

Thinking Aloud

Themed starting points for the exploration of David Almond's graphic novel, 'The Savage'.



Devised by

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the reader
organisation

Find Your
TALENT

the
Bluecoat.

Thinking Aloud

Themed starting points for discussion before, after or during a reading of 'The Savage'.

This collection is for use by anyone who has engaged with the book, be they teachers and their pupils in KS2 and KS3 or educators who are not from a school setting, and wish to facilitate further thinking and discussion around the issues raised.

Many of the activities suggest starting points for a dialogue, for journeys of exploration using discussion; several are informed by a reading of the SEAL material from KS2; others suggest drama as the medium of exploration; some suggest writing or drawing.



1. Exploring pictures

And how
we can tell??

Reading the pictures

How do the images make you feel?

Select three or four illustrations that
Contrast:

What questions do you want to ask about
the character?

What is the character feeling?

Stick a copy of the picture on a large sheet
of paper

Write your questions around the picture.

Now see if the group can answer some or
all of the questions.

Thinking Ideas

Exploring the pictures,

Talking about the
pictures

Asking questions

What is he sitting on? Who is this boy?



Why hasn't he got proper clothes?

2. The book as art



Looking at the writer's motivations, techniques and achievements.

How does the text interrelate with the pictures?

Why are many of the images uncomfortable?

After we have read the text

What questions do we want to ask the book?

What questions would we like to ask the author?

What questions would we like to ask the illustrator?

Gather these questions together and put them in a table to be answered as you read the rest of the story.

Ask yourself ...

What is a savage? What does this word actually mean?

What do you think a savage looks like?

Make a picture of a savage and put labels on the picture to show the bits that make your drawing look like a savage.

Explain your picture to your partner or your group.

3. Blue's inner life

More questions to think about ... try to explain these ideas

'Narration' technique

This allows you to speak directly to your audience in character to give information about a scene.

You could use this idea to explore what's going on in Blue's head at several points of the story for example ...

Chapter 4

Blue has seen Hopper through the Savage's eyes

Chapter 5

Blue wakes out of a dream

Chapter 11

This is the last chapter when Blue tells us about looking back at the experience of writing the story.

Look carefully at the chapters in your group and then decide who is going to take the role of narrator

why does Blue invent the Savage?

why do you think Blue writes so fiercely?

What is the relationship between Blue and the savage

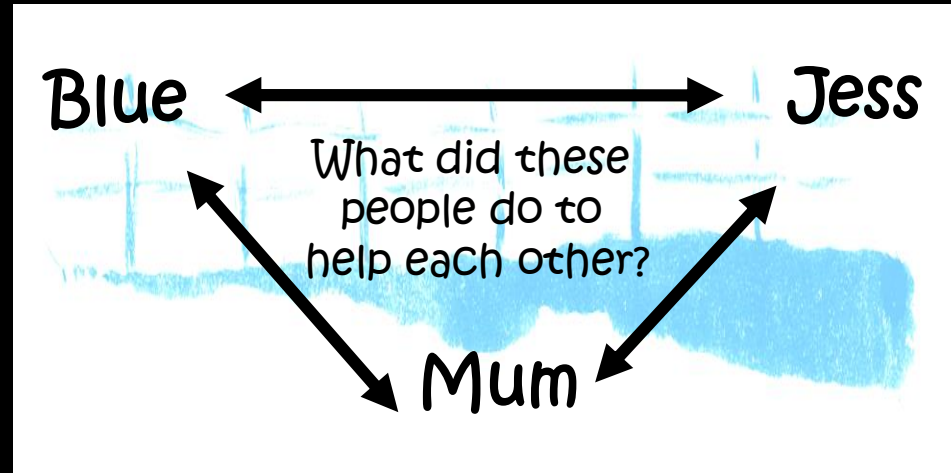
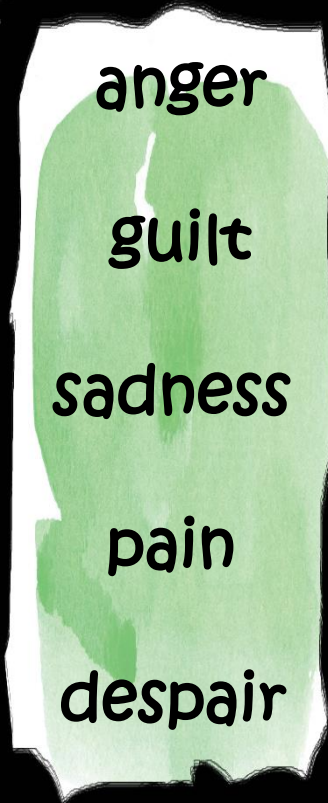
What is the savage for?



Here is the process - think ... talk ... write ... share ... decide

4. Grief & Loss

A terrible thing has happened to Blue's family – they are all shocked and show it in different ways.



Anger: we see this when Mrs Molloy wants Blue to “start to move forward” He did for a while but then ... what did he do?

See if you can find parts where these other emotions come out in the story – write them down and save them to show the other people in your group.

Have you all got the same bits? Have you all got different ones?

Find out from the text how each of these feelings is described to the reader.

5. Dreams & Reality

Imagination ...
Speculation ...
Narration ...



- What is a dream?
- What is reality?
- How do we know the difference?
- Let's explore where we want our imagination to go...what will we find?
- Is it comforting when we get there?
- Is it frightening?

Dream meets reality when we read chapter ten ... or does it?

"I stopped writing. I crawled through the stones towards the hidden cave beneath."

Going into the cave

HOT SEATING ...

What was it like in the cave?

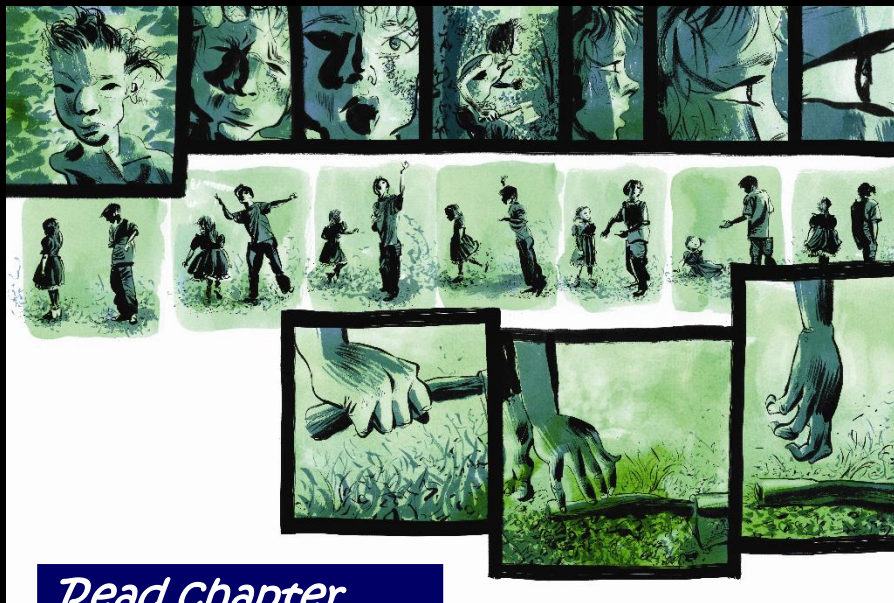
What did you feel ?

What did you see ?

What did you hear?

.....?





6. Awakening the imagination

How can you make a creative response to this story?

Read chapter four very carefully and see if you can draw the chapter as a picture, or a map or a diagram ...

Retell the scene as a poem – 'the Savage at Stokoe's farm' from chapter five.



Write down what Mrs Molloy would have written about Blue in chapter nine.

You should try to see what happened from Mrs Molloy's point of view – what did she think about the noises that Blue was making? How did she react to his strange behaviour what did she think when Blue ran out of the school?

7. Disconnected people

Solving problems

Things we know about Hopper

- Hopper is disconnected from his home and the other people that live there.
- He can't run home and tell people stuff like Blue can.
- He's only got himself and the smoking friends that he hangs around with – and they don't care much.
- What else do we want to know ... ?

Five Things we can guess about Hopper

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5

See how long you can make these lists



Try to draw a full length picture of Hopper.

Think first about all the things we know about him and what he does and what he says.

Put labels on your drawing to explain your thoughts

8. Bullying

How do you think Blue ought to deal with Hopper?

Use a 'thought tunnel' to advise Blue ...

- Take turns to be Blue
- Someone might want to be Hopper.

How would you advise him?

How would the rest of the group react?

“Why do some people become bullies because of their life experiences and yet others don't?”

Advice to Blue Baker ...

How to deal with Hopper

Hey, Dogbreath ...

that dad of yours was at our door last week. Did you know that? He said that you'd been whingeing on about me.

What do you think about ...

- Power
- Influence
- Direct and indirect bullying
- Name calling
- Being insecure
- Being afraid
- Being unloved
- Being unsure of yourself
- Trying to be assertive in the wrong ways.



I know it's awful, son. But what you've got to remember is that a bully like Hopper is just showing how weak he really is.

9. Love

Loyalty

Empathy

Security

Understanding

Giving space

Respect

Who do you empathise with?

Who do you show loyalty to?

Who do you feel secure with?

Who do you give security to?

Are you allowed your own space for thinking?

Do you give and receive respect?

Where?

When?

With whom?



What else could you add to this list?

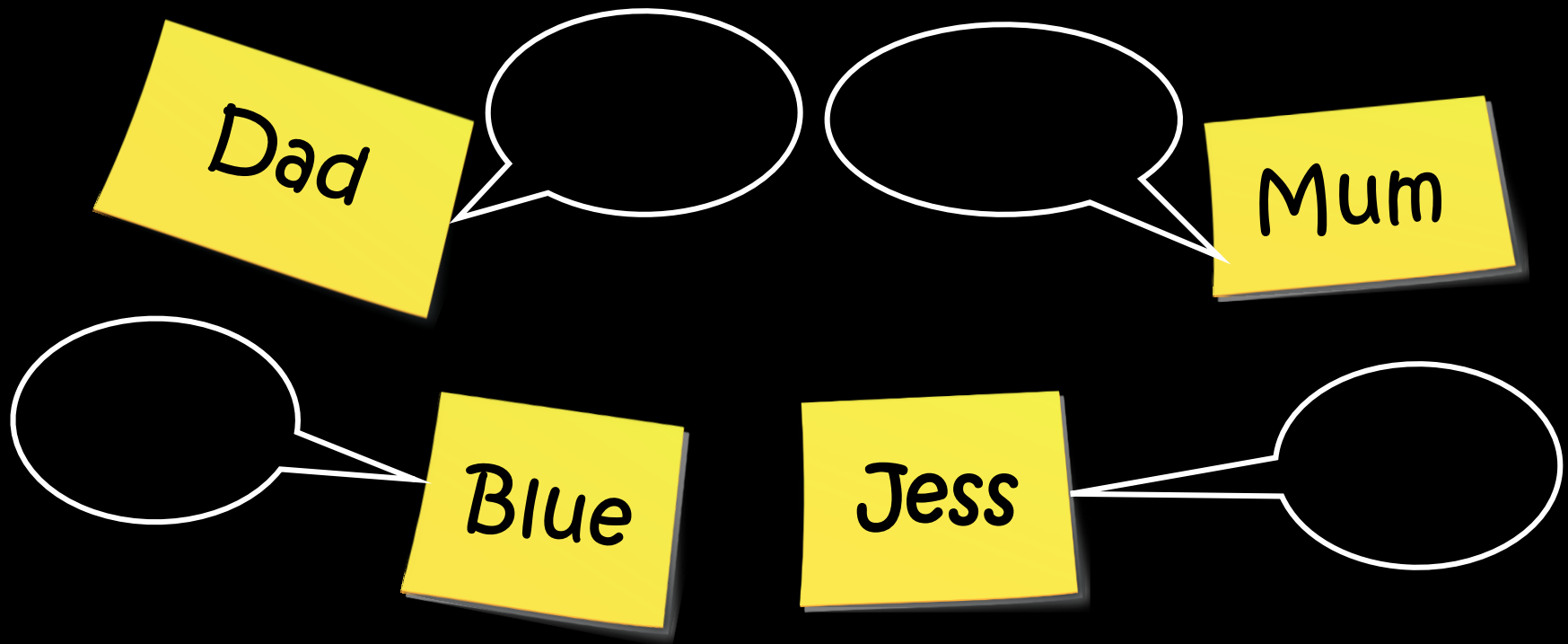
What happens to people who cannot give love and cannot receive love?



10. Family

How are people in this family connected?

Write down some of the things that they say that make us realise that they are very connected?



Emotional intelligence is what keeps this family together. They are capable of dealing with problems that arise in their life without losing love for each other.

Each family member has special qualities. – what are they?

Try drawing a diagram with links between the members showing what they think about each other.

11. Getting it off your chest

Read this first ...

He wandered about for a minnit with a stupid luk on his face like Hopper did, and he stud for a minnit like Hopper stud, and he put his hand to his mouth like he had won of them smoky things and he breethed in and owt like Hopper did so he new how horribil it felt to feel like Hopper. Then he grunted and growled. He knew he would always remember the stupid ugly kid Hopper. And he knew he wud see him agen.

Then Blue tells us:

When I wrote all that, I felt much better. It was great to see Hopper through the savage's eyes, and to write how ugly and stupid and horrible he was. It was great to think that if there really was a savage in the world, he would help me sort Hopper out.



Why has writing this helped Blue?

Why does he feel 'much better'?

"You're so clever, Blue!
I had no idea you had
this in you!"

12. What worries you?

Write down on post-its a list of the things that worry Blue.



1. Hopper
2. How mum is feeling
3.
4.

Homework
School work
Going to work
No work

Other people
Aggressive people
Not meeting people

Feeling small
Feeling a fool

Spend time talking about
and sharing these things.

Share your thoughts in the group and make a group list of Blue's worries.

Organise them into categories:

e.g.

- big worries
- little worries
- worries he can deal with alone
- things that he needs help to sort out

Write down on post-its the things that worry you and put them in the same categories.

What sort of worries
does the savage
have?

13. Reason & Instinct

The nature of the savage

What are his feelings?

In what ways can he communicate?

What does he think when he sees Hopper?

What does he think when he watches Jess and Blue dancing?

What does he think when he is hungry & when he is full of food?



Your group should
Choose a question

Put all

Your ideas

On post-its
To show the group

Then you can explain
what you have decided

14. Good & Evil

For this idea to work it would be best if the group was sitting in a circle, or at least a horse-shoe arrangement.



Having shared the experience of reading the story it would be interesting to explore the ideas of good and evil that come out of this book.

Discuss how the ideas of good and evil are portrayed in this book.

- * Where are the best examples of good things happening and where do we see bad things happening?

- * Select pictures of two characters –

- * how are they similar?
- * how are they the different?
- * what makes them good,
- * what makes them bad?

How important is it that a book has bad things in it as well as good things?



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Much of the ground work for this
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the
Bluecoat.



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