



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower Primary (ages 5+)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** HSIE, English, Creative Arts, Languages.
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Intercultural Understanding, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Visual Literacy.
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia; Sustainability.

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To learn more about our relationship to our environment – both the built environment that we create and the natural environment and how those interact.
- To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
- To use and experiment with different materials, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience

THEMES

- Our relationship to the natural and built environment
- Change and continuity
- Friendship/significant relationships
- Creativity/imagination

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Christopher Cheng

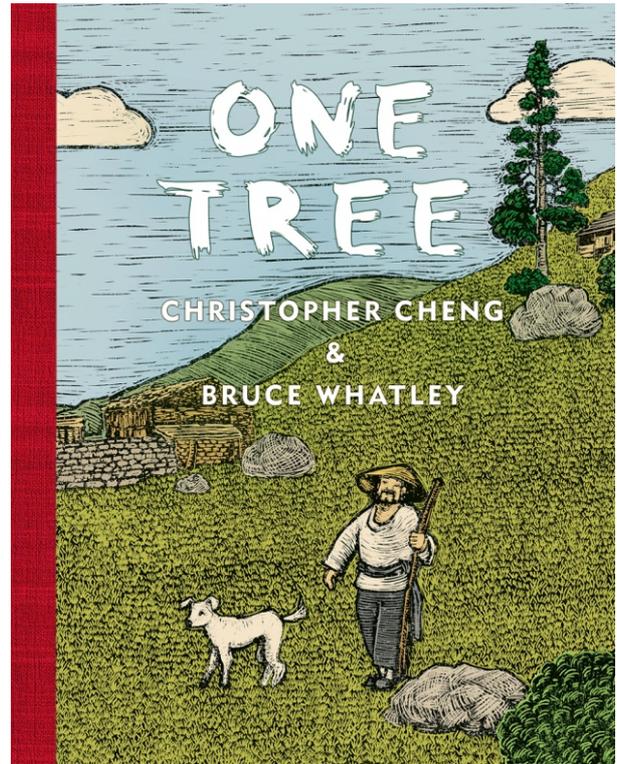
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One Tree

Christopher Cheng & Bruce Whatley

PLOT SUMMARY

One tall tree on the mountain once marked Grandfather's farm.

Now there is a busy city and Grandfather lives with us in our apartment.

Once he told stories but now he stays silent.

Until one day, in the city market, I find something precious ...

Something that brings Grandfather's memories alive again.

A touching and uplifting story about love, change and the importance of the natural environment in all our lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher Cheng is an award winning, full-time children's author who writes fiction and non-fiction, conducts workshops and visits schools. He has a Master of Arts in Children's Literature, is co-chair of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) Advisory Board, and an ambassador for the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL). He is a passionate advocate for kids and kids' books.

His picture book, *One Child*, illustrated by Steven Woolman, won the Wilderness Society Environment Award for Picture Books (Australia) and the Skipping Stones Honour Book (USA). Christopher also worked with Sarah Davis on the critically acclaimed picture book *Sounds Spooky* which won an Aurealis Award in the picture book category and is a CBCA Notable Book. In 2013, his picture book *Python* was shortlisted for the CBCA Eve Powell Award.

He lives with his wife in inner-city Sydney and is often heard to say that he has the best job in the world.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Christopher says:

A large part of my family live overseas, many of them in Hong Kong. I have often visited the city and noticed the dramatic change to the rural (and the city) environments. Where once there were farms, now bland high-rise apartments tower over the hills – without the green environment and all of the nature (the birds, spiders, bugs and other wildlife) it brings.

But attitudes are changing. We are slowly realising that our urban environment needs the green environment too and so apartments are being designed with hanging gardens, green balconies and more.

Families, too, are increasingly important – loving, sharing and caring families. I love our extended family gatherings where we all swap stories!

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Since 1992 Bruce has written and/or illustrated over 80 children's picture books. His international award winning titles include his first two books, *The Ugliest Dog in the World* and *Looking for Crabs*. He often writes with his wife Rosie Smith and has also had much success with the *Diary of a Wombat* series created with Jackie French.

Bruce uses a variety of illustration medium including gouache, pen and ink, pencil, oils, watercolour and more recently CGI software. *Tin Toys*, *The Watchmaker* *Who Saved Christmas* and *Ruben* are classic examples of his search for new ways to create images.

Bruce and Rosie live on the South Coast of NSW.

ILLUSTRATOR'S INSPIRATION

Bruce says:

I am always inspired by the illustrators I admire and the boundaries they keep pushing. It pushes me to do better – to find new ways to create visual narratives.

For *One Tree* I looked at old Chinese illustration styles for inspiration and found lots of watercolour drawing and illustrations created from wood block printing. This is where the artist carves a drawing into a block of wood, rolls ink onto it and presses it onto paper. I used a similar technique when I was in art college using a special piece of lino. In *One Tree* I was able to use a computer program (Photoshop) to produce the same kind of effect.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover. What can you tell about the title from the cover. Where is the book set? Who might the characters be?
2. On the half title page are the names of the author and the illustrator. What is the red square-shaped symbol after the author's name and what does it signify? Explore the significance and meaning of name chops in Chinese culture and how they are used.
3. What is the significance of the vignettes (the small illustrations above or below the text) throughout the book? Why might they have been included?
4. Investigate Chinese culture through digital media, through class discussions or with local Chinese identities.

THEMES

- **Our relationship to the natural and built environment:** Looking at the book's illustrations and text, students can identify the elements of the natural and the built environments. They can compare how grandfather feels and acts in both of these. They can then surmise how the boy might feel living in grandfather's place. Students can discuss how grandfather and the boy live in both environments.
- **Change and continuity:** Using the language and events in the book, children can learn about and discuss things associated with time, change and place
- **Friendship/significant relationships:** Students discuss the importance of friendship and family and their relationships with each other. Students can identify significant events, places and people in the life of the grandfather and then compare them with their own and those of their peers. How are they similar and different to each other.



- **Creativity/Imagination:** Using the illustrations in the book, children can identify features significant to them and link that to their own experience. They can talk about the use of different colours, shapes, textures and other things of interest in the art and also talk about the artist and how/why he created the illustrations in the way he did.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

English

Questions

1. Think of some other tree planting stories. (e.g. *Florette* or *A Patch From Scratch* – details on pp 7 & 8.) What happens in those stories? How are the trees/plants significant?
2. Uncover other stories about family relationships. (e.g. see *Oma's Buttons* – details on p8.) What happens in the stories? Identify the similarities and differences.

Activities

1. What are some of the new words that you read in this story? There are a few Cantonese (Chinese) words in this book as well. How do these words impact the telling of the story.
2. Write a story from this tree's point of view and about how it is impacted by the changing environment.

Creative Arts

For the illustrations in *One Tree*, the artist has imitated a traditional linocut technique. He has used the eraser tool in the computer program, Photoshop, leaving the areas that would become the line work. He then converted that to a textured line. The colours were added on a layer beneath that.

Questions

1. Why do you think the illustrator has used this technique?
2. How has this technique provided additional interpretation / meaning to the text?
3. What emotions or feelings does this technique portray?
4. How is this technique different to creating illustrations with photographs or paintings? Compare this technique to other styles used by this illustrator and to the styles used by traditional Chinese artist.
5. How has the illustrator framed each illustration? Why? What effect does it have on the story?

Activities

1. Closely examine leaves you can find in the natural environment. What are some of the feature that can be identified? Use the **leaf worksheet** to create a tree-scape. Enlarged leaf shapes can also be used for writing poems, stories etc.
2. Do some **leaf rubbings** using leaves you can find in the playground (strong leaves, green enough so they won't crumble, with well-defined veins are the best). Hold a blank piece of paper firmly over the leaf so it won't move, then holding a crayon horizontally over the paper, rub over the leaf gently so its pattern appears on the paper.
3. **Create linocut style illustrations** in class: using a block of plasticine with a flattened surface, carve out a design (e.g. of a leaf), perhaps using a stick or handle of a spoon, and then cool in fridge to harden. Dip carved side into paint then use to stamp multiple prints on a sheet of paper. The class could also do a combined coordinated series of designs to make one artwork.

Human Society and Its Environment

One Tree explores the ideas of environment, change and family; how they are all interconnected and how they all rely on each other.

Questions

1. What does the boy/grandfather have to do to help the plants grow?
2. Have you ever moved to a new place / school like grandfather did? How did you feel about the experience?
3. How is the natural environment important in this story? How is it important to you? And to the community?
4. How is the family important in the story?
5. How do the boy and the grandfather interact? How does it change throughout the story? Why?
6. How do your students interact with their grandparents? What sorts of activities do grandparents of today get involved in?
7. Why are gardens important in the urban areas, especial high-density living environments?

Activities

1. Construct a timeline of the events involved in growing the seedling that the boy discovers.
2. Provide each child with a seed / bulb and plant these using recycled plastic pots (with drain holes) or from divided milk containers. Students can



- create a diary of the changes in the seedlings/ bulbs, and if time permits the life cycle.
- 3. Create a class garden of potted plants, or a terrarium, or plant an outdoor garden.
- 4. Using the web, have students find pictures of balconies / apartments that have gardens. Why have architects included gardens in their designs? Students could draw their own building designs.
- 4. Find pictures of your city / town / village. Create a timeline of the changes. Describe how it has changed over time? Interview people who have lived there to find out how it has changed.
- 5. Children can interview their parents about how their childhood places have changed. Have the changes have made it better or worse?
- 6. Children discuss an older person and why they are important to them.

READING ONE TREE

Page 4-5

- Why do you think grandfather says 'Better than an emperor's palace.' Which of the buildings is grandfather's house? Why do you think so?
- Who might the ten people be who live in the house? Are there clues in the illustrations? How do you think they all fit into the house?
- What do you think is grandfather's job?

Page 6-7

- What conversation might grandfather have had with his plants?
- Where do you think grandfather is walking to?
- How does grandfather carry the crops? What does this tell you about grandfather, about where he lives, and about where and when this part of the book would be set?
- Create a word cline for *palace*.
- Text Connections: (text to self; text to text; text to word)

When do you share stories? (t-s)
 What stories do you tell? (t-s)
 The grandfather reminds me of the book ... (t-t)
 Birds singing in the trees reminds me of ... (t-t)
 How do other cultures share stories? (t-w)

Page 8-9

- Where is grandfather's house?
- What is happening in the village?

- What can you say about the clothes and the hats? What are some of the things that can be seen in the village.
- Why would grandfather 'proudly announce where he lives.' What would you proudly announce?

Page 10-11

- Discuss your dinner time. How is it the same / different to that of grandfather and the family?
- Why would grandfather stare at the faded picture of his mountain? What would he be thinking?
- Why does he not tell stories any more?
- Why might the air be hard to breathe?

Page 12-13

- Explore the differences between the city and village markets. How are they different to our markets, including our farmer's markets?
- Is the boy happy or sad that the buildings all look the same? How do you think the grandfather feels?
- What people visit the city market?
- How does the illustrator show the busy atmosphere of the city market?
- Investigate the various ways of saying 'hurry up' in Chinese dialects and also in the languages of class members' families.

Page 14-15

- Why do you think that the only coloured images in this illustration are the boy and the plant? What does that tell you? Why would the illustrator have used this technique?
- Discuss and research what a plant needs to grow. How does this plant grow through the crack in the pavement?
- Have you ever seen plants growing in pavement cracks or on the side of the roads? What did you do? Why does the boy pull the plant from the ground?

Page 16-17

- Discuss the language of grandfather's spoken words.
- Why does the boy talk to the plant?
- Why do you think grandfather does not encourage the boy?
- Discuss grandfather's mountain painting and its importance.



Page 18-19

- Why does grandfather talk to the plant? What might he say?
- Describe grandfather from the pictures.
- What is the significance of the vignette (small illustration below the text)?
- Why does grandfather buy a new pot and soil?

Page 20-21

- Why are grandfather's teeth yellow?
- Why is grandfather smiling?
- Examine the background colours of the buildings and trees. What do you notice when these are compared to the previous background pages?
- How would the balcony be covered in trees? What does that tell you about grandfather, and about the boy?
- How many plants do you think would 'cover the balcony'?

Page 22-23

- Why would the birds be in the trees?
- What season do you think this is?
- What do you notice about the colours that the illustrator is using?
- Grandfather and the boy can't stop talking at dinner. What would they be talking about? Role play their dinner conversation.
- Describe the balcony.
- Create a word cline for *preen*.

Page 24-25

- How does the boy describe the buildings? What does this mean.
- Describe the market square.
- Identify the apartment where the boy lives. What technique has the illustrator used to show this?
- Do you live in a place like this? How is it the same / different? List the similarities and differences between your place and this apartment.
- Why do you think there is only one balcony covered in trees?
- What do you notice about grandfather and the boy?

Page 26-27

- Grandfather tells the story of the little tree to Mrs Choy. Construct a timeline and then role play the telling of the story.

- The people still rush by. Why are people rushing?
- Predict what the three people are looking at? How does the illustrator show this?

Page 28-29

- Why would Mrs Choy want a tree?
- Describe the other apartment in the illustration.
- Where would Mrs Choy obtain her tree?
- Predict what will happen to Mrs Choy's balcony.

Page 30-31

- Discuss the balconies. What can you tell about the apartments and the people who live there.
- Identify the apartment where the boy and grandfather live.
- Predict what could happen next in the story.

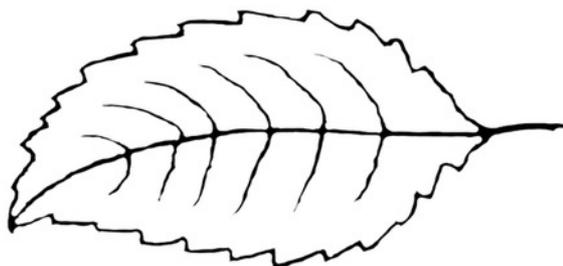
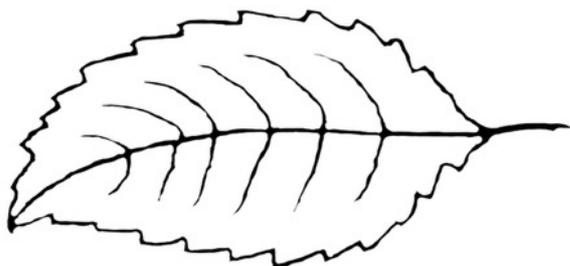
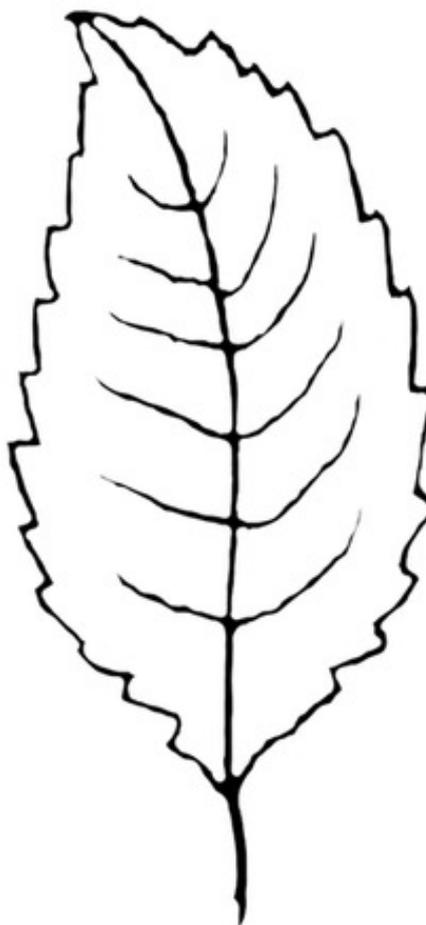
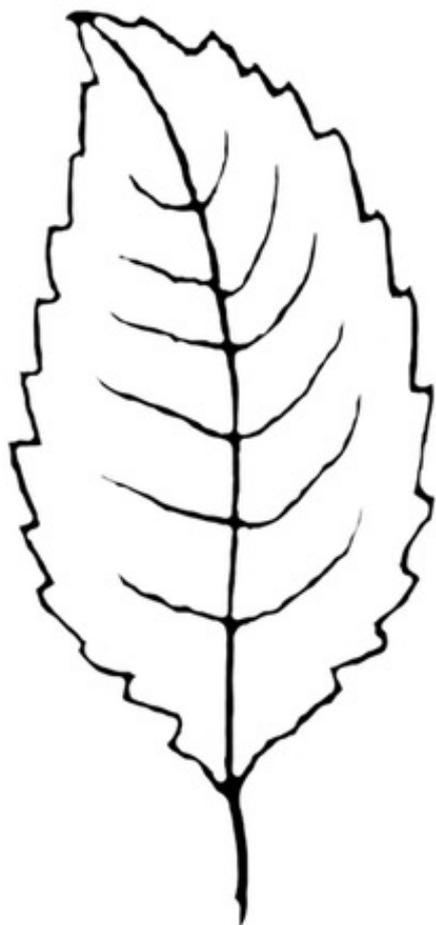
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- What has happened to apartments in the nearby buildings?
- How has the city changed?
- How do you think the people feel?
- Discuss sustainability and how it is shown in this illustration.

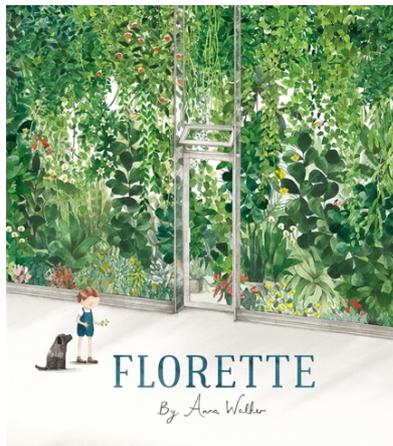


WORKSHEET

The following leaf shapes were created by the illustrator based on the leaves adorning the balconies in this book. Photocopy or trace the outline, then cut out the leaves, colour them in and use them to create your own tree in the classroom, or as writing templates for descriptive words or poems.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Florette
by Anna Walker

From this award-winning picture book creator comes a delicate, exquisite story about the magic of the natural world, resilience in the face of change, and the power of one child's imagination.

When Mae's family moves to a new home, Mae wishes she could bring the garden with her.

She'll miss the apple trees, the daffodils and the butterflies in the long, wavy grass.

But there's no room for a garden in her new home...

Or is there?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



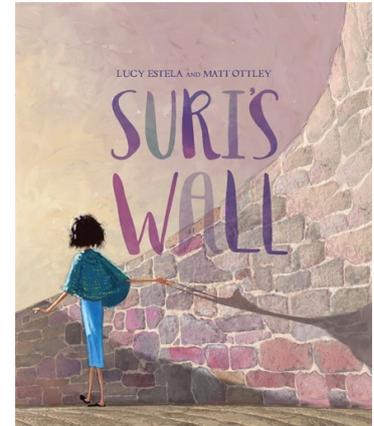
A Patch From Scratch
by Megan Forward

'An engaging book, with beautiful illustrations, that helps show children the joys of growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing fresh, seasonal, delicious food in their own backyard.'

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation

Jesse and Lewis want to grow their own fruit and vegies, just like people do on a farm. They're going to dig and build, plant and grow, and when they're finished they're going to have a feast!

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



Suri's Wall
by Lucy Estela &
Matt Ottley

A moving tale of the power of the human spirit and the influence of the environment around us – real or imagined.

Eva squeezed Suri's hand. 'What's there? What can you see?'

'What can I see?' Suri looked out over the wall. 'Oh, it's beautiful, let me tell you all about it.'

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>One Tree</i>	Christopher Cheng & Bruce Whatley	9780143786733	K-2	\$24.99		
<i>Florette</i>	Anna Walker	9780670079414	K-2	\$24.99		
<i>A Patch From Scratch</i>	Megan Forward	9780143794608	K-2	\$14.99		
<i>Suri's Wall</i>	Lucy Estela & Elise Hurst	9780143505969	K-3	\$14.99		
<i>Oma's Buttons</i>	Tania Ingram & Jennifer Harrison	9780143786573	K-2	\$24.99		
TOTAL						

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