‘Leon and the Place Between’ Snap Reading notes

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| Pages | Slides |  Teaching notes |
| Blurb | 1 | Don’t tell the children the title yet, but give each child a post-it. Display the blurb on slide 1 and ask the children to write their initial responses/thoughts/questions.Feedback ideas.Discuss what an unusual blurb it is – how the rhetorical question involves us and makes us think; what the ‘place between’ might be.Look closely at the actual back cover and notice what the blurb is written inside – does this add to our interest/understanding?Tell the children the title and use the discussion about the blurb to make an initial prediction about the story. Emphasize that predictions are not just imagination – they must always be based on clues from the text. |
| Cover | 2Predictionsheet | Look closely at the cover and use the questions from slide 2.Ask the children to complete the prediction sheet and then fold it in half and keep until the end of the book. |
| Double fairground picture | 3 | Use the slide to discuss this picture. Explain that they have just used inference by spotting a clue and then working out what it shows us. You could build on this by providing some sentences that provide inference opportunities so that the children can see the link between the way they analysed the visual clues and how they need to analyse the clues in text (e.g. what clues certain words give us etc.) Alternatively, you could share-write inference questions based on the picture. |
| ‘I don’t believe in magic…’ |  | Before reading the text, ask the children to turn to the page and without reading, spot the first word that leaps out at them – which words did they pick? What clues do they give us as to what the story might be about?Tell the children they’re going to skim and scan the picture to race to find details in the picture. Ask them to put their finger on:* The girl in the flowery dress
* A yellow hat
* A red shoe
* A girl wearing glasses
* A man with a moustache
* A face gesturing ‘sssshhh’

Discuss how the first three tasks were easier because they were at the front are in colour – what does this tell us about these particular characters?Read the text, reflecting the font size in the expression you use.Use slide 4. |
| ‘The lanterns went out…’ |  | Before turning to this page, tell the children that you are interested in their reaction the moment they see it. Encourage them to explain what they thought and why – what is the effect of the completely black page?Use the text to recreate the scene – discuss ‘fidgeted’ and which other sound they would hear. How can you have a ‘loud hush’? Once discussed, have the class perform together as the audience.If possible, cover the board or something simple such as a cupboard door, with some material to represent a curtain. Explain that there’s something exciting behind it and ‘twitch’ it to build up tension. What could be behind it? Explain that this is how the audience feels in the book and emphasize that the author wants us to really imagine it in order to feel what they are feeling. |
| ‘With a ripple…’ | 5, 6 | Use slide 5’s questions as a focus. If you wish, slide 6 contains pictures of juggling skittles and the transition for this slide is that of curtains to try to mimic the book. Use the picture to predict what the first act might be.  |
| ‘Bang!’ pages | 7, 8 | Read the page with an emphasis on using the size of the fonts and the use of ellipsis as a guide (question 1 on slide 7.)After question 3, point out that after each sound, there are comparative adjectives (e.g. loud and louder) and ask the children to spot as many paired words as they can.Take a moment to discuss the skittles comparison (up, but not down) – what could have happened to them? What clue does this provide about this circus?Once they’ve been identified, re-read the page in groups, with emphasis on font size and ellipsis pauses. Ask some children to read the first half of the paired words and some the second.Complete question 4.Replace the material over the board and turn to slide 8. There is a link on it to a clip of a barrel organ playing. Use this to help the children picture the events in the next pages. What could be magical about the barrel organ? |
| Barrel organ and fold out page, plus ‘At last…’ page | 9 | Use the tasks on slide 9. |
| ‘Pouff!’ page | 10 | Use slide 10. The first task is to be done before you’ve read the page as a class. Hear some of the readings and draw out areas that are expressed really well. |
| ‘Trust nothing!’ page | 11 | Use the slide for tasks. |
| ‘The crowd was amazed’ page, plus next page. | 12 | Use the slide for tasks. |
| ‘Inside, the box was not a box’ page | 13 | Read the text and then use slide 13 for questions.Question 5 requires use of the picture to answer.Question 6 requires close use of the text. Model taking clues from the text and turning them into the character’s thoughts.Question 7 – emphasize that prediction requires evidence from the text. |
| ‘Will you show me?’ page | 14 | Use the questions on slide 14. Question 3 requires the children to look again at the cover to help them. |
| ‘Leon hugged the lonely rabbit’ page | 15 | Use slide 15 for tasks. Remind children about the techniques for completing the thinking bubble questions, modelling if required. |
| ‘Leon heard a sharp tap’ page | 16 | Use slide 16 for questions.Question 2: demonstrate working out the meaning of a word through context. Later on, follow this up by providing some sentences with made-up words in them and giving the children the chance to practice the technique of using context as clues. (e.g. The mouse caroomed as the cat pounced… Miserably, the child didoodled his cold, lumpy custard.Question 5: Refer back to the diagram they drew after slide 4.Ask the children to write or act out (or both!) the conversation the children will have as they leave the tent. (Remind the children that prediction responses must come from the clues in the text.) |
| ‘Did you really disappear?’ page | 17 | Display slide 17 – the first paragraph of this page. Use shared reading to highlight:* What does the first line tell us about what Pete is wrestling with in his mind?
* Highlight the word ‘shuffled’ and discuss why this would be how they move. Ask the children to demonstrate and try out different words – what effect would they have? Emphasize how one word can create a picture for us and that it’s very important to notice the word choice and think about the effects.
* What evidence does Tom use for why it must be real?
* What might Leon’s response be to Little Mo’s question?

Read the rest of the page: why does Leon smile? What do you think the author wants us to take from this story as a message? What do you think about the final double page? |
| Post-reading  | 18 | Use the slide to complete the sequencing task. |