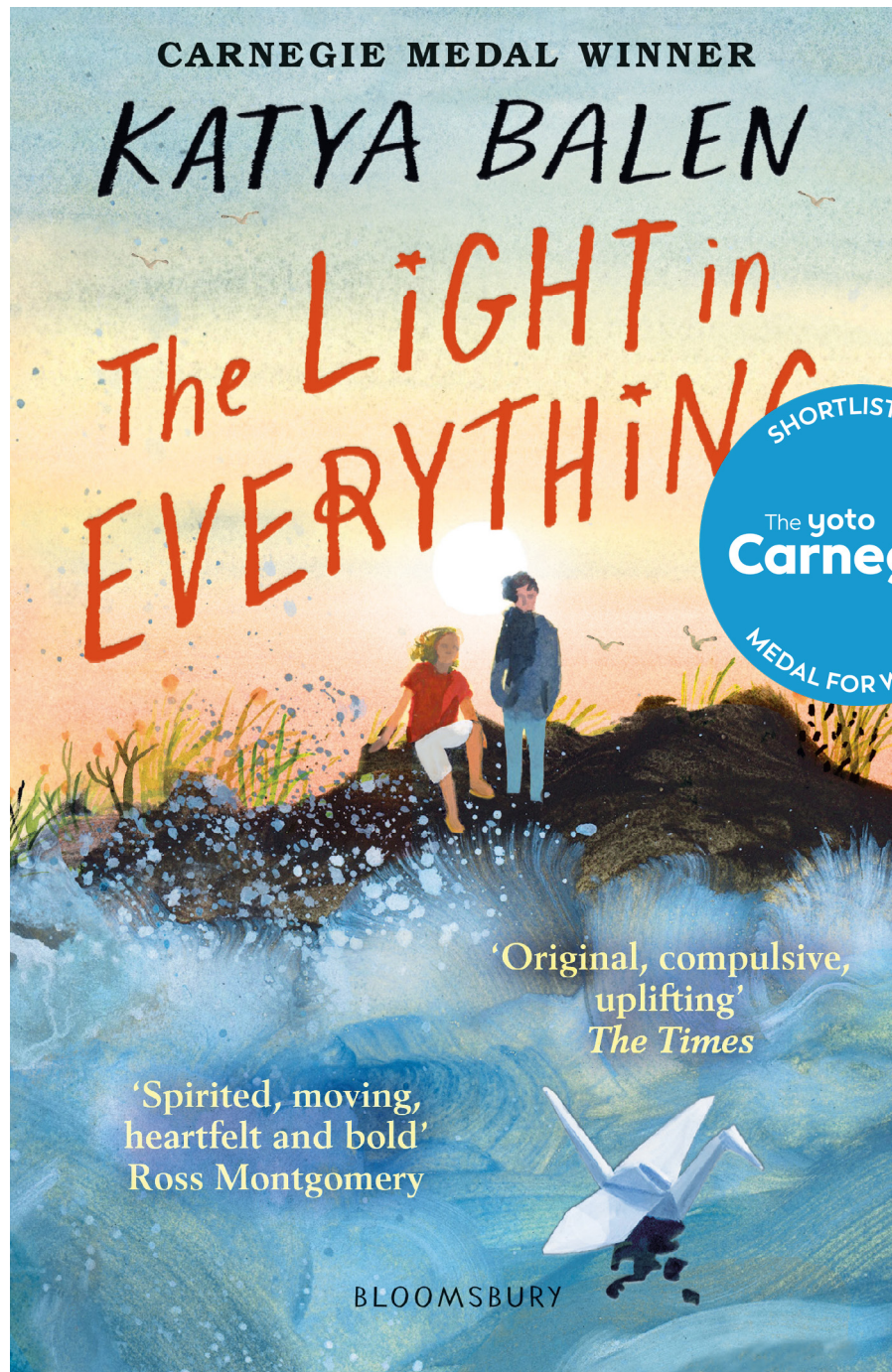


The yoto Carnegies



The Yoto Carnegie Shortlist 2023 Shadowing Resources

Activities for *The Light in Everything*

Author: Katya Balen
Publisher: Bloomsbury
Age: 9+



Note to Group Leaders

Shortlisted books may contain material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that group leaders read the books carefully before sharing or recommending them to students and/or seek parental guidance. We trust that Shadowers and other young readers will be guided by their group leader, librarian, teacher or parent to help them select suitable, enjoyable and age appropriate material from the lists.

Warning

Contains content relating to domestic violence, family death, bullying.

General Activities for the Full Shortlist

1. Imagine each of the shortlisted titles as a dessert! Do you think the book you read is a Lemon Sorbet with a light and tangy plot or a Sticky Toffee Pudding with a complex, multi-layered narrative?
2. Take the last line of one of the shortlisted books and use this as the opening line for your own story or poem.
3. Taking each of the shortlisted books in turn, think about the characters and the way they navigate the plot and various subplots. If you were going to wake up inside each book, which character would you choose to be and why?
4. Imagine that two characters are sitting on a bench. Only two people can sit on that bench at any given time, so when a third person arrives, the first person has to make up a reason to leave. Shadowers should think carefully about the different characters from their chosen book; what reasons might they have for being near to or sitting on a park bench. They must then become the character and interact with the other person/people on the bench. You could base this activity on a single title or have some real fun by using characters from across the shortlist. What will happen when characters from different worlds collide?
5. Create your own playlist to accompany a shortlisted book - you might want to highlight a particular theme, tap into the geography or time period of the book or create a playlist that reflects a particular character.
6. Play charades, using non-verbal communication to act out the title of each book and get the rest of your group to guess which book you are presenting.
7. Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
8. Redesign the cover of a shortlisted book. How would your creation differ from the existing cover? What would you include and why? Explore colour, shapes and themes.
9. Think about who would play the main characters in a film or TV adaptation of one or more of the shortlisted titles. Create a cast list and explain your choices.
10. Create your own book trailer for one of the books, or work together to make a trailer for the entire shortlist. This could be a TikTok style 'sell' of the book or a more traditional thematic video.
11. Take the first line from each of the shortlisted novels and create a poem or story by combining them with words and phrases of your own.

Book Activities

1. Follow the instructions at the back of the book to make your own origami crane. Research the Japanese concept of folding 1000 cranes to get your wish. Are there similar traditions in your culture? What other origami creatures could you learn to make?
2. Zofia is half Polish – spend some time learning how to say a few phrases in Polish. Start with “hello,” “goodbye” and “let’s go to the beach”, then add one or two of your own. The name ‘Ula’ is Polish for sea-jewel; find out the origins of your own name. What does it mean?
3. Throughout the book, there are many descriptions of the beach and the sea at different times of the year and in different weather conditions. Choose your favourite description and create a drawing/ painting or collage of how you imagine it to be.
4. Use an online tutorial to learn how to make paper boats and decorate them. Test them in the water to see which boat will float. You could even have a boat race - but remember to remove the boats when you’re done so they don’t cause harm to wildlife! Share your designs with other shadowers on social media using the hashtag **#YotoCarnegies23**
5. There are many different types of knot used in sailing. Carry out research into the different variations and practise some of them with a piece of rope or string.
6. Make a mini-kite using origami and construct the tail using some of the knots you’ve learnt. Take it to an open space and practise your kite flying skills - but remember to take your kite and any litter away with you.
7. Let’s talk about tea! What kind of tea do you like and how do you prepare it? Do you prefer milk or lemon? What kind of milk? What other ways are there to drink tea? With mint? Sugar? When do you reach for a cup of tea? Why do you think this might be?
8. Can you think of a time when you were afraid or worried? Can you describe how you felt using seaside metaphors and similes like “jelly-fish sting skin and lungs made of rock”?

Wellbeing/mindfulness:

Zofia works hard on holding her breath. Practise mindful breathing – breathe in for a count of four, hold for a count of three then breathe out for a count of five. See if you can do this for a minute. As Tom is afraid of the dark, spend another minute on the mindful breathing technique but this time close your eyes. Does it make a difference? Which do you prefer – eyes closed or eyes open?

About these resources

All of these tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done individually. Instead of talking about the tasks, students can write down and keep a record of their ideas.

Before Reading

10-20 minutes

- Discuss what you think *The Light in Everything* will be about based on these extracts. You should structure your discussion around the questions below.
 - What other novels do you think it will be like?
 - What kinds of characters do you think it will have?
 - What sense do you get of where and when it will be set?
 - If you had to identify three likely themes, what would they be?

Extract 1

I am more than a storm and I am more than a hurricane and I am more than a tempest. I am all fury balled up into one girl and I have lightening in me. It bites at my bones and burns in my blood.

Extract 2

I am trying so hard but the pictures I can see in the dark won't go away. My breaths are ragged. My fingers start trembling again. My muscles shiver. I am pathetic, just like he said I was. I start folding birds. Five. Ten. Fifteen. Twenty.

Extract 3

The sky is already blue-black and mottled with clouds. But the beach is always the most beautiful place in all of the whole wide world. Every day it's different. The half-moon of sand is cupped by cliffs sprayed green with heather and springy gorse. The sea and the sky are always dressed the same as each other, cloaked in grey velvet or blue silk or sparkling emeralds or darkest black obsidian or melted gold like treasure spilling from a chest. They stretch out lazily until they meet and then they push their edges together. Sometimes the line is hazy and sometimes it's pin-sharp. But they always meet.

Extract 4

I can feel the anger coming off her in shoots and sparks even if her face stays exactly the same and even if she doesn't say a word. I can feel something else and I think it's hurt and sadness. I want to say something. The anger that simmers inside is melting slowly. She looks lost.

Extract 5

But you two, you are old enough to take over. We can build it all together. I can teach you but it's not so tricky, you know. You'll be able to do most of it yourselves once you have the basics, I think. It'll be, what do you call it? A project. A joint project.

During Reading

WARNING: DON'T READ THE QUESTIONS BEFORE READING EACH SECTION!

Read up to the page number listed and then answer the questions. You will probably need to spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions.

The page numbers are based on the Bloomsbury YA edition of the book, first published in the UK in 2022.

Read to the end of page 37

- What do you notice about the way the story is told?
- What are your thoughts about the different narrators: Zofia and Tom? What can you tell about their characters? How are they different? What feelings do you have about them?
- Zofia lives in a cottage by the beach. What do you think about the writer's choice of setting? How is the beach and sea presented?
- As a reader, what questions do you have after reading this part of the novel? What do you think will happen next?

Read to the end of page 85

- When Tom and Zofia start spending time together, Zofia describes Tom as 'like a baby bird'. What do you think she means by this?
- On page 58, Tom says about Zofia: 'I hate the way she fills a room with her noise and ideas'. Who do you feel more sympathy for, Tom or Zofia? Why?
- There are lots of references to paper in Tom's chapters so far. Why do you think this is?
- Zofia's Dad says she's 'rude' and 'unmanageable'. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- How do you feel when you find out that Fiona and Marek are having a baby together? How do you think Zofia and Tom will react? Will their reactions be similar or different?
- Zofia finds swimming in the sea comforting and is dedicated to her ambition to reach the rock called 'Fiji'. But on page 83 when she swims in the sea, she describes how 'instead of the whole world changing, and everything becoming quiet and faraway and perfect, something is wrong.' What do you think is wrong? If you were to give her some advice at this point in the novel, what would it be?

Read to the end of page 144

- Tom describes packing up his things on page 86. He says 'Some of the things don't look very important but they are to me'. Can you think of any possessions you have that are important to you but might not seem it to other people?
- What do you think of Marek's choice to paint the baby's room yellow? Why do you think Zofia says 'and just like that all of the colour drains out of everything' on page 93?
- Throughout the book, Tom slowly reveals details about his Dad. Why do you think the writer doesn't tell us what happened straight away? What do you think might have happened to make Tom so afraid?
- Look at the passage from where Zofia says 'They all look so perfect sitting there' on page 100 to the end of the chapter. What feelings do you think she is experiencing here? Why? How might her behaviour come across to the other characters?
- Are you surprised by how Ceto class treat Tom when he starts school? If you were in the class, how would you behave towards Tom on his first day?
- What is your impression of the relationship between Zofia and Tom in this part of the novel? Do you think it will change at any point? Why or why not?
- On page 115, Fiona comes to collect Zofia from school. When she says 'you know what mums are like', Fiona looks 'horrified'. Why do you think this is? Zofia then says 'People always look like that when they think they've put their foot in it'. What do you think she means by this? Why might she have experienced something like this before?
- Zofia compares herself to a scarf that is 'unravelling'. What do you think of this metaphor?
- On page 144 Marek says '*sit down we have something to tell you two*'. Look back over the section you have just read from page 86-144. What clues are there that something is wrong with Fiona and Marek? What do you think will happen next in the novel?

Read to the end of 188

- In this section we find out that there is something wrong with the baby. How do Zofia and Tom react differently? Do you think there is a right way to react to this kind of bad news?
- Look at the passage about the sea on page 160. How does the description of the sea connect to Zofia's feelings here?
- Look at page 163-166. What is your impression of the May Regatta? Does this impression change when you read Tom's perspective instead of Zofia's?
- What do you think about what happens on the boat? How do you feel towards the different characters in this part of the story?
- Do you think Tom is right when he says 'I laugh because there is nothing Zofia is scared of in the whole wide world'? Why do you think he feels like this?
- What do we learn about Tom's past in this section? How does it help explain some of his feelings and behaviour in the novel so far?
- Why do you think Zofia says 'I feel something uncomfortable and squirmy in my tummy' when she thinks about what she did to Tom on Nathan's boat?
- At the end of this section, Marek tells Zofia '*I've got a surprise for you.*' What do you think this could be? Why might Marek want to surprise both Tom and Zofia?

Read to the end of page 236

- After Marek tells Zofia and Tom about the boat, Zofia says 'that thing is happening to his face again. It's coming alive. There is a light behind his eyes and his whole body is turning from frozen to feathers.' What do you think this reveals about Tom? How do you think he feels about building the boat? Does Zofia feel the same? How do you know?
- What do you notice about the boat yard on pages 209 to 213? How does the writer use language to create a sense of the place?
- What do you notice about the relationship between Tom and Zofia in this section? What do you notice about how this has changed since beginning work on the boat?
- Why do you think Zofia describes the sea as 'my sea'? Are you surprised when she sits next to Tom on the beach? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Zofia tells him about swimming to Fiji? Do you think Tom is right when he says 'I know it's the most important thing in the whole world to her'? What do you think Fiji could symbolise for Zofia?
- Why do you think Tom's fingers are 'dancing by his sides' when he goes back to school?
- At the end of this section, Tom says 'for a moment everything feels just like a proper family should.' What do you think he means by this? What is a proper family? Why do you think he feels like this?

Read to the end of the novel

- Why do you think Tom and Zofia are called to Ms Laghari's office? What are your thoughts and feelings at this point in the story?
- How do Tom and Zofia react to the news about the baby? Is this similar or different to their reactions in other parts of the story? What has changed about their relationship and feelings towards each other? Do you think these changes will last?
- What do you think about the conversation they have on the sofa? How do you feel about the characters in this part of the story? Why do you think Zofia says 'Things start to slot into place like a Jigsaw puzzle and I don't like the way I fit into the picture'?
- Why do you think Zofia says 'I am a permanent stormcloud and I can't do anything about it and I don't understand it and I don't like it very much either'?
- What do you think about what happens on the beach when Tom brings the boat to show Zofia? Why do you think he says 'suddenly I don't feel afraid anymore... I feel angry.' Do you think his feelings are justified?
- Tom tries to swim to Fiji to prove to Zofia that he is brave and she is afraid. What do you notice about the structure of the chapter on page 290?
- How does the writer build tension in this part of the novel? How does the part where Tom is in the sea and Zofia is in the boat make you feel?
- Zofia tells Tom that he is the bravest person she knows. What about Tom makes him so brave?
- Towards the end of the novel, the whole community come together to help Tom and Zofia make one thousand paper cranes. What do you think these paper birds symbolise? How does this part of the novel make you feel?
- What do you think about how the novel ends?

After Reading

Spend 10-15 minutes discussing some or all of the questions below.

- What are your overall impressions of this novel?
- Which moments stick most in your memory and why?
- Which characters do you like best and why?
- Which other novels does it remind you of and why?
- How gripping did you find the story?
- What are your thoughts about how the book was written?
- Based on reading *The Light in Everything*, how likely are you to read other novels by Katya Balen?

What's *The Light in Everything* about?

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*The Light in Everything* is about ...'
- If you are working in a group, share your different sentences and discuss.
- Next read the sentences below that give further ideas about what the novel is about.
- If you are working in a group, spend 5-10 minutes sorting the sentences, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the statement you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *The Light in Everything* relates to your chosen statement.

***The Light in Everything* is about...**

- The importance of family.
- Learning from other people.
- The ability to recover from terrible events.
- The power of hope.
- Recognising that strength lies in difference.
- The complexity of human relationships.
- The importance of community.
- The power of nature.

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *The Light in Everything* further.

Other characters

The novel is told through the voices of Tom and Zofia and their narrative takes us through the entire story.

Choose a moment in the novel that interests you and write how a different character might tell this part of the story. Here are some examples of the kinds of moments you might choose:

- How Fiona feels when she first meets Zofia.
- How Fiona feels when the baby is born.
- How Dommo feels when she realises Zofia shut the door on the boat on purpose.
- How Marek responds to Tom's stress and anxiety.
- What Cameron thinks of Tom when he starts at his school.
- When Ms Laghari tells Tom and Zofia about the baby being born.

Spend 20-30 minutes on this activity.

A poem about nature

There are many moments in the novel where the setting is described in vivid detail. The natural environment is an important feature of the story and connects to the feelings and emotions of the characters and their lives.

- Select 4-5 moments in the novel where Katya Balen describes the beach, the sea or the sky and write them down. These could be words, phrases or longer sentences.
- Using the quotations you have selected, write a poem.
- Share your poem with a partner or group and discuss what you notice about how nature is presented. What are the similarities or differences between your poem and others?

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Zofia or Tom?

Write a list of adjectives to describe each of the two protagonists.

Discuss your ideas and decide which character you would most like to be friends with and why.

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Make an Origami Crane

At the end of the book are some visual instructions for how to make your own paper crane.

Using a square piece of paper, have a go at making your own paper crane.

Discuss why you think Tom finds doing origami so comforting. Did you feel the same when you had a go?

Spend 10-15 minutes on this activity.

Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, consider which reviewer comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph to express your views about the novel. You can draw on the review extracts you have read if you wish.
- If possible, compare your ideas with other readers.
- Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12662

Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: https://yotocarnegies.co.uk/?post_type=books&p=12668

Give yourself 30-60 minutes to complete this activity.

A. I loved this book. Two children so opposite in personality brought together through fear and hope. This book touches on so many themes including domestic abuse, single parent families, parental imprisonment and infancy sickness. I really enjoyed the way it was written from the perspectives of both Zofia and Tom and their struggles with their own inner emotions. It shows the importance of truth and trust and, how hope can bring people so far apart, together.

Sharon, www.goodreads.com

B. Katya Balen does such a brilliant job of bringing these two characters to life and allowing us to feel everything that they are feeling. She writes about pain, anger, fear and shame with such honesty, but transforms them into hope and compassion. Tom's vulnerability is particularly affecting: Balen gives us a really powerful portrait of a child who has experienced abuse and bullying, and therefore always expects punishment and mockery. I was very moved by the difficulty he has in understanding that he is loved and accepted in his new home and school, and I think Balen manages to explore these serious and dark themes in a way that is entirely age-appropriate for this book's intended readers.

Stephen, www.goodreads.com

C. Tom and Zofia have polar opposite ways of processing their parents finding each other and starting a new life, but each are as valid and deserving of compassion as each other. It's this compassion that leads to an ultimately happy, hopeful ending.

BookTrust

D. *The Light in Everything* is a deeply moving and absorbing story which skilfully moves from the viewpoint of one child to the other, allowing the reader to explore their complex emotions, actions and reactions. Each has a coping mechanism - Tom folds paper cranes to control his shaking hands and Zofia heads for the sea to find peace. Each is terrified of the change they are facing, although for very different reasons, and as the story progresses, they each learn to face their fears and find hope in the future.

Sue, readingzone.com

Writing Activities

On your own, or with a partner, complete one or more of these writing activities to help you develop your thoughts about *The Light in Everything* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

- Write a diary entry in the voice of Tom or Zofia, based on their first encounter.
- Add a final chapter to the story from the perspective of Ula Hope.
- In the voice of Katya Balen, write a blog entry with the title: 'Why I wanted to tell this story.'
- Imagine you were swimming to 'Fiji'. In the style of Katya Balen, write your own chapter describing this experience.