



## Nikiwe's Magical Glass Doors

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The Otto Foundation Children's Book Award

Picture Book Shortlist

In *Nikiwe's Magical Glass Doors*, young Nikiwe embarks on an enchanting journey through her local library, discovering the magic hidden within the pages of books. Inspired by the spirited children of Harare Library in Khayelitsha, this heartwarming story celebrates the transformative power of books and the joy of reading.

With each turn of the page, Nikiwe travels to far-off places, learns new languages and meets captivating characters who spark her curiosity and inspire her dreams. Along the way, she encounters friendly librarians and a diverse community of readers, all united by their shared love for discovering new stories.

This beautifully illustrated picture book is a tribute to the vital role that libraries play in nurturing young minds and fostering a love for reading in underserved communities. It highlights how libraries act as gateways to knowledge, personal growth and opportunity, bringing light and hope to those who need it most.

### Teaching notes

These notes have been written by the Otto Foundation to provide teachers and caregivers with ideas to develop reading comprehension and support literacy skills. They encourage deep reading of the text and illustrations, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, not just one sitting.

These notes have been written with Grade R, 1, 2 and 3 readers in mind, but teachers and caregivers will need to adapt them to the age and experience of their readers.

### Themes

- Community
- Creativity
- Imagination
- Libraries
- Reading
- Self-expression

### Before reading the story

- Open up the discussion by allowing the children to share their initial responses to the front cover of the book. Encourage them to discuss what they see and their responses to it.
  - *What do you notice about the cover illustration?*

- What does the cover illustration make you think about?
  - How does the cover illustration make you feel?
  - What do you like most about the cover illustration?
  - How do you think the girl on the front cover is feeling? Why do you think that?
  - Why do you think the books on the front cover are flying around the girl?
- Explain that the title of the book is **Nikiwe's Magical Glass Doors**. Ask the children to share their thoughts about the title.
    - What does **magical** mean? What do you think might be **magical** about Nikiwe's glass doors?
    - Where do you think Nikiwe's **glass doors** lead to?
    - What is the name of a place where you can find many books to read? (a library)
    - What do you think Nikiwe might do in this story?
    - Who do you think Nikiwe might meet in this story?
  - Read the back cover blurb aloud. Explore how your children may change their ideas about the story now that they have more information.
    - How does reading the back cover blurb change what you thought might happen in the story?
    - What is a **local library**? What is the name of your **local library**? What do you think Nikiwe wants to do at her **local library**?
    - What book would you recommend Nikiwe read?
    - Who do you like visiting your library with?

## Reading aloud discussion points

- On pages 1 - 2 Nikiwe arrives at the library.
  - Look at the illustration of the library on page 1 carefully. What do you imagine the inside of this library will look like?
  - Why do you think everything changes for Nikiwe when she walks through the glass doors of the library?
  - Nikiwe described the inside of the library as **a whole new world**. What does it mean when something is described as **a whole new world**? Why do you think Nikiwe felt like the inside of the library was **a whole new world**?
  - There were big beautiful drawings by **local artists** in the library. What is a **local artist**? If you were asked to make a big drawing for a library, what would you draw?
- On pages 3 - 4 Nikiwe meets all the different people who visit the library.
  - Look at the illustrations of all the library visitors on pages 3 - 4. Do these people remind you of people you have seen in a library? Why or why not?
  - Everyone is **welcome** at the library. What does it mean to be **welcome** in a place? Where do you feel most **welcome**? What makes you feel that way?
  - Everyone **belongs** in the library. What does it mean to **belong**? Where do you feel like you **belong**? What makes you feel that way?
- There are many taxis making a lot of noise in the illustrations on pages 5 - 6.
  - What did Nikiwe wish she could tell the taxis?
  - Nikiwe explained that her **heart feels happy** in the library. What about the library makes her **heart feel happy**? What makes your **heart feel happy**? Why?

- Mrs Namhla told the children in the library to **keep their voices down**. What does it mean to **keep your voice down**? Why do you think Mrs Namhla wanted the children to **keep their voices down**? Do you think the library is a place where **voices should be kept down**? Why or why not?
- Nikiwe is reminded of principal Dlamini on pages 7 - 8.
  - What is a **principal**? Who is the **principal** of your school?
  - Why did Mrs Namhla remind Nikiwe of principal Dlamini?
  - Look at the illustration of principal Dlamini on page 8. What kind of mood do you think principal Dlamini is in? What makes you think this? Would you want principal Dlamini as your principal? Why or why not?
- Nikiwe, Khanyi and Jabu visit the children's area of the library from pages 9 - 16.
  - Look at the illustration of Nikiwe and her friends standing in front of the glass doors to the children's area of the library on page 10. What do you think they will find behind the glass doors? What would you want to find in the children's area of a library?
  - When Nikiwe and her friends entered the children's area they felt they could have **countless adventures**. What does it mean to have **countless adventures**?
  - Look carefully at the illustrations on pages 11 - 12. What part of the children's area would you want to visit first? Why?
  - Nikiwe and her friends explored the children's area blackboard, where they are encouraged to draw anything they would like to. Look at the illustration of the blackboard on pages 13 - 14. Which drawing on the blackboard do you like the most? Why? If you could draw your favourite character from a book on the blackboard who would you draw?
  - What did Jabu draw on the blackboard? What did Khani draw on the blackboard? What did Nikiwe draw on the blackboard?
- On pages 17 - 20 we meet Miss Belinda, the book club teacher.
  - Does Miss Belinda look like someone you would like as a book club teacher? Why or why not?
  - Miss Belinda called the blackboard her **expression board**. Why did Miss Belinda feel an **expression board** was important? What does it mean to express yourself? What would you draw on the **expression board** to express yourself?
  - What were some of the expressions children have shared on Miss Belinda's expression board in different languages? (I love myself – Tswana, I am proud of myself – isiXhosa, I am worthy – isiZulu)
  - Look at the illustration of the **magical reading tree** on page 20. What do you think is special about the **magical reading tree**?
  - What books would you choose to put onto the magical reading tree for people to read?
  - Nikiwe said: **Between the pages of a book is a wonderful place to be**. What does it mean to be **between the pages of a book**? What is your favourite book to **be between the pages** of?
- From pages 21 - 28 we meet some characters from books which might be familiar.
  - Look at the illustration on pages 21 - 22. What types of food can you name from the illustration? What is the name of a book about a caterpillar who cannot stop eating? (The Very Hungry Caterpillar)

- On pages 23 - 24 we met some friends flying in a hot air balloon. What were the different colours on the hot air balloon? How many friends were flying in the hot air balloon? What other languages can you say hello in? What is the name of the book that teaches us how to say hello in many different African languages? (How Many Ways Can You Say Hello?)
- What is the name of the name of the girl who came from Johannesburg and has magic beads in her hair? What special power did her beads have? What is the title of the book about a girl who had magic beads in her hair? (Mpumi's Magic Beads)
- What sport was being played in the illustrations on pages 27 - 28? What is the name of the cricket champion Miss Belinda mentioned? If you wrote a book about a sport, what sport would you write about? Who would the main character in your story be? What is the title of the book about a boy called Yanga who plays cricket? (Yes Yanga!)
- On pages 29 - 30 Nikiwe appreciates her local library.
  - What is the name of Nikiwe's local library?
  - What is the name of your local library?
  - Why do you think Nikiwe described a book as **a lovely thing**?
  - Nikiwe explained that as long as libraries exist, she will **never feel alone**. Why do you think this is?
  - Look at the illustration of Nikiwe on page 30. How do you think Nikiwe is feeling? What makes her feel this way?

## Topics for discussion after reading the story

- Ask your children:
  - What did you like most about this story?
  - What is something you have learnt from reading this story?
  - If you were writing this story, what would happen to Nikiwe next?
  - Who do you think should read this story next and why would you recommend it to them?

## Activity ideas for after reading the story

- Host a book club for your children and introduce the books mentioned in Nikiwe's *Magical Glass Doors*, including:
  - *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
  - *Mpumi's Magic Beads* by Lebogang Masango
  - *How Many Ways Can You Say Hello?* by Refiloe Moahloli
  - *Yes Yanga!* by Refiloe Moahloli
- Create your own expressions board with your children. Build on the examples from the story: *I love myself, I am proud of myself, I am worthy*. Encourage your children to illustrate their expressions for display.
- Ask your children what their favourite book in the library is. Encourage them to work in pairs, sharing a favourite story with a friend.

- Brainstorm ideas around how to take good care of library books with your children.

**Please see the following pages for Grade specific CAPS aligned skills covered in these teaching notes.**

## CAPS skills covered in teaching notes

### Listening and speaking

#### Grade R

- Listen to stories
- Listen and respond to simple questions
- Listen without interrupting
- Talk about pictures
- Participate in discussion and asks questions
- Ask questions
- Give explanations

### Reading

#### Grade R

- Use pictures to predict what a story is about
- Predict what will happen in a story through pictures
- Recognise and point out common objects in pictures
- Interpret pictures
- Make up own story by 'reading' pictures
- Pretend to read
- Make links to own experience when reading with teacher
- Discuss and describe characters in a story
- Describe characters in stories and give opinion
- Answer questions based on the story read

### Listening and speaking

#### Grade 1

- Listen to and express feelings about a story
- Listen without interrupting, taking turns to speak and asking questions of clarification
- Respond to pictures
- Listen to stories with interest and enjoyment, drawing on a picture to show understanding
- Listen for the detail in stories
- Talk about personal experiences and feelings
- Answer closed and open-ended questions
- Participate in discussions

### Reading

#### Grade 1

- Develop book handling skills (holding the book and turning pages correctly)
- Uses book cover to predict what a story is about
- Use pictures in the book for understanding
- Make up own story by 'reading' pictures
- Discuss a story identifying main idea and characters
- Ask questions related to a story told and read
- Recognise cause and effect in a story
- Give an opinion on what was read
- Answer open-ended questions based on text read
- Interpret information from pictures

### Listening and speaking

#### Grade 2

- Listen to stories and answer higher-order questions
- Listen to a story with enjoyment and answer questions related to the story

### Reading

#### Grade 2

- Read books as a class with teacher
- Use the cover of a book to predict what a story is about
- Use pictures in the book for understanding

- Listen to stories for a longer period with enjoyment
- Listen without interrupting showing respect for the speaker
- Use ever increasing vocabulary when answering questions
- Understand and use appropriate language in context
- Ask questions and comments on what was heard
- Talk about personal experience
- Express feelings about a story
- Answer closed and open-ended questions and justify answers
- Participate in discussions, asking and answering questions and suggesting ideas
- Identify key details in what was read, such as main characters and setting
- Express whether a story was liked and justify response
- Express personal response to a text read
- Give opinion on what was read
- Answer open ended questions based on text
- Answer higher order questions based on text read
- Recognise cause and effect in a story
- Describe main ideas in a text
- Identify key details in what was read
- Discuss different cultures represented in a story

## Listening and speaking

### Grade 3

- Listen for main ideas and detail in stories
- Listen to story for cause and effect
- Ask questions for clarification
- Express feelings and opinions about text and gives reasons
- Talk about personal experiences
- Answer open-ended questions and justify answer
- Answer higher order questions based on text
- Participate in discussion
- Engage in conversation as a social skill, accepting and respecting the way others speak
- Listen without interrupting

## Reading

### Grade 3

- Read books as a class with teacher
- Discuss main idea, characters, plot and 'problem' in a text
- Answer a range of higher order questions based on text
- Express whether a story was liked and justify answer
- Interpret information from pictures
- Use illustrations in text to increase understanding