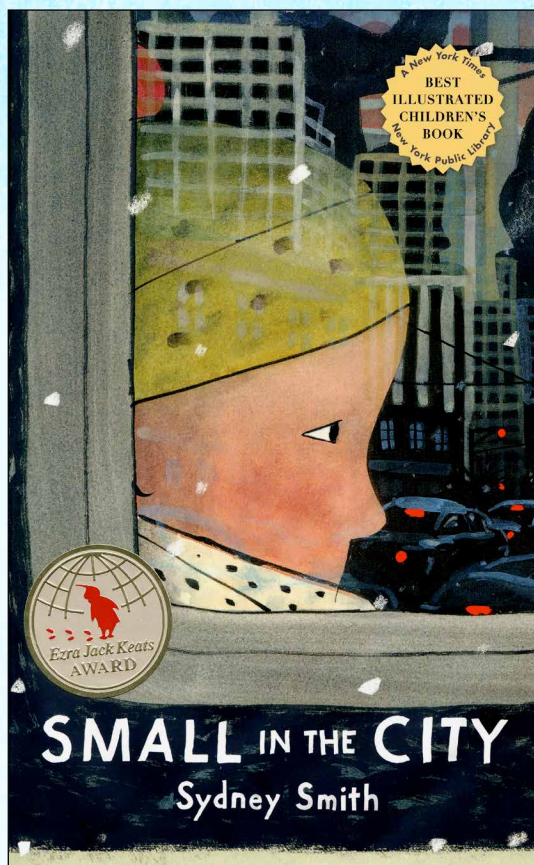


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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Neal Porter Books

Small in the City by Sydney Smith

Ezra Jack Keats Award for Writing

ALA Notable Children's Book

New York Times Best
Illustrated Children's Book

ABOUT THE BOOK

It can be a little scary to be small in a big city, but this child has some good advice for a very special friend in need.

In the first book that he has both written and illustrated, award-winning artist Sydney Smith spins a quiet, contemplative tale about seeing a big world through little eyes.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- Describe things you see in a city. Then study the cover illustration. Point out the main character. In what type of vehicle is the character riding? How many different buildings do you see? In what season is the book set?
- The first two double-page spreads have no words. Explain what is happening in each illustration. In which illustration does the main character seem especially small? Explain how these spreads prepare the reader for the first page of text: "I know what it's like to be small in the city."
- *Point of view* refers to who's telling the story. Who is telling *Small in the City*? Who is the character talking to? The age of the main character isn't given. Take clues from the illustrations and assign an age to the character. Share how you reached your conclusion.
- Study the eyes of the main character. What is he thinking? The character says, "People don't see you and loud sounds can scare you." Which illustrations support the thought that "people don't see you"? Point



out the illustrations that represent “loud sounds.” The character says that it’s difficult to know what to do. What decisions must the main character make to keep safe?

- Look at the full-page illustration on the eleventh page. What is the purpose of the grid, or square boxes, that the illustrator uses? How does this support the idea that a lot is happening on the city street?
- Think about the advice that the character gives about navigating the city. Discuss the warnings about specific places to avoid. Why is a dark alley not safe? What are the nice parts about the city?
- Note the direction in which the character is walking. How does this invite the reader to turn the page and find out what happens next? How does the illustrator demonstrate that the snowfall is becoming heavier as the character gets closer to home? Which illustration suggests that the character is almost home?
- Remind readers that a simile compares two unlike things using the words *like* or *as*. *Personification* is a literary device that gives human-like qualities to an object. Explain the following simile: “There is a dryer vent that breathes out hot steam that smells like summer.” Point out the personification in the quote. How does this use of figurative language work with the illustration on the opposite page to provide a vivid image of the scene?



Photo Credit: Steve Farmer

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Sydney Smith is both the author and illustrator of the award-winning *Small in the City*, which received the Ezra Jack Keats Award for Writing, is a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children’s Book, and received eight starred reviews. His work also includes *The White Cat and the Monk* by Jo Ellen Bogart; *Smoot: A Rebellious Shadow* by Michelle Cuevas; *Sidewalk Flowers* by JonArno Lawson; and *Town Is by the Sea* by Joanne Schwartz, which was awarded the Kate Greenaway Medal. His accolades include a Governor General’s Award for Illustrated Children’s Books and four *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children’s Book of the Year citations. Sydney lives in Halifax, Canada.

