

# EMC Approaches to Reading

# The Roles We Play



Reading Teachers Reading Pupils

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English and Media Centre in conjunction with the Reading Teachers Reading Pupils programme, 2024

EMC and Cheltenham Festivals: Reading Teachers=Reading Pupils

These teaching notes have been designed to support schools using *The Roles We Play* as part of the Reading Teachers=Reading Pupils project in 2023-24. The ideas in the sequence of sessions will support teachers in reading aloud and talking about the selected texts with their students, allowing students to respond to and understand the text in greater depth. As this is a graphic novel, the resource includes tips and prompts for reading images.

## Notes for Teachers

- Content warning: domestic abuse.
- All page numbers refer to the Myriad Editions paperback edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2021.

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## Tips for Reading

### Reading Books with Words You Don't Know - Useful Tips

In writing about her experiences growing up in Britain as a Kashmiri Muslim, Sabba Khan sometimes uses her first language, Pothwari, and may also use other words you don't recognise. Here are some tips for reading a book with words you don't know, whether it's because the language is archaic (like Shakespeare), or because the writer makes use of words from a language you are not familiar with, or because the writer uses specialist or unusual vocabulary.

-  When you come across a word you don't know, first consider whether it is stopping you from understanding something important in the novel.
-  If the word is not affecting your overall understanding we suggest that you keep reading, so that you don't lose track of the story. You could look the word up later if you want to, out of interest.
-  If the word is stopping you from understanding something important you could:
  - ▶ Read back a little and then forwards a bit and see if you can guess from the context (in *The Roles We Play* the images may help as well)
  - ▶ See if someone else in your class can tell you what it means
  - ▶ Look it up online or in a dictionary.

### How to Read a Graphic Novel

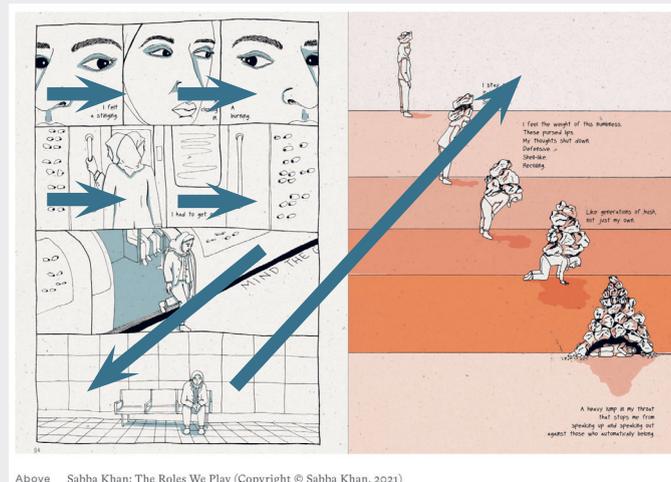
-  *Slow down.* Reading a graphic novel is not like reading a prose novel, even one with illustrations. Everything on the page contributes to the story: the pictures, the words, the way the words and pictures work together.
-  Look for places where the pictures are telling a part of the story which is not in the words, or, sometimes, even a story that is different from the story told in words
-  Read from left to right, top to bottom, as shown in the image on page 5. (Except manga which is read right to left)

### Useful terminology for talking about a graphic novel

- ▶ Panel: frame containing images and text
- ▶ Gutter: the gap or border between panels.
- ▶ Words are contained in
  - » Thought bubbles,
  - » Speech bubbles
  - » Captions.

## Useful Tips for Reading Images

In the 'During Reading' section of this resource there are some questions for you to consider as you read the novel. Some of them will draw your attention particularly to the images, or to the way the images and words are working together. When you are looking at the images be aware of some of the following things.



### Figures

- ▶ Facial expressions show emotions clearly, or be drawn without much expression, leaving the reader to decide how the person is feeling.
- ▶ As in real life, a person's body language gives clues to what they are thinking or feeling.
- ▶ Close ups of different parts of a person can draw attention to that part, for example a gesture with the hands.

### Point of View; Perspective

- ▶ Imagine a camera has been used to capture this image. How does this affect the way we read the panel? For example:
- ▶ A high camera angle, looking down on someone, might make the person in the panel look vulnerable
- ▶ A low camera angle, looking up, might mean we are looking through the eyes of a child.

### What's in the Frame?

- ▶ Sometimes what's in the background, or off to one side of the panel is important. Some panels on a page might be bigger than others. Think about what the author might be suggesting or drawing attention to.

### Colour; Use of Shadow

- ▶ Colours and shadows can create a particular mood or atmosphere or connect themes throughout the book.

# BEFORE READING

These tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done on your own too. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

## Chapter Titles

The chapter titles from the novel are listed in order, below.

- Discuss with a partner or small group:
  - ▶ What do you notice about the titles?
  - ▶ What might this novel be about?
  - ▶ Which title/s make you want to read that chapter?

Together	Opposites	Space
Friendship	Nothing	Rocks
Opposites	Spare Rib	Monstrous
Kismet	Punctured	Questions
Pardah	Other	Heritage
Layers	Tabula Rasa	Silence
Limbs	This City	Warmth
Performance	Choice	Illuminations
Vessel	Finite	Love
Cycle	Future	Water

## Looking Inside the Book

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, flick through the pages of the book. What do you notice? What different kinds of layout are there?
- Have you read any other graphic novels? If so, what were they and what did you think of them? If not, what are your thoughts about trying one?