

cybèle young

TEACHER'S GUIDE



TUNDRA BOOKS

DEAR EDUCATOR

Nancy Knows is the charming story of an elephant who remembers lots of things, except the very thing she is trying to remember. Each spread of this whimsical, arresting picture book features fantastic miniature paper sculptures within expressive outlines of a puzzled pachyderm. It's a book not to be forgotten. Where applicable, discussion prompts and activities have been linked to Common Core State Standards.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Nancy knows she's forgotten something. Something important. When she tries to remember, she thinks of all kinds of other things instead. She remembers things she knows and things she doesn't quite know. She remembers things one way, then another. Sometimes she remembers with her ears or her stomach or even her heart. But Nancy knows she's still forgetting something. It's only when Nancy stops thinking altogether that she finally remembers the very important thing she's forgotten.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CYBÈLE YOUNG is one of Canada's most accomplished author-illustrators. She is a fine artist who exhibits internationally and is renowned for her stunning paper sculptures. *Ten Birds*, the first picture book she both wrote and illustrated, earned her the 2011 Governor General's Award for Illustration, Canada's most prestigious literary prize. It was also a *Kirkus* Best Children's Book of 2011, along with her subsequent book, *A Few Blocks*. Her other critically acclaimed works include *A Few Bites* and *Ten Birds Meet a Monster*. Cybèle lives in Toronto, Ontario, with her family.



© Photo by Virginia Macdonald

BEFORE READING

Before reading the book aloud, look at the cover as a class. Consider using the following questions to guide the introduction of the book.

- *Nancy Knows* is a story about an elephant who has forgotten something. Why do you think the author chose to write the story about an elephant? What do you think she forgot?
- Look carefully at the lettering—what medium was used to make the lettering?
- “Nancy” and “know” start with the same sound but different letters. Make a list of words that begin with the same sound and divide them into two groups: those that begin with “n” and those that begin with “kn.” Some common “kn” words include knew, knock, knit, knee, knot, known, knife, kneel, knight and knapsack.

THE SENSES

- What are the five senses?
- What senses does Nancy use to help her remember?
- Describe in pictures and/or words a special memory. Use two of your senses in your description.
- Choose a person, place or thing that is important to you. How would you remember this person, place or thing based on the use of your five senses?

(W.1.2)



NANCY REMEMBERS!

- What does Nancy do to help herself finally remember what she has forgotten? Why doesn't the author include any images inside of Nancy at this point?
- What clues does the author give about what she has forgotten when she wakes up? How does each of the paper sculptures connect to what she has forgotten?

(RL.K.1, RL.K.7, RL.1.7)

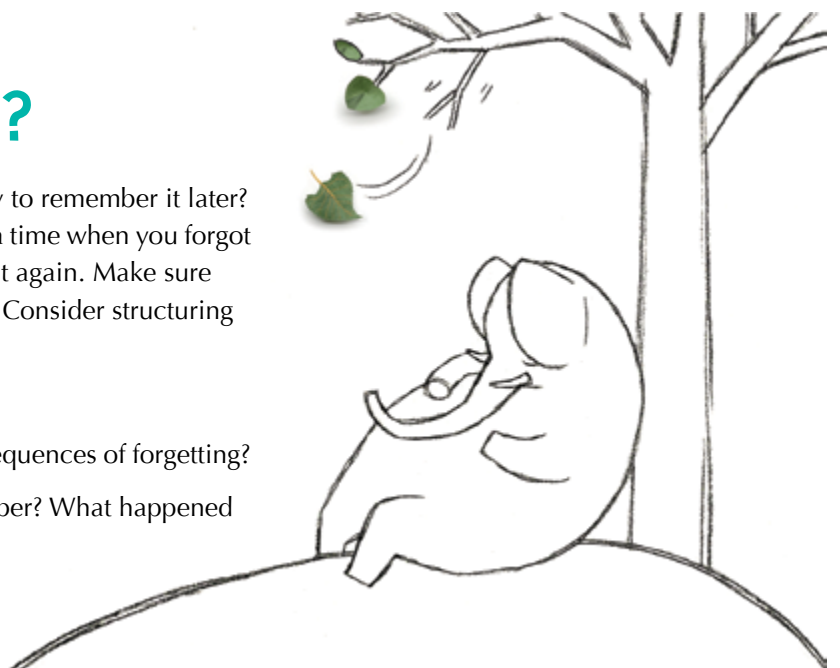
NANCY

- How does the position of Nancy herself (not the images inside) in each of the pictures connect to what she is remembering?
- Re-read the story to the class, but do not show the pictures. Ask students to use movement and facial expression to show the kinds of things Nancy is remembering.

WHAT DID YOU FORGET?

- Have you ever forgotten something important only to remember it later? Write a short story in words and/or pictures about a time when you forgot something important but eventually remembered it again. Make sure your story has a clear beginning, middle and end. Consider structuring your story as follows:
 - Beginning: Introduce what you forgot
 - Middle: How did you feel? What were the consequences of forgetting?
 - End: Did you use any strategies to try to remember? What happened when you finally remembered?

(W.1.3, W.1.8)



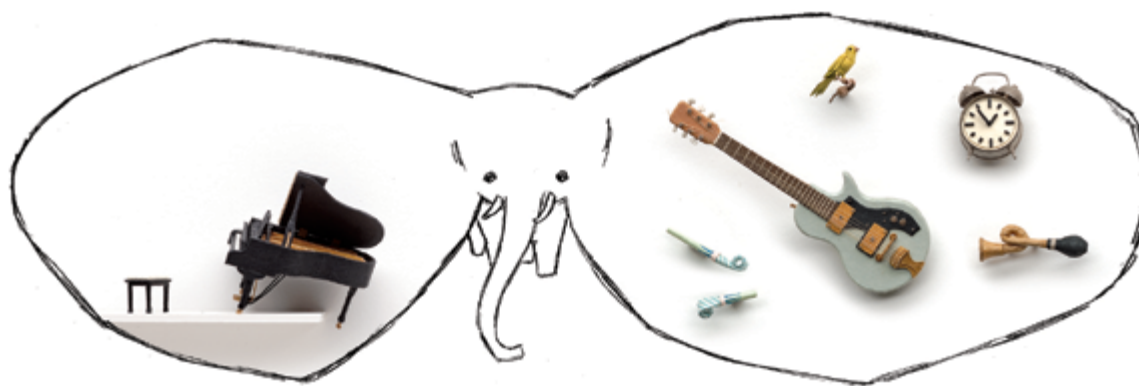
WHAT COMES NEXT?

- Display one of the pages from the book where Nancy is full of objects. With students sitting in a circle, the first student names one of the objects inside Nancy. The next student repeats what the first student said and names another object. See how far around the circle you can go, naming the objects in sequence. After a few rounds, discuss what strategies can be used to help students remember. For example, cross out each object after it has been said, write down the first letter of the object, etc.

(*RL.K.1, RL.K.7, RL.1.7*)

PAPER SCULPTURE

- Visit the author's website, www.cybeleyoung.ca/sculpture.html, to learn more about her paper sculptures.
- If available, use Japanese papers to create your own paper sculptures. Otherwise, use scrap paper or whatever paper can be found to create your own sculptures. They can be abstract or based on a particular person, place or thing.



PRAISE FOR *NANCY KNOWS*

“... the vehicle for a truly beautiful and unique visual tour de force. Young creates delicately worked, detailed illustrations of the things Nancy does remember ... Each item is a tiny, intricate sculpture made with Japanese papers. Colorful shapes in abstract design and amazingly detailed, seemingly three-dimensional objects demand intense, close examinations, and fingers will tingle with the wish to lift them off the page. It's a work to be shared in wonderment and delight. Pure fascination.”

– **Starred Review, *Kirkus Reviews***

“*Nancy Knows* is a great example of the power and charm of simple storytelling. Young's prose is clear; each brief sentence is composed of carefully chosen words that inspire readers to take their time and savor the story (a fitting approach for a book about memory). But it is Young's artwork that elevates the narrative to extraordinary heights. In *Nancy Knows*, Young once again works her magic, combining intricately detailed miniature paper sculptures (which represent memories) with soft, pencil-sketched outlines of Nancy and her surroundings. The effect is utterly mesmerizing ... Young's interweaving of story and character with her art provides a much richer reading experience. This is the sort of picture book that has the power to create happy memories for its readers.”

– **Starred Review, *Quill & Quire***

“... truly exceptional paper sculptures from Young ... it's the how-did-she-do-that nature of Young's paper constructions that will have readers returning to these pages again and again.”

– **Starred Review, *Publishers Weekly***

