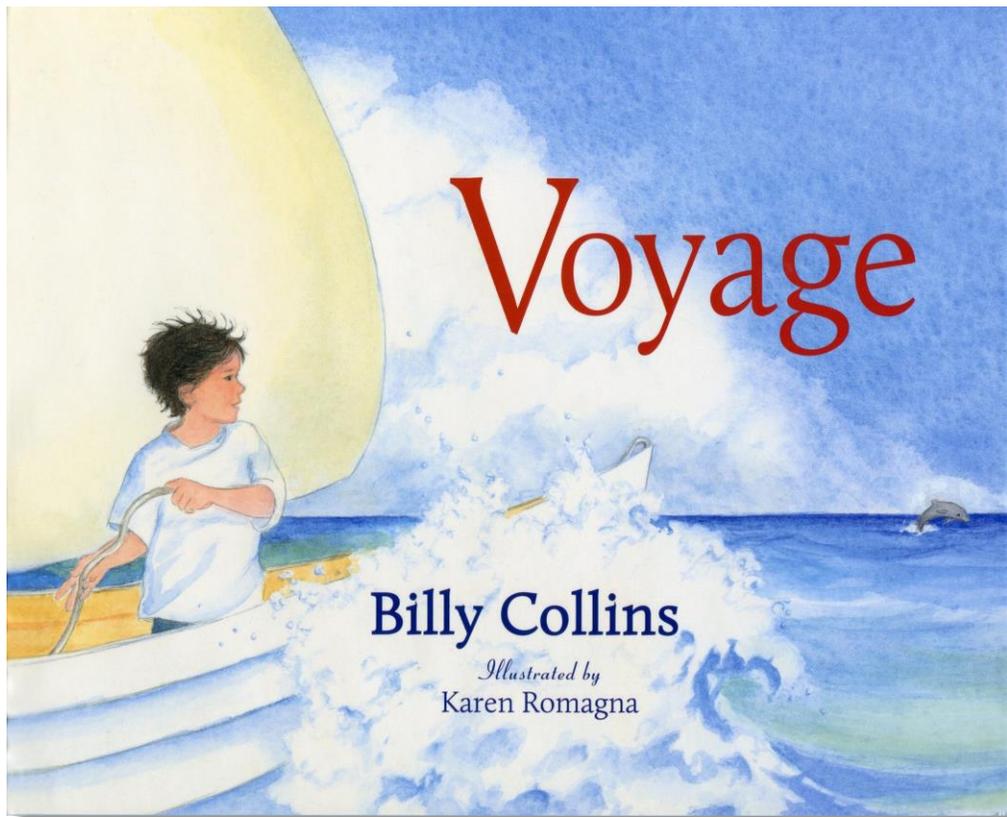


Voyage

A teacher's guide created by Marcie Colleen
based upon the picture book
written by Billy Collins and illustrated by Karen Romagna



Published by
Bunker Hill Publishing

Billy Collins
Author, *Voyage*

Billy Collins has been called “America’s most popular poet” by the *New York Times*, and the New York Public Library named him a Literary Lion. The author of a dozen books of poetry, he served as US poet laureate 2001-03. His work is featured in magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *The Atlantic*, and he sells out reading venues all across the country. Appearing regularly in *The Best American Poetry* series, his poems appeal to readers and live audiences far and wide and have been translated into more than a dozen languages. He received the 2005 Mark Twain Award for Humor in Poetry. This is his first illustrated children’s book.

Karen Romagna
Illustrator, *Voyage*

Karen Romagna loves the ocean so much that as a little girl she decided she would be a mermaid. That didn’t work out. Instead she has followed her other love, art. Mainly as a self-taught artist, Karen lives and paints in historic Clinton, New Jersey, with her family. They vacation every year at the Jersey Shore, where Karen spends most days on the beach painting . . . hoping to one day at least see a mermaid! *Voyage* is Karen’s debut as a picture book illustrator.

Marcie Colleen
Curriculum Writer

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU. In addition to creating curriculum guides for children’s books, Marcie can often be found writing picture books of her own at home in Brooklyn, NYC. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Voyage* is designed for students in kindergarten through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *Voyage* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies curricula. Art and drama are used as a teaching tool throughout the guide.

All activities were created in conjunction with relevant content standards in ELA, math, science, social studies, art, and drama.

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English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Before reading *Voyage*,

Help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

The Front Cover ~

- Describe what you see.
- Stand up and pretend to be in the illustration. How does the illustration make you feel?
- Using your five senses, describe what it is like being in the illustration.
 - What do you see?
 - What do you hear?
 - What do you smell?
 - What do you feel on your skin?
 - What do you taste?
- What does the word "voyage" mean?
- Can you guess what the story might be about? What are some clues you can find in the cover illustration?

The Endpapers and Title Page~

- *Voyage's* story starts on the endpapers and title page. Describe what you see in the illustrations.
- What are some details in these illustrations that lead you to guess what the little boy is doing on the beach?
- Read the note from John Y. Cole aloud (more than once, if necessary).
- According to John Y. Cole, why was *Voyage* written? Use textual quotes if you can.
- Can you now guess what the story might be about?

Explain that *Voyage* is a poem.

- What is a poem?
- Share with the class what you already know about poems.

Now read the text only of the book aloud to the class while the students close their eyes.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about.

- In your own words, describe what *Voyage* is about.
- Focus on the second stanza. Does the boat really become a book? Why or why not?
- Have you ever gone on an adventure while reading a story? Describe that experience.
- When the boy finishes reading the book, he becomes the book. Does he really become the book? What do you think the poet meant when he wrote that the boy became the book?
- Have you ever read a book that became a part of you? How?
- In the second half of *Voyage* the world of the book and the real world become the same. How so?

Read the text of *Voyage* aloud again, but this time share the illustrations, as well.

Let's talk about the people who made *Voyage*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Take a close look at the illustrations throughout the book.

- Can you guess what Karen Romagna used to make the illustrations?
- Often in picture books the illustrations tell their own story. Create your own text for *Voyage* based on what you see in the illustrations.

OR

- Using the text for *Voyage* as inspiration create your own illustrations.

Create a Library of Poems

Gather poetry books from the library or ask students to bring some in from home.

- Encourage students to explore the poems on their own or as a class.
- Illustrate some of their favorites from the collection and hang them around the classroom.

Writing Activities

“The Boy Becomes the Book” ~ Writing a Book Report

Voyage encourages us all to lose ourselves in the world of the printed word. In this way, books can take us on an adventure.

Have you ever read a book that you wished you could be a part of? Did you ever want to jump inside a book’s pages? If so, what book and why?

Write a book report about a book that you love, using the prompts below.

Be sure to write in paragraph form.

Use complete sentences, correct spelling, correct punctuation, and correct capitalization.

1. Begin with an introduction. State the title of the book and the author's name. Next, write a one-sentence summary of what the book is about. Last, explain why you chose this book.

For example, “A book I love is *Voyage* by Billy Collins, illustrated by Karen Romagna. This book is a poem about how books can take us on adventures. I like this book because I love exploring new and exciting places while reading a book.”

2. Describe the setting. This is where and when the story takes place. It might be in a building or outside, or in an imaginary place. The time might be now or a long time ago. Describe where and when the story takes place.
3. Describe the main character(s). Most stories have a main character and one or two others who are important. Choose 1 or 2 important characters from this book and describe them. Write about what they look like, what they like to do, and how they act – silly, honest, smart? Describe some things that make the character(s) special.
4. Write a summary (the important ideas) of the plot. Explain what happens in the beginning, the middle, and the end. Explain the main problem or conflict the characters have to solve and how they do it.

5. End with a conclusion. This is where you give your opinion of the story. Write a paragraph explaining why you love going on an adventure with this book. Be specific.

For some extra fun, students can share their favorite book and book report with the class. Place all of the books in an "Our Book Voyages" classroom library, along with a bookmark containing the key information in the book reports. Students can then borrow a book from the classroom library, read it, and write reports about their own experiences while reading it.

A Poem is a Gift

Billy Collins wrote *Voyage* as a gift to John Y. Cole for all he did in regards to books, reading, and literacy. What a very special gift.

Did you ever notice that many greeting cards contain poems? Why do you think a poem is a special greeting for someone?

- Ask students to bring in greeting cards that contain poems. Gather an assortment of different occasions. Make sure cards are appropriate in terms of content and reading level. Read and discuss the cards, separating them into categories such as humorous, birthday, anniversary, get-well, etc.
- Have students create a greeting card for someone special and write their own short poem inside. It's easiest to start with a "Happy ____ to you" greeting using the Happy Birthday song as a template. For example:

Happy Independence Day to you,

With the red, white, blue.

Let's go have a picnic

And fireworks too!

- Provide various art supplies (construction paper, rubber stamps, markers, glue, glitter, etc.) to decorate the cards. Many online and print resources provide templates and ideas for patterns.
- For an additional activity, have students visit the Postcard and Greeting Card Museum online at <http://www.emotionscards.com/museum/history.html> to learn more about the history of the greeting card.

Speaking and Listening Activities

Picture books are written to be read aloud. Here are some other ways to bring *Voyage* to life in your classroom and also have fun with speaking and listening skills!

Mime

While the teacher reads the book aloud, the students can act out the events in the book. Emphasize body motion and facial expressions, as well as listening skills.

Metaphor Charades

Just as “the boy becomes the book” in *Voyage*, students can play Metaphor Charades. Have the students become an object or an animal in front of the class—without speaking. The class will then have to guess what they have become. When someone thinks they, know they should raise their hand and state their answer as “the boy/girl becomes a _____.”

Or

Create a TV commercial to encourage people to read and explore books.

Vocal Style

Poems are filled with emotion. In small groups, recite *Voyage* with a specific emotion (sadness, joy, frustration, etc.) The rest of the class should guess what “style” is being presented.

Language Activities

Poetry is Playing with Language

The Poetry Box

Decorate an empty shoe box and cut a hole in one of the ends.

You can attach a sock (with the toes cut off) to the hole on the end to make it easy to guide little hands in and out of the box. Attach one end of the sock around the hole and the rest of the sock serves as a tube into the box.

Place various items in the box (i.e. A Lego, pinecone, play-doh, feather, etc.) These should be very tactile items. The kids will not be able to see inside the box, but only feel around.

Although they might be able to identify the object, the game is to DESCRIBE the item using adjectives. (i.e. Hard, soft, squishy, bumpy, etc.)

Each child should have a chance to reach inside the box. See how many adjectives the class can come up with and create a list.

Once the descriptive lists are created, students can turn their lists into a poem. For example:

Play-doh

Squishy.

Takes the shape I make it.

Smooth. Rollable.

Soft between my fingers.

Painting Pictures with Words

Poems paint pictures in our minds with words.

- Have the students close their eyes while listening to a poem that uses imagery (*Fog*, by Carl Sandburg, for example).
- Read the poem two or three times slowly.
- Remind the students to keep their eyes closed and imagine the pictures the words paint as they listen.
- Then have the students draw a picture of what they "saw" as they listened.

Now, look closely at one of the illustrations in *Voyage*.

- Using words which describe the five senses, use words to re-paint the illustration and create a poem.

Simple Acrostic and Lantern Poems

Acrostics and lantern poems help students use their vocabulary and develop their language skills.

An acrostic can be assigned for subject matter. An easy way to start is to have students make acrostics of their own names. Each letter of their name is a new word or phrase.

Red hair

Only child

Great smile

Eyes of blue

Really nice

Lantern poems are shaped like Chinese lanterns as each line is centered. The following format is modified from the typical form to help students practice their vocabulary.

Line 1: a noun

Line 2: 2 -ly words describing line 1

Line 3: 3 adjectives describing line 1

Line 4: 4 -ing words describing line 1

Line 5: a synonym for, or renaming of noun in line 1

Metaphors

The metaphor is a literary comparison that compares two objects, but does not use like or as or than. A simile is a literary comparison that compares two objects, but uses like or as or than.

Metaphor: The boat becomes a book.

Simile: The boat is like a book.

Guide students through writing metaphors or similes about themselves.

1. How do you feel?

Example: I feel as lazy as a polar bear on a hot summer's day.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. How do you look?

Example: My hair is a porcupine's quills.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. How do you act?

Example: I am a rabbit, hopping quickly from here to there.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Pick one of your metaphors or similes and explain its meaning. What are you comparing yourself to? Why did you choose to compare yourself to this particular thing?

Think about *Voyage*. Billy Collins creates a metaphor that compares an adventure at sea to an adventure into a book.

- A boat is a vehicle that takes a passenger on an adventure to the open sea where anything is possible. Why do you think a boat and a book are compared in *Voyage*?
- Read through *Voyage*. How many metaphors can you find?
- Explain in your own words why Collins may have used each metaphor.

Math

Under Where? Spatial Sense

Look at the “*which looks down with such amusement*” spread in *Voyage*.

Describe where the moon is.

[examples: in the sky, next to the stars, above the sea]

Describe where the boat is.

[examples: underneath the boy, on the water, below the sky, next to the dolphin.]

Describe where the dolphin is.

[examples: next to/beside the boat, in between the moon and the boat water, in the water, below the boy

Have students choose another spread in *Voyage* and discuss where things are spatially within that illustration.

Now look around your classroom.

- Describe where your desk sits.
- Describe where your teacher is sitting or standing.
- Describe where the chalkboard/whiteboard is.
- Describe where the clock is.
- Describe where the door is.
- Can you describe where anything else is?

Voyage More Often: tracking your activities

Kids spend their afternoon and evenings in many different ways.

Have students create a Free Time Journal as a way of recording and tracking their activities. For the next three days, record the length of each activity from the time that school lets out until bedtime. A stopwatch or clock is necessary for this activity.

Some common activities include:

- Watching television
- Playing on the computer
- Reading books for pleasure
- Eating (snack/dinner/etc.)
- Taking a bath
- Washing dishes
- Talking on the phone
- Hanging out with a friend
- Homework

Once students have recorded their activity in their Free Time Journal for three days, have students create a pie chart of their activity.

- What did they do the most?
- What did they do the least?
- How much time did they spend on reading books?

Now that students have a base line, the goal is to increase their reading time by 5 minutes each day for a week. Therefore, students must figure out where to decrease their activity in order to increase the reading time. Students have to learn to budget time!

Therefore, by the end of the week they should increase their reading time by 35 minutes.

Discuss as a class the benefits of spending more time reading books.

A *Voyage* Board Game

Math will never be boring when students use their creativity to transform their favorite board game into a *Voyage* math experience!

How?

- Choose a board game that includes a journey to a destination. Candy Land, Life and Sorry make excellent math games.

- Review the rules of the game.
- Write the new “math” instructions that will help players with their adding, subtracting or multiplication skills. Make sure they are simple and easy to understand, but also clear.
- Create your own version in which “the boy in the boat” must solve math problems on his voyage. Be sure to include obstacles and traps. (ie. fashion the board, playing pieces and cards out of paper/cardboard/etc.
- Label all game pieces or add things to make them look pretty. People don't want to play games that are just plain pieces of paper.
- Place the game in a box or large envelope. If you have small pieces, place them in a bag. Label your box with the name of the game, who made the game, and a picture in the background to decorate.
- Present the game to the class, along with the playing instructions, and enjoy!

Science

Take a Voyage with Nature

Create a Nature Journal:

- Gather together 6-8 pieces of paper (some can be lined for writing, others blank for drawing).
- Add on top a piece of blank paper for the cover.
- Punch three holes through the pieces of paper and the cover sheet.
- Cut a piece of cardboard just a bit larger than your paper.
- Punch three corresponding holes in the cardboard.
- Place the papers on top of the cardboard and top everything with the cover sheet.
- Line up the paper and cardboard holes. Then tie together with yarn or string.
- Copy Billy Collins’ poem (the text from Voyage) onto the cover sheet and decorate.
- You are now ready to head outside and observe nature.

Observing nature.

- Find a spot to sit outside where you can be quiet and observe. Be sure to have your Nature Journal and something to write with. You may use colored pencils, crayons or markers if you prefer.
- Sit for at least thirty minutes. You may set an alarm.
- Look all around you. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel?”
- Find something you want to write about or draw and record it in your Nature Observation notebook.

- Continue to observe nature in the same spot, thirty minutes at a time, for a whole week. Every day, take care to notice something different to write about or draw.
- Write your own poem to express your experiences observing nature.

Share your notebook with the class.

- What did you find when you paid attention?
- What did you feel? What did you smell? What did you hear? What did you see?
- Did the weather ever change? How was it different? How did the weather (wind, rain, snow, etc.) affect nature?
- What astonished you?
- If you were to continue observing nature, what spot would you choose? Why?

The Book Becomes a Boat

Using old books and items found in their recycling bins, challenge students to create a boat.

Together as a class or individually collect materials, design, and build the boats.

Many of the students will have fun adding various details. A quick internet search can provide information about the parts of a sail boat.

After assembling their ships and decorating them, students can test their “floatability”. A kiddie pool makes an excellent sea for a host of book boats.

Did their boat sink or float? What could they do to improve the boat? Allow time for reflection and more experimenting.

Create awards to increase the competition.

- Most “Like a Book” Boat
- Most Attractive Boat
- Most Materials Boat
- Least Materials Boat

The Science of Making a Book

Invite a professional from the publishing industry to your class or ask them to visit via Skype. The focus of the visit should be “how a book gets made: from the author’s imagination to the finished book”.

During the visit, students should practice taking notes and creating follow up questions.

After the visit, students should present what they learned, in the form of a flowchart to illustrate the many steps of creating a book from first idea to finished product on the bookstore shelves

Social Studies

The US Poet Laureates

The Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress—commonly referred to as the United States Poet Laureate—serves as the nation's official poet. During his or her term, the Poet Laureate seeks to raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry. The position was established in 1937.

Billy Collins, author of *Voyage*, served as US Poet Laureate from 2001 to 2003.

- As a class, warm up your library and computer research skills to explore the history, qualifications and responsibilities of the US Poet Laureate position. Use this time to model good research techniques for the library and the Internet.
- Create a master chart to record all of the information gathered about the US Poet Laureate.

Then, assign a US Poet Laureate for students (either individually or in groups of two or three) to research in the library and on the Internet. A list of 10 are below, but do not feel limited to those on the list.

- Billy Collins
- Joseph Auslander
- William Carlos Williams
- Robert Frost
- Gwendolyn Brooks
- Joseph Brodsky
- Maxine Kumin
- Rita Dove
- Robert Hass
- Robert Pinsky

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Encyclopedias
- The Internet

Take notes and gather as much information as possible on the following 5 topics:

- Early Life/Childhood/Family
- Life as a poet
- Famous work
- US Poet Laureate work and project
- Other fun facts

Once the information is gathered, work to create either an illustrated poster or booklet of the findings.

The Right to Read ~ literacy advocacy

As stated in the inside cover of *Voyage*, Billy Collins wrote the poem for John Y. Cole who is an advocate for books, reading and literacy.

What is literacy?

Quite simply, literacy is the ability to read and write. And literacy advocacy strives to ensure that all people have the right to learn to read and write.

Even kids can have a voice in literacy advocacy. No one is too young to get involved.

As a class, brainstorm all of the reasons why learning to read and write is so important.

Then, brainstorm how you can help.

- Write letters or send an e-mail to your school or local paper. Tell them about literacy, why you think it is important, and how people in your school or community can help.
- Work with private organizations, including Reading is Fundamental or the National Center for Family Literacy. Visit their websites or invite a representative to speak to the class to learn how to get involved.
 - <http://www.rif.org/> (Reading is Fundamental)
 - <http://www.familieslearning.org/> (National Center for Family Literacy)
 - <http://www.everybodywins.org/>
 - <http://www.firstbook.org/>
 - <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>
 - <http://readwriteact.org/> (Student Coalition for Action in Literacy Education)
- Organize a bake sale or craft sale or other fundraiser for literacy.

- Organize a book drive and give the books to needy communities.
- Volunteer to read to children or adults in the hospital, nursing home, or community centers.
- Design posters to hang within the school, raising awareness about literacy.
- Create a short documentary about literacy which addresses the importance of reading and writing and encourages other kids to get involved.

“The Boy Becomes the Book” Mural

Throughout history, art has been used to transform public spaces into places of beauty and reflection. Most importantly, these pieces of public art are used to bring about tighter community.

Look up examples of public art on the Internet: examples in subways, under bridges and in parks. Be sure to find examples of traditional murals painted on walls, but also sculptures and knit-bombing.

How can art be used to foster community?

- Bring people together to create it
- Reflect all people in the community in the artwork
- Create a space that people will want to visit and hang out in

Make your own piece of public art for your school community!

1. Choose a space within the school that could use some brightening or some inspiration.
2. Brainstorm a mural or other piece of temporary art called “The Boy Becomes the Book” that can be created in this space.
3. Brainstorm how this mural can build community and promote the power of literacy.
4. Involve as many people as possible in the creation.