

COLLECTIBLE STORIES
WITH COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

The CLIMBERS

TEACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

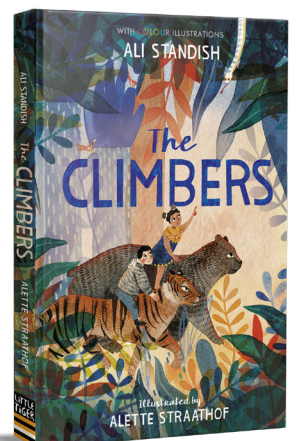
Suitable for: Children aged 5-8 years old in Years 1-3

Based on: The experiences of a girl and a bear setting off in search of a place to call home

Ideal for: Emerging readers, and especially reluctant readers

Includes: 4x lessons that build towards children considering how courage can be shown

Themes: Belonging; Home; Fear; Friendship; Forest; Hunting; Outsiders; Environmental Destruction



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ABOUT THE CLIMBERS

Lonely Alma longs to explore the lush forest beyond her narrow town, but her uncle has told her it's full of fearsome beasts. One night, she ventures into the trees and finds a frightened bear cub. The two become friends but the rest of the town is not so welcoming. Soon, Alma and Star Bear are forced to set off in search of a place to call home.

The Climbers is a lyrical tale about a tender friendship that triumphs over fear, with colour illustrations on every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – ALI STANDISH

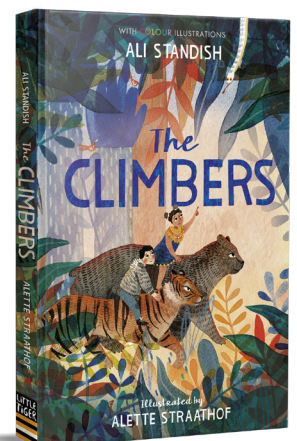
Ali Standish was raised in North Carolina. She has a BA in English and worked as a teacher and programme administrator in the US Public School system for four years. While teaching, she began an MFA in Children's Writing from Hollins University. As a teacher, Ali worked with many children who had suffered a loss or trauma and who often turned to stories to help them navigate their grief. One of her best-selling novels, *The Ethan I Was Before*, was born from those experiences. In 2014, she moved to the UK with her Finnish fiancé, where she lived in Cambridge, England. She has now returned to the USA and lives with her family in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she is squirreled away, working on her next novel.

Find out more about Ali by following her on social media @alstandish or visiting her website alstandish.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR – ALETTE STRAATHOF

Alette Straathof was born and raised in a small town in The Netherlands. She received a BFA in Illustration and minored in Gamification at the Willem de Kooning Academy in 2016. Her illustrations are colourful, happy and are drawn in a naive style. Mixing different analogue materials such as watercolour, Indian ink and colour pencils, she creates playful paintings that make people smile and create a good vibe. Alette works exclusively as a freelance illustrator and lives in Paris, France.

Find out more about Alette by following her on social media @alettestraathof or visiting her website alettestraathof.com.



NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

English: Spoken language

Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates

Reading: comprehension

Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:

- discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:

- identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Writing: composition

Plan their writing by:

- discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar

Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:

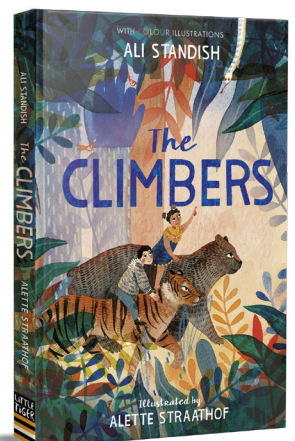
- writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

PSHE

Be able to identify who can help them with difficult feelings

Learn about where they live and belong and what they can do

Recognise how images in the media do not always reflect reality and can affect how people feel about themselves



Design and technology

Generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock-ups and, where appropriate, information and communication technology

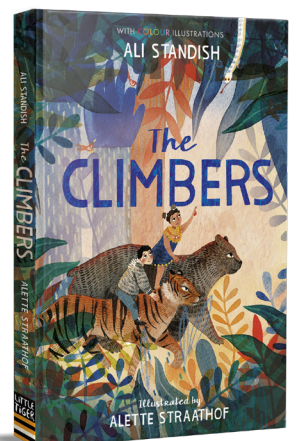
Select from and use a wide range of materials and components, including construction materials, textiles and ingredients, according to their characteristics

Geography

Use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of their school and its grounds and the key human and physical features of its surrounding environment

Use aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features; devise a simple map; and use and construct basic symbols in a key

Describe and understand key aspects of:
human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water



LESSON OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Lesson 1: A Sense of Belonging

Objectives:

- To identify the importance of belonging, and recognise the difference this makes to their lives by feeling that they have a place and a right to belong
- To see themselves as part of a wider community and know about their local area, including some of its places, features and people

Outcomes:

A class discussion about what it feels like to belong; a plan to visit the local area and community around your school; and a completed My Place in the World activity.

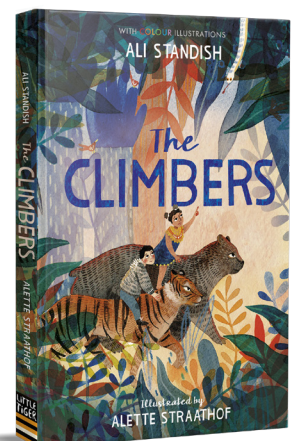
Lesson 2: Feels Like Home

Objectives:

- To explore the meaning of 'home'
- To consolidate an awareness of the type of building they live in

Outcomes:

An opportunity to reflect on what home means to them; an observational drawing of children's individual homes; and the design and construction of a dream house.



Lesson 3: Fear of the Forest

Objectives:

- To identify some things which cause us to be afraid, and think about how we can overcome our fears
- To consider the positive and negative aspects of fear, and the theme of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'

Outcomes:

A class conversation about fear and feeling scared; a consideration about the positives and negatives of fear in the context of 'fake news'; and a poster to promote inclusivity within the classroom.

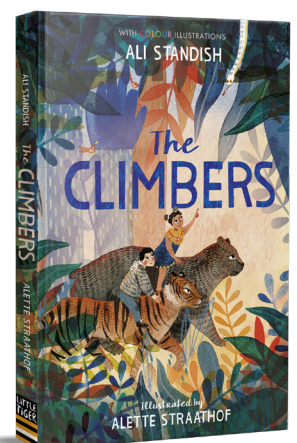
Lesson 4: Being Brave

Objectives:

- To recognise the concept of true courage, and suggest that often the bravest people are those who are frightened yet still do things in spite of it
- To appreciate and celebrate acts of courage within the animal kingdom

Outcomes:

A discussion about what it takes to be courageous and the gathering of synonyms using a word cloud; the writing of a bold move to consider doing in the future; and a completed biography about an animal that has shown courage.



LESSON ONE: A SENSE OF BELONGING

Questions:

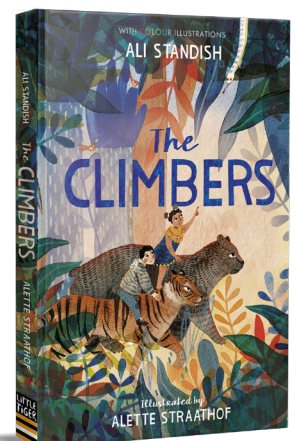
- What does it mean to 'belong' somewhere?
- What does it feel like to belong?
- Do we all have a place that we belong?

Task 1:

Have the children sit in a circle. Talk a little about families and how we belong with them. Explain that you are going to talk about belonging together as a class. Share how building a sense of belonging is about being inclusive and sensitive to those who feel left out, and valuing and celebrating the good in others. Stress how it is not about building a sense of being in an 'in' group, developing a competitive spirit against others or encouraging prejudicial or stereotypical comments against other groups. Any such comments should be challenged. Relate this to how Alma feels like she doesn't belong in her narrow town in the story. Go on to identify different groups the children belong to such as family, school, class, youth organisations, sports teams, etc. How do they show belonging? (Uniforms, badges etc). Create a 'Book of Belonging' with all that they belong to to make links between their own experiences of belonging. Display it in the classroom for children to read.

Task 2:

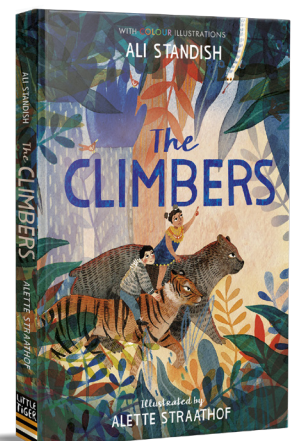
Discuss how your school plays a part in belonging in the community, how it has acted as a central place for many people and generations growing up and passing through its doors. Do children know any other places that are like this within your community? It could be the library, the hospital or any other places known to them. Ask them to discuss local amenities and attractions and other interesting things to visit. If possible, ask the children to plan a guided tour around the community, adhering to any risk assessments and adult ratios that you require. Think carefully where the children may have already visited, and about the modes of transport you will be using. They may choose to plan a walking visit or use travel companies depending on what is available to you. Make sure they think about what they will need to provide to make it happen.



They could also produce a leaflet to accompany their walk or invite local parents to come on the tour to share their experiences too. If a trip out cannot be arranged, perhaps you could facilitate a visit from, or interaction with, members of the community into school. This could be achieved virtually if you prefer doing this.

Task 3:

Do the children know how to say where they live? They might know their street name or what their house looks like, but can they identify the country and the continent they live in? To increase children's global awareness as they begin to grasp their place in the world and to see themselves belonging to a wider community and know about their local area, introduce the My Place in the World activity. Either print out or ask children to draw six circles starting small and getting bigger each time. Each circle should fit inside the other with the smallest circle (1) on top and the largest circle (6) on the bottom, a little like Matryoshka dolls. Label them: (1) My home (2) My street (3) My town/city (4) My country (5) My continent (6) My world. Talk more about their homes, streets, towns/cities, countries, continents and the world including place names, making reference to Task 2. Discuss the size of each and what they can see in each. Be mindful that the bigger the place, the more abstract it can become. Ask children to write about each of these places to show their understanding of them and to add an illustration of each place in each circle. When finished, combine the circles to create an ever-expanding way for children to look at their life in the world, and display these in the classroom. If you can hang them from the ceiling, this could be a very effective way of showing them.



LESSON TWO: FEELS LIKE HOME

Questions:

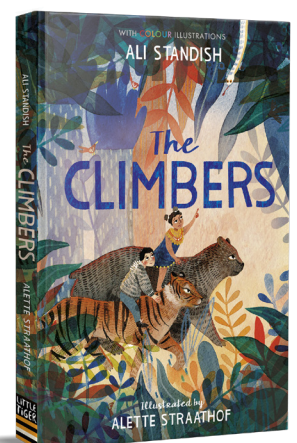
- What do you think makes a home? What does it mean to 'feel at home'?
- What is important to you about your home?
- Does everybody have a home?

Task 1:

Display the illustration that appears at the end of the book where Alma speaks to Star Bear and says "Welcome home, Star Bear". Use this as a conversation starter to consider the meaning of 'home' with the children. Begin by giving an example of what home means to you or what symbolizes your hometown for you. This could be to do with the people, the places or the culture, and the emotions it makes you feel. Explain how home is a special place to us, and that home will be different for everyone. For some of us it is a warm, safe place. For others it is a fun, lively place. Whatever your home is to you, it is built by the people in it, not just the bricks and materials that make the walls and the roof. The way you treat each other and the time you spend together also define what your home is to you. Ask children what 'home' means to them. Help them to think about things like it being a place of protection and safety, a place where we feel we belong and where we feel comfortable and loved.

Task 2:

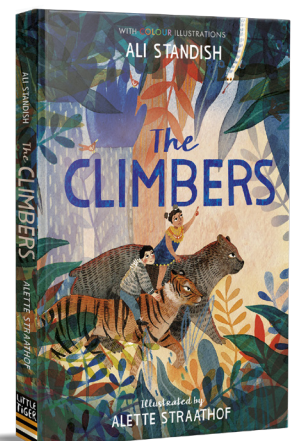
Following on from Task 2, show some images of different types of homes from around the world on the board (the more original and unique the pictures, the better!). Discuss with children which images they think are people's homes and why. Point out that actually they are all pictures of people's homes. You may want to read *Home* by Carson Ellis, which is a picture book that takes a loving look at the places where people live and shows the many possibilities of homes, physically and spiritually, to really exemplify this. Discuss more about what it means to live in a home such as having an address. Do children know their addresses? Why should we know our addresses? Stress to children that your address is personal information and therefore we do not share it with people we do not know, especially online. Go over the format that an address is written with a house name, street name, town or county name and then a postcode.



See if you can find the school online using the address on Google Maps. Using software like Google Street View, children could draw their house from observation; interpreting the details accurately and drawing what they see rather than what they think it looks like. Encourage children to think about the complexity of their drawing with greater detail and accuracy, possibly including shading and hinting around the surrounding areas.

Task 3:

Discuss with children about what it takes to build a home and who takes part in the construction process such as architects, designers and builders. Talk about how you would like to design your own dream home. Gather creative suggestions from everyone in the class together as to how your house should look, listing them on the board. Ask children to consider the number of bedrooms/bathrooms, garden, driveway, double glazing, floors, loft, materials, etc, as well as the costs. You also want to encourage them to think about sustainability. After this, ask children to consider ideas for their own dream house and to make an initial plan. Children could then use their plan to build a model of their dream house using junk materials or apps like Minecraft Education to recreate it virtually. Extension: Ask children to draw a 3D room plan, and a floor plan from above of their dream house using squared paper to think about measurements such as perimeter and area, and scale. This could also be done as part of work on Computer Aided Design, where children can add specific 3D items to scale using technology such as SketchUp.



LESSON THREE: FEAR OF THE FOREST

Questions:

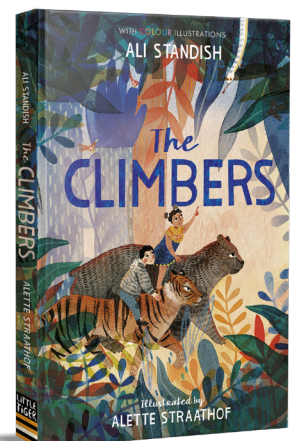
- What is fear? Why do we feel fear?
- Can you face your fears?
- How do people use fear to make others feel scared?

Task 1:

Ask the children if any of them are frightened of anything. Would they like to tell you what it is that frightens them? Tell the children that it is quite natural to be afraid of things we don't understand or have never experienced before. Ask what sort of things make them feel better when they are afraid. Hopefully someone will mention having someone to share the fear with – if not, give this suggestion yourself. Have they ever tried to share a fear with a friend or family member, only to be met with a response such as 'Don't be silly'? Again, hopefully, this will strike a chord with some! Ask what you can do when there is no one to share your fears with. Link this to the book where the people like Alma's uncle, teacher and the mayor are afraid of the forest because they think it is full of fearsome beasts, and they have created a culture of fear among the community. Go on to explain that sometimes being frightened of something is actually much more frightening than the thing itself as shown in this story!

Task 2:

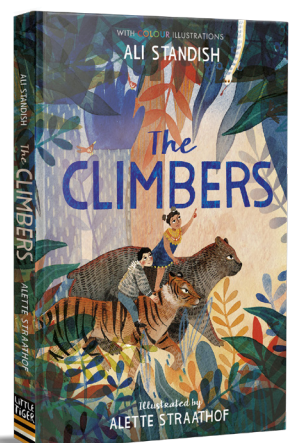
Following on from Task 1, use the way in which the inhabitants of Alma's town have created a culture of fear amongst themselves through spreading misinformation about the animals in the forest as an opportunity to talk about critical literacy and 'fake news'. Talk about how we hear about what's happening in the news. Do we watch Newsround or read a paper? Do we hear about the news from adults at home? Have we ever heard of the term 'fake news', what do we think this means? Explain that fake news is simply news stories we may hear about that aren't true. Explain that sometimes, news stories have been completely made up and others are based on the truth but twisted in a different way – often it is because what isn't true may seem more interesting and it may get us to click a link, or watch something we may not have done otherwise. Fake news can also be spread through word of mouth. We sometimes call a story or report that is spread this way a rumour.



Have you ever come across this before, perhaps at school, where something was spread that wasn't true. What might it feel like? Explain that fake news on the internet and social media can spread rapidly and reach the whole world. List the positives and negatives of this in a table. Discuss some ways in which we can better trust the news and information we receive such as using respected sources like national organisations and encyclopedias; look at the dates of publications and trust their instincts about if something feels fake. Point out how it is always good to ask a trusted adult to help.

Task 3:

Ask the children what it would be like to go to a friendly school. What would they see there? How would it feel to be there? Focus on the feelings of being an insider through belonging, respect and tolerance. Now ask the children to imagine what it would be like in an unfriendly school. What would they see there? How would it feel to be there? This time, focus on the feelings of being an outsider through isolation, division and rejection. Link this to the feelings of the characters in the book who feel like they are not accepted by their communities. Ask the children to design a poster to make everyone in the school feel welcome and wanted. What could they include to ensure they are thinking of everyone and recognising equality and diversity? After the lesson, display everyone's 'No Outsiders' posters on the working wall or similar. Check out no-outsiders.com for more resources.



LESSON FOUR: BEING BRAVE

Questions:

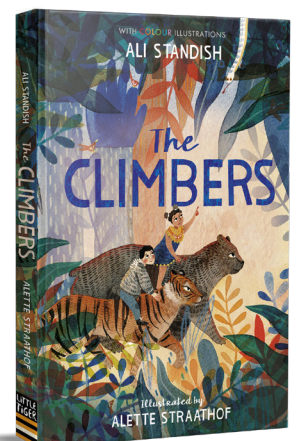
- What is courage?
- How do you show that you can be brave?
- Can animals be brave?

Task 1:

Write the word 'courageous' on the board. Ask the children what they think it means. Can they give examples? Write these around the word in a spider diagram, writing synonyms (alternative words) in a different colour so they stand out. Suggest words such as brave, bold, fearless, heroic, etc. Explain that there are different types of courage. See how many words you can generate as a class and either choose to make a word cloud with all the associated words for 'courageous' and/or a definition dictionary with the meaning of the word and alternative words to be used throughout these lessons to help children's literary understanding.

Task 2:

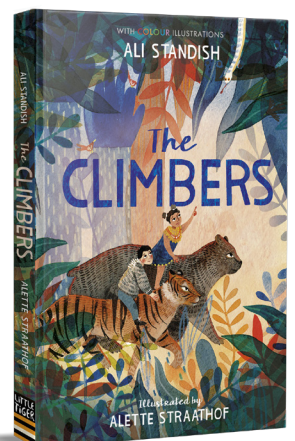
Link back to the word cloud in Task 1 for the word 'courageous' and pick out the word 'bold'. Ask children where they have heard this word before and relate it to the bold style of font that can be used on a computer. How does this help us to understand what it means? Ask children, 'What do we mean by the word "bold"?' Discuss how we often speak about colours, patterns and product designs as being bold too. In this sense, 'bold' means having a strong, vivid or clear appearance. For example, we might observe that someone has an especially bold dress sense. However, when we use the word 'bold' to describe a person, action or idea, it has a slightly different meaning. It shows 'a willingness to take risks; and that someone feels confident and courageous'. Explain that is the meaning that we are going to focus on today: people who make bold moves. That is, people who show courage and confidence, and are willing to take a risk for the greater good. Ask children to reflect upon the bold moves that Alma and Star Bear take during the story.



Children could use the bold experiences of Alma in the book as inspiration to consider bold steps they could do in their own lives. Suggest that one bold move might involve taking a risk in our learning and rising to some new challenges. Another might involve taking the bold step to believe in ourselves when we are feeling low and lacking self-confidence. Ask children to write one bold step which will help them in the future.

Task 3:

Following on from Task 1 and Task 2, say that today you are going to be looking at the ways in which different animals display courage because the book tells the story of a girl and a bear with a tender friendship that triumphs over fear. Ask if the children know of any brave animals and why they think they are brave? It is quite likely the children will think of animals that display physical courage, such as those which show overtly brave characteristics and are fierce animals – lions and tigers, for example. It might surprise them to know that animals just like our pet dogs, cats and horses can also show bravery in difficult and challenging circumstances. These animals aren't as strongly built as fierce lions or tigers, which makes their courage all the more remarkable. Show images of animals like this, including images from the war when these animals were used in service. Highlight how animals have worked in dangerous situations throughout history, and still do today, such as police dogs and horses. Write a short biography about an animal of their choice that has shown courage or exceptional endurance. You may want to use books like *Heroes: Incredible true stories of courageous animals* by David Long and Kerry Hyndman to research different animals.



FURTHER IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

Read more books that explore the subject of forests and environmental destruction together such as *Where's the Elephant?* by Barroux; *A Forest* by Marc Martin and *Window* by Jeannie Baker.

Learn more about the devastating effects of deforestation, especially in places like the Amazon Rainforest. Investigate the arguments for and against deforestation coming from different perspectives and debate these. Make posters, warning people about the dangers of destroying animal's natural habitats.

Discover deforestation from a scientific perspective and find out how the lack of trees to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen leads to increased air pollution and the effect it has on habitat loss and animals, causing their numbers to decrease, even to the point of extinction. Look at food chains and what could happen if deforestation continues, and research what has happened to other species of animals that have become extinct.

Research and create a presentation about a person who has shown bravery in adversity such as Malala Yousafzai, Rosa Parks or someone of your choice. What brave things have they done? What might their advice to others be?

Read *Can I Join Your Club?* by John Kelly and Steph Laberis and use it as inspiration to ask children what clubs they would like to start in school to feel a greater sense of belonging. Make a list and use some of the expertise of the children if they have it to run the clubs themselves.

