening around him and trying to survive it.

LOOK CLOSER

Before discussing what happens, look at the images.

- What does Akim see?
- What does he hear?
- Where is he?
- Who is around him?
- When does the atmosphere change?
- How does the illustrator show fear?
- What is left unsaid?

Look especially at the moments when the pictures become quiet.

Sometimes the absence of words makes the experience even more powerful.

READ THE FEELING

Children experiencing war do not experience it as an abstract political event.
They experience: FEAR • CONFUSION • SEPARATION • UNCERTAINTY • LOSS
And sometimes the simple desire to return to something ordinary.

Akim Court reminds us that when adults speak about conflict, it is easy to forget the children living inside it.
A child's experience deserves to be heard in its own right.

THINK TOGETHER

- What do you think Akim is feeling?
- What might he be thinking but not saying?
- What does Akim need most?
- Why do you think the story is told from a child's point of view?
- What does a child need in order to feel safe?
- Why is it important to hear children's experiences of war?

AFTER READING

Ask the children to imagine that they could give Akim one thing.
Not necessarily an object.

It could be:
a person, a place, a word, a feeling, a promise or something that makes him feel safe.

Then ask:
What would you give him and why?

A QUESTION FOR CHILDREN

What would you say to Akim?
(There is no need for a complicated answer)

A QUESTION FOR ADULTS

How do we talk about war with children without taking away their childhood?

READING IMAGES

Akim Court is especially important for this issue because it reminds us that reading does not always mean reading words.

Before children can explain what they see, they can often feel it. This is visual literacy: **learning to look, notice and understand what an image communicates without words.**

A EUROPEAN CONNECTION

Akim Court was created in Belgium, but its story speaks to a reality that has crossed many European borders.

Children have experienced war, displacement and separation in different times and places.

The details, languages and borders may change. But the need for safety does not.

Perhaps this is one of the responsibilities of **The European Children's Book Review**: It cannot tell every story of war and displacement, but it can make space for children's perspectives within them, *to encounter lives we might otherwise never see and to listen to stories that might otherwise remain unheard.*

Cover of Akim court / Akim Runs by Claude K. Dubois, published by Éditions de l'École des loisirs, 2012. Reproduced for editorial/review purposes.

One Word, Many Europes

HOME · FRIEND · PEACE · WELCOME

Europe speaks in many languages.
Sometimes, one word is enough to discover just how many ways there are to say the same thing.



1

HOME
Greek — σπίτι
French — maison
Slovenian — dom
Italian — casa

2

FRIEND
Greek — φίλος / φίλη
French — ami / amie
Slovenian — prijatelj / prijateljica
Italian — amico / amica

3

PEACE
Greek — ειρήνη
French — paix
Slovenian — mir
Italian — pace

4

WELCOME
Greek — καλώς ήρθες
French — bienvenue
Slovenian — dobrodošel / dobrodošla
Italian — benvenuto / benvenuta

Now, choose one word that matters to you

YOUR WORD

Choose **one word that matters to you**.

It could be:
home · friendship · peace · family · hope · welcome · love · together

How do you say it in:
your language?
another language you know?
a language you would like to learn?

Write it down, draw it or ask someone to teach it to you.

Then add it to your **European Word Wall**.

FOR THE CLASSROOM

Create a large map of Europe.
Each child contributes **one word in one language**.

Don't worry if you cannot include every European language. The point is not to create a complete dictionary. The point is to create a **mosaic of voices**.

How many different languages can our classroom welcome?

FOR FAMILIES

Ask someone in your family:
What is one word you know in another language?

Maybe it is a word from a language spoken at home.
Maybe it is a word your child learned from a friend.
Maybe it is simply a word you have always liked.

Write it down together.

Then ask:
What does this word mean to you?

Because sometimes learning another language begins with something very small: **one word.**



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Translator's Corner



What happens when a children's story crosses a language?

A children's book can travel far beyond the language in which it was first written.
But what happens along the way?

We want to hear from the people who know this journey best.

If you translate children's books, we'd love to hear from you.
Choose one of these questions and share your answer with us:

- What is the hardest thing to translate in a children's book?
- What is the most beautiful thing about translating one?
- Can a translation change the way a child experiences a story?
- What happens when a word simply doesn't exist in the other language?
- How do you keep a character's voice alive across languages?

Or tell us something we haven't thought to ask.

📩 **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**
Translators, authors, editors, publishers and readers of children's books are invited to contribute.
Send us a short response, a thought, an example or a question for a future issue.

Tag us and use:
#EuropeanChildrensBookReview
#mosaiceurope
#The European Children's Book Review
#ReadingEurope

We may feature selected responses in a future issue or on our social channels.

What should never be lost when a children's story crosses a language?

Tell us.

VI. FOR THE CLASSROOM



GROGNE DRAGONNE!

READ

A short, child-friendly introduction to the book and its creators, followed by a simple prompt: ***What do you think this book might be about?***

LOOK

Before reading the words, look carefully at the illustrations.

- What do you notice?
- What is the dragon doing?
- What changes from one page to another?
- Can you find something that repeats?

THINK

The dragon becomes an opportunity to think about learning itself.

- What does it mean to be learning something new?
- Can something be difficult and fun at the same time?
- What happens when we make a mistake?

FEEL

- How does the dragon make you feel?
- Which page makes you laugh?
- Is there a moment that makes you feel nervous, excited or curious?
- If the dragon could have a feeling, what would it be?

CONNECT

Have you ever learned something that seemed difficult at first?

Draw or write about it.

DISCUSS WITH A PARTNER

- What makes someone a good reader?
- Do you have to understand every word to enjoy a story?
- Is making mistakes part of learning?
- What words do you enjoy saying?
- If you could teach the dragon one word, what would it be?

MOSAIC MOMENT

A word from this book travels with us

.

Choose one word from the story.

- *Write it in another language you know.*
- *How does it sound?*
- *Does it mean exactly the same thing?*
- *Does it feel different?*

1. MY READING JOURNEY

What can I read today that I couldn't read before?

Draw/write:
I can read...
I am learning...
I want to read...

This turns learning to read into a journey rather than a test.

2. DRAGON WORD LAB

Take words from the story and ask children to:
circle the first sound
clap the syllables
find a word that sounds similar
invent a dragon name

For example:
My dragon's name is _____.
It starts with _____.
It has _____ syllables.

3. WORDS ARE PLAY

Try changing one sound in a word.
Can you make a new word?

Then try: word → rhyme → silly word → dragon word

Children can invent words that don't exist and this could introduce, very gently: *sounds · syllables · rhyme · repetition · phonological awareness* without turning the reading experience into a formal lesson.

4. MAKE YOUR OWN DRAGON

Draw your dragon.

Give your dragon:
A NAME
A SOUND
A FAVOURITE WORD
A SUPERPOWER
Something your dragon is learning:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

My dragon says:
"_____!"

This can become a playful literacy activity.

Teacher extension

Use the book to open a conversation about:

- sound and phonological awareness
- repetition
- vocabulary development
- early reading confidence
- mistakes as part of learning
- playful language
- children's willingness to experiment
- the difference between reading for assessment and reading for pleasure

LE REFUGE

READ

A short introduction to Le Refuge, inviting children to look closely at the characters, their surroundings and what they are trying to communicate

LOOK

Look carefully at the illustrations.

- What do you notice about the place?
- Who is there?
- What are the characters doing?
- What might they be thinking?
- Which details tell you that someone is new?
- Can you find something that helps a character feel safe?

Look without reading the words first: *What can you understand from the pictures alone?*

THINK

What might the story be saying about belonging?

- What makes a place feel welcoming?
- Does belonging always begin with speaking the same language?
- How can we know what someone needs if they cannot tell us?

FEEL

Imagine arriving somewhere where you don't understand the language.
How might you feel?

Choose three feelings:
curious · nervous · excited · confused · lonely · safe · welcome

I feel _____ because _____.

CONNECT

Think of a time when you felt new somewhere.

It could have been:

- a new school
- a new classroom
- a new neighbourhood
- a new country
- visiting someone's home
- meeting a new group of people

Draw or write:

A place where I felt new
I noticed: _____
I heard: _____
I saw: _____
I felt: _____
Something that helped me: _____

DISCUSS

With a partner or small group

1. What makes someone feel welcome?
2. Can you communicate without speaking?
3. Is it difficult when you don't understand the language around you?
4. Have you ever helped someone who was new?
5. What could our classroom do differently to help a new child?
6. Do we all need the same things to feel that we belong?

A bigger question
Who makes a place feel like home?

MY WELCOME KIT

Imagine that a new child is joining your classroom tomorrow.

They don't know the school.
They don't know the rules.
They may not speak the same language as you.

What could you give them?

Create a WELCOME KIT containing:

ONE PICTURE
Something that helps them understand the classroom.

ONE USEFUL WORD
A word they might need.

ONE CLASSROOM RULE
Something important to know.

ONE FRIENDLY GESTURE
Something that says: You are welcome here.

ONE THING THAT COULD MAKE THEM FEEL SAFE
What would you choose?

Then give your Welcome Kit to another group.

Could they understand it without you explaining everything?

WORDS WITHOUT WORDS

Imagine:
You meet someone who doesn't speak your language.
How could you communicate?

Try communicating one simple message without using spoken words.

For example:
“Come with me.”
“Are you okay?”
“This is your seat.”
“You are welcome.”

You can use:
drawing · gestures · facial expressions · objects · pictures · another language · actions

Then ask:
Which ways of communicating worked best? Why?

MOSAIC MOMENT

OUR CLASSROOM SPEAKS MANY LANGUAGES

Create a Classroom Welcome Wall with useful words:
HELLO · WELCOME · FRIEND · HELP · WATER · TEACHER · ARE YOU OKAY?

Translate them into the languages of your classroom. Add pronunciation, writing, drawings or gestures.

What happens when one classroom speaks many languages?

Teacher extension

What happens when we enter a place where we don't understand everything?

Use Le Refuge to explore belonging, communication and inclusion.

Discuss:

- What happens when someone cannot understand the language around them?
- How does language affect participation?
- What other forms of communication can we use?
- What makes a classroom feel safe?
- How can children help someone who is new?
- What is the difference between being present and belonging?
- Does inclusion mean making everyone the same, or making space for difference?

A final classroom challenge

Ask children:
Tomorrow, if someone completely new joined our classroom, what is ONE thing we could do differently?

Write their answers on small cards.

Put them together.

OUR CLASSROOM WELCOME CODE
A set of rules created by the children, for making sure that nobody has to understand everything before they are allowed to belong.
That, I think, is the real strength of Le Refuge in the Mosaic Reading Kit: it begins with a story about entering an unfamiliar place and ends by asking children to redesign their own place so that someone else can enter it more easily.

Akim Court

READ

A short introduction to Akim Runs, inviting children to look closely at the characters, their movements, expressions and surroundings. Notice what the images communicate without words.

Before discussing what happens, look closely at the illustrations and the details they contain. What can you understand from the pictures before anyone explains the story?

LOOK

Look carefully at the illustrations.
Choose one illustration and spend one quiet minute looking at it.

- What do you notice first?
- Where is Akim?
- What is happening around him?
- What do the characters' faces tell you?
- What do their bodies tell you?
- How does the setting change?
- Which colours, shapes or details create a particular feeling?
- What might have happened just before this moment?
- What might happen next?

Complete the sentence:
I think _____ because I can see _____.

THINK

What happens when a child's world suddenly changes?

Akim Runs invites us to think about experiences that children may have when they have to leave somewhere unexpectedly.

- What makes a place feel safe?
- What can make a place suddenly feel unsafe?
- Why might someone have to leave their home?
- What does a child need when everything around them has changed?
- What can we understand without someone speaking?

A bigger question

What happens to a story when nobody explains what the character is feeling?

FEEL

Imagine that you suddenly have to leave a place that is familiar to you.

You do not know where you are going.
You do not know what will happen next.
Choose three feelings:
afraid · confused · lonely · worried · surprised · hopeful · tired · curious · safe · relieved
I feel _____ because _____.
I might need _____.
Someone could help me by _____.

Remember

You do not have to share a personal experience. You can imagine what a character might feel instead.

Akim Court

CONNECT

What helps us when everything feels unfamiliar?

Think about a character who arrives somewhere new.

It could be:

- a new school
- a new classroom
- a new neighbourhood
- a new country
- a new shelter
- a new group of people

Draw or write:
A place that feels safe
I can see: _____
I can hear: _____
I can find: _____
Someone is there who: _____
Something that helps me feel safe: _____

DISCUSS

With a partner or small group

1. What does Akim lose?
2. What does he carry with him?
3. What can we understand about Akim without him saying anything?
4. How do the illustrations help us understand his feelings?
5. Why do you think movement is important in the story?
6. What does it mean to be safe?
7. What might a child need after arriving somewhere unfamiliar?
8. How can other people help without asking lots of questions?
9. Can silence communicate something important?
10. What can pictures tell us that words sometimes cannot?

A bigger question

If someone cannot tell us their story, how can we still listen?

WORDS WITHOUT WORDS

Tell the story silently

- Choose three or four illustrations from Akim Runs.
- Do not use the text.
- Put the pictures in an order.

Now create your own version of the story.

You can use:
drawings · gestures · facial expressions · sounds · movement · symbols · objects · photographs

But try not to use spoken words.

Then ask:

- What did you imagine happened between the pictures?
- Compare your story with another group's story.
- Did you imagine the same things?
- What was the same?
- What was different?
- Why?

VISUAL EVIDENCE

I SEE · I THINK · I WONDER

Choose one illustration.

I SEE
What can you actually see?
_____
_____
I THINK
What do you think is happening?
_____
_____

I WONDER
What question does the picture make you ask?
_____
_____

Now complete:
I think _____ because
_____.

This reminds us that interpreting a picture is not guessing. We use evidence.

IF YOU COULD HELP AKIM

Imagine you could send Akim one thing.
What would you send?

I would send:
_____
_____

Because:
_____
_____

Now think beyond objects.

Could you send:

- a person?
- a message?
- a place?
- a sound?
- a picture?
- a book?
- a familiar object?
- a promise?
- a feeling?

The important question
What does someone need when they have lost the familiar?

MOSAIC MOMENT

Imagine a new child has arrived somewhere unfamiliar. They may not know the place, language or people.

*Create a **WELCOME KIT**:*

- *ONE PICTURE — to help them understand.*
- *ONE WORD — they might need.*
- *ONE OBJECT — to comfort them.*
- *ONE GESTURE — to say "You are welcome."*
- *ONE MESSAGE — without translation.*

Exchange your kit.
Can another group understand it without your help?

*Then create a **WELCOME WALL**:*

Use drawings, gestures, symbols, objects, colours, words or signs.

Teacher extension

Use Akim Runs to explore visual literacy, empathy, displacement and communication without requiring children to disclose personal experiences.

Discuss:

- What can we learn from a character's body language?
- How can movement communicate emotion?
- What can silence communicate?
- How does the setting affect the way we understand the story?
- What happens when a character cannot explain what they need?
- How can we support someone without knowing their whole story?
- Why is it important not to assume that every person's experience is the same?
- What makes a new place feel safe?
- What is the difference between helping someone and speaking for them?
- How can pictures create empathy?

A useful distinction
Ask children to separate:
WHAT I SEE · WHAT I THINK · WHAT I FEEL

What we see is not always the same as what we think.

And finally, to ask:
What can we do when someone arrives carrying a story we cannot yet understand?

Perhaps empathy begins there: *not with having all the answers, but with learning how to look, listen and make space.*

Kje si?

READ

A short introduction to Kje si?, inviting children to think about searching, finding, language and belonging, and to notice how people, places and objects can become important to us.

LOOK

Look carefully at the illustrations.

- Who or what is being searched for?
- What places do you recognise?
- What details help us follow the search?
- What might the character be feeling?
- What changes during the journey?

Look before reading the words:
What can you understand from the pictures alone?

THINK

What might the story be saying about searching and belonging?

- Why do we look for people or things that matter to us?
- Can a place be something we search for?
- What makes somewhere feel like home?
- How can language help us find our way?
- Can we belong to more than one place

FEEL

Imagine looking for someone or something important to you.

Choose three feelings:
curious · worried · hopeful · excited · confused · lonely · relieved · happy

I feel _____ because _____.

CONNECT

WHERE ARE YOU?

Create a simple map:
ME → HOME → SCHOOL → PEOPLE → PLACES

Add the places and people that are important to you.

Then ask:
Where do I feel most at home?

Draw or write your answer.

DISCUSS

With a partner or small group

1. What does it mean to search for someone?
2. How do we know when we have found what we are looking for?
3. Can we feel at home in more than one place?
4. What places make us feel that we belong?
5. How can language help us find people and places?
6. What happens when we do not understand the language around us?

A bigger question
Can you be “home” in more than one place?

SAY IT IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Choose the phrase:
WHERE ARE YOU?

Write it in the languages you know or hear around you: Greek · Albanian · French · Slovenian · Turkish · Arabic ·

Look at the different versions.

- Do they look different?
- Do they sound different?
- Are any words similar?
- Which version do you like saying?

THE SEARCH TRAIL

Imagine you are looking for someone or something important.

Create a trail of 3–5 clues.

Your clues can be:

- a picture
- a sound
- a colour
- a word
- a place
- a gesture
-

Give your trail to another group.
Can they follow the clues and find what you were looking for?

Think:
What makes a clue easy or difficult to understand?

MAP YOUR SCHOOL

Imagine a new child asks:
“Kje si?” / “Where are you?”

Make a map of your school.
Draw the places a new child might need to find:
CLASSROOM · TOILET · PLAYGROUND · LIBRARY · OFFICE · CANTEEN · WATER · EXIT · TEACHER

Add words, pictures or symbols to make your map easy to understand.

Then ask:

- Could a new child find their way using your map?
- What is missing?

MOSAIC MOMENT

Create a classroom “Where Are You?” Wall.

Write the phrase “Where are you?” in all the languages spoken or heard in your classroom.

Then add useful words:
HELLO · HOME · FRIEND · COME · HERE · WELCOME

Add drawings, pronunciation or symbols if helpful.

What happens when one question can be asked in many languages?

Teacher extension

Use Kje si? to explore language, searching, place and belonging.

Discuss

- How does language help us navigate the world?
- What happens when we cannot name a place or ask for help?
- Can a word feel different in another language?
- What makes a place feel like home?
- Can searching be emotional as well as physical?
- What does it mean to belong to more than one language or place?

A FINAL CLASSROOM CHALLENGE

Ask children:
What is one word from another language that could make our classroom feel more welcoming?
Collect the words and create a shared: **MOSAIC OF WORDS**

Add the languages, meanings, drawings or symbols.
Then look at your mosaic together.
What happens when our classroom makes space for many languages?

Different languages do not separate us.
They help us find one another.

SHARE YOUR MOSAIC MOMENT

Did your class or child create something inspired by this Reading Kit?

We would love to see it!

Teachers and parents are invited to share with us:

- classroom activities
- children's drawings
- maps and posters
- creative responses
- multilingual words
- questions or ideas
- photographs of classroom work

Your contribution could become part of our Mosaic of Voices, showing how children across different places and languages read, create and connect through stories.

Share your Mosaic Moment with us.
Every classroom creates its own piece of the mosaic.

For Parents

READ TOGETHER
You don't need to explain everything.
Read, look and talk together.

AFTER READING
Ask your child:

- What was your favourite part?
- What surprised you?
- How do you think the character felt?
- What would you have done?
- Did the story remind you of something?

TRY THIS
DRAW one scene together.
TELL the story without words.
SAY one word from the story in another language.
ASK: What would you like to ask the character?

SHARE WITH US
Did you create a drawing, activity, question or something inspired by the story?

We would love to see it!

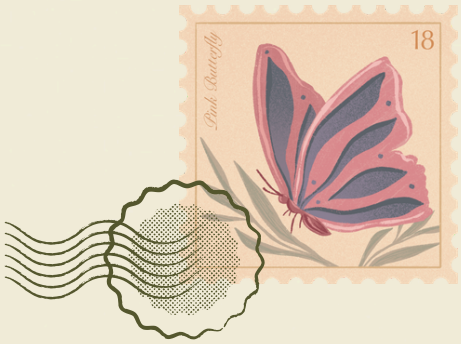
Share your Mosaic Moment with us and help us build a collection of children's responses from across Europe.

OUR EUROPEAN CLASSROOM

AIR MAIL

HERITAGE JOURNEY

Every story carries something from the place it comes from.



by: MODAIC EUROPE

THE EUROPEAN REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Every story can take us somewhere new.
Heritage Journey invites children to explore Europe through books, discovering the languages, places, traditions and details that make each story special.
With a Reading Passport, postcards and stamps, children can collect their discoveries as they travel from one story to another—at home, on their own, or together in Our European Classroom.

HERITAGE JOURNEY

MY READING PASSPORT

Travel through Europe one book at a time.

Record what you read, what you notice, what you discover and one word you want to remember.

CREATE YOUR HERITAGE STAMP

Design your own stamp for the book.

Write the book title and country, then draw something from the story or its heritage:

a monument • place • object • tradition • landscape • character

SEND A POSTCARD

Imagine you have just visited the world of the book.

Write or draw a postcard sharing:

Where you went • What you discovered • What you will remember

One book. One place. One journey.

MY BOARDING PASS

Get ready to travel! Complete your boarding pass before beginning your journey through the book.

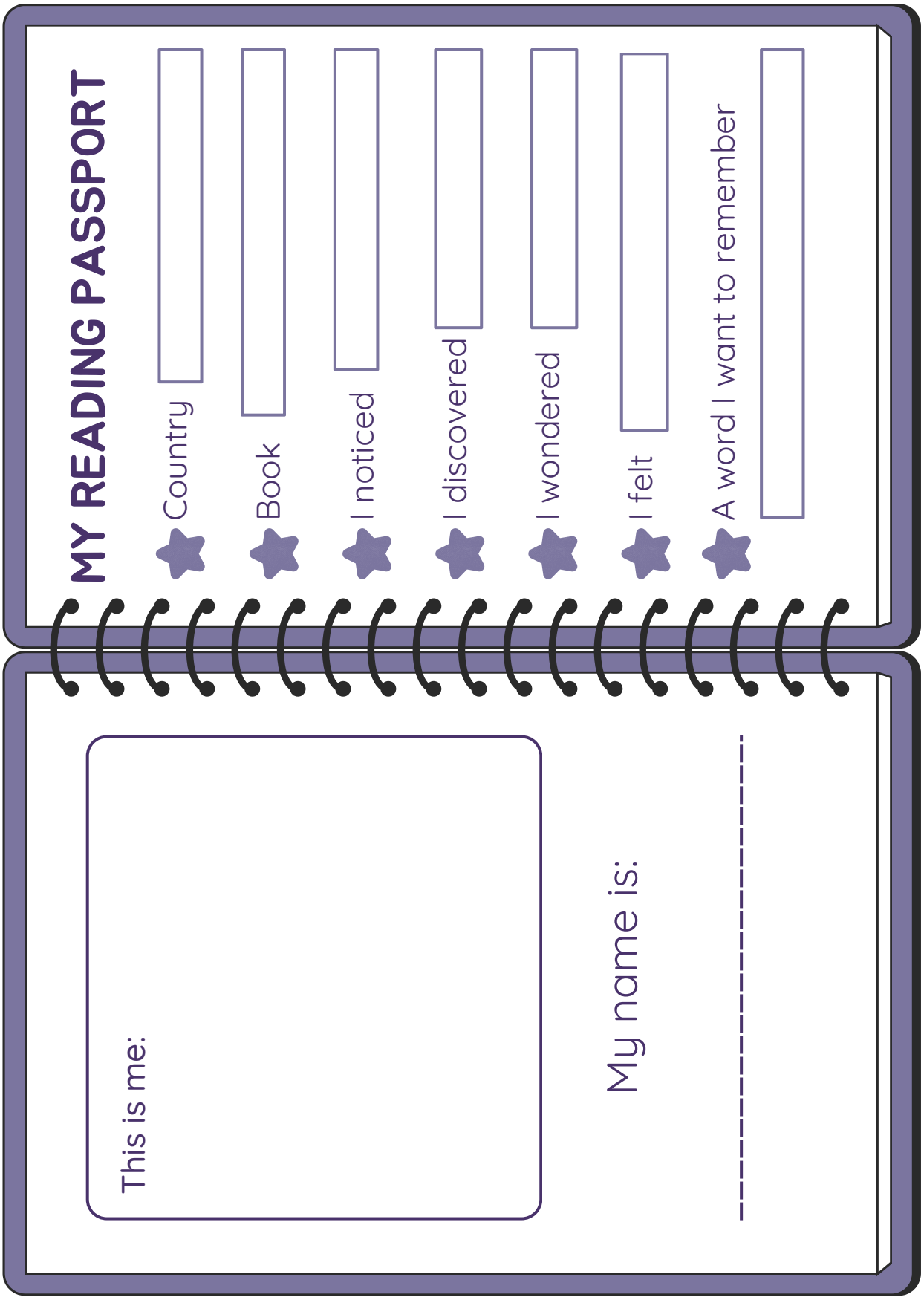
WRITE A LETTER

Write a letter to a character, author, child in another country or someone you met through the story. Tell them what you discovered and what you would like to ask or share.

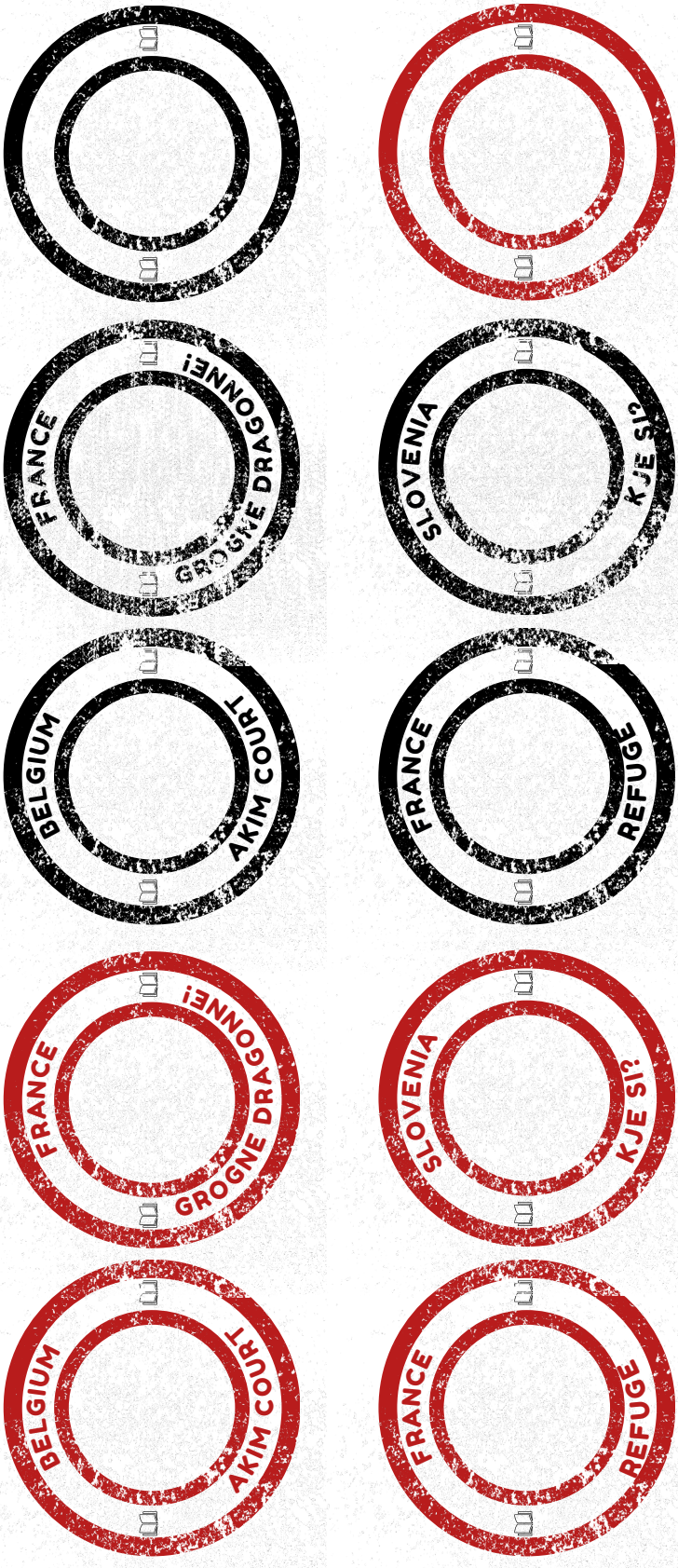
Read. Travel. Discover. Collect. Connect.

Where will your next story take you?

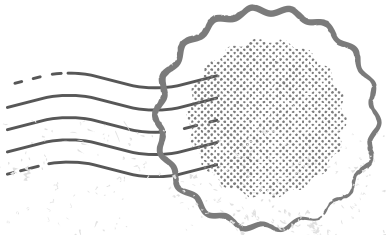
PRINTABLES


MY READING PASSPORT
Country
Book
I noticed
I discovered
I wondered
I felt
A word I want to remember
This is me:
My name is:

PRINTABLES


FRANCE
GROGNE DRAGONNE!
BELGIUM
AKIM COURT
SLOVENIA
KJE SI?
FRANCE
REFUGE

POSTCARD



to:

from:

MOSAIC
Airlines

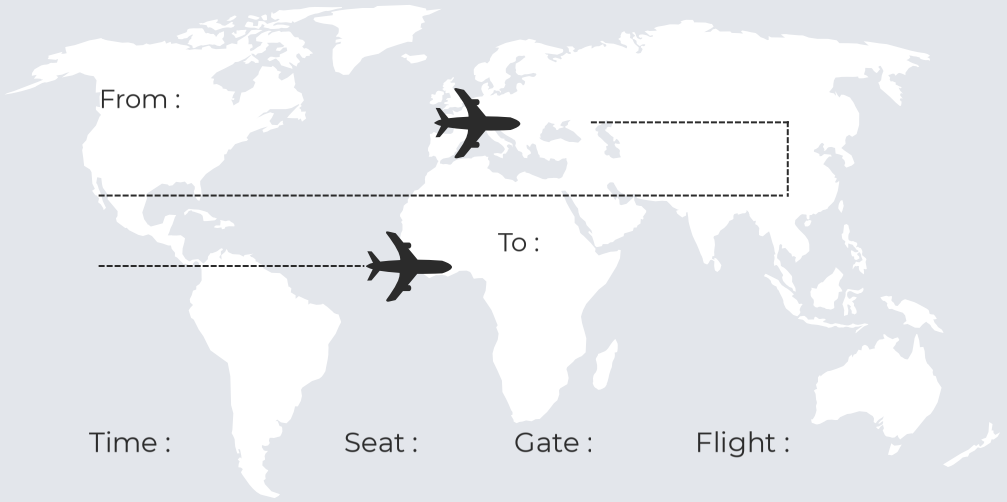
Passenger Name :

_____

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

_____



From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS

MOSAIC
Airlines

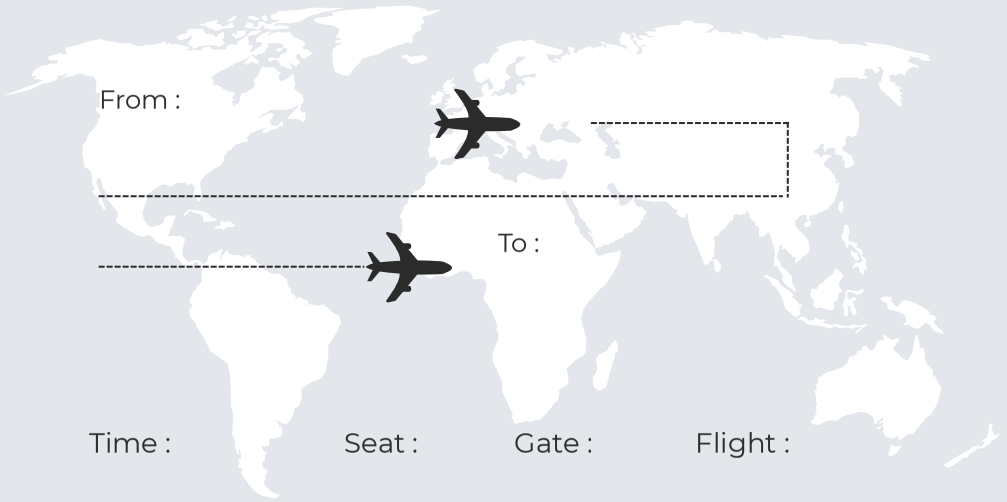
Passenger Name :

_____

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

_____



From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS


EIFFEL TOWER
PARIS FRANCE
18
87
PARIS FRANCE
EIFFEL TOWER


Greetings!
2

MOSAIC Airlines

Passenger Name :

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS

MOSAIC Airlines

Passenger Name :

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS

MOSAIC Airlines

Passenger Name :

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS

MOSAIC Airlines

Passenger Name :

Class :
FIRST CLASS

Date :

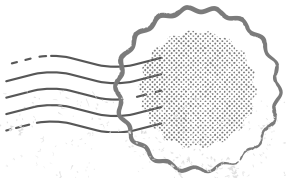
From :

To :

Time : Seat : Gate : Flight :

BOARDING PASS

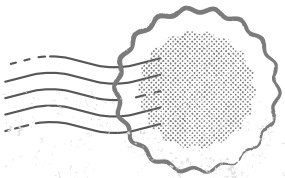
POSTCARD



to:

from:

POSTCARD



to:

from:

This is me:

My name is:

_____

MY READING PASSPORT

- Country
- Book
- I noticed
- I discovered
- I wondered
- I felt
- A word I want to remember

This is me:

My name is:

_____

MY READING PASSPORT

Country
Book
I noticed
I discovered
I wondered
I felt
A word I want to remember

this
MOSAIC CARD
belongs to

.....
name

DATE	TITLE

this
MOSAIC CARD
belongs to

.....
name

DATE	TITLE

this
MOSAIC CARD
belongs to

.....
name

DATE	TITLE

READING LIST

MOSAIC EUROPE



READER

YEAR

DATE	BOOK TITLE

@MOSAICEUROPE.ORG

READING LIST

MOSAIC EUROPE



READER

YEAR

DATE	BOOK TITLE

@MOSAICEUROPE.ORG

READING LIST

MOSAIC EUROPE



READER

YEAR

DATE	BOOK TITLE

@MOSAICEUROPE.ORG

Across Europe We Discovered...

A Book · A Voice · A Word · A Story · A Classroom · A Question

A **Book** that teaches us to listen.
A **Voice** that refuses to disappear.
A **Word** that means something different in another language.
A **Story** that crosses a border.
A **Classroom** where children learn not only to read, but to live together.
A **Question** we are still carrying.



Next Issue

STORIES, TRADITIONS & CELEBRATION

How do stories, traditions and celebrations bring us together?



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See you next time.

THE EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW