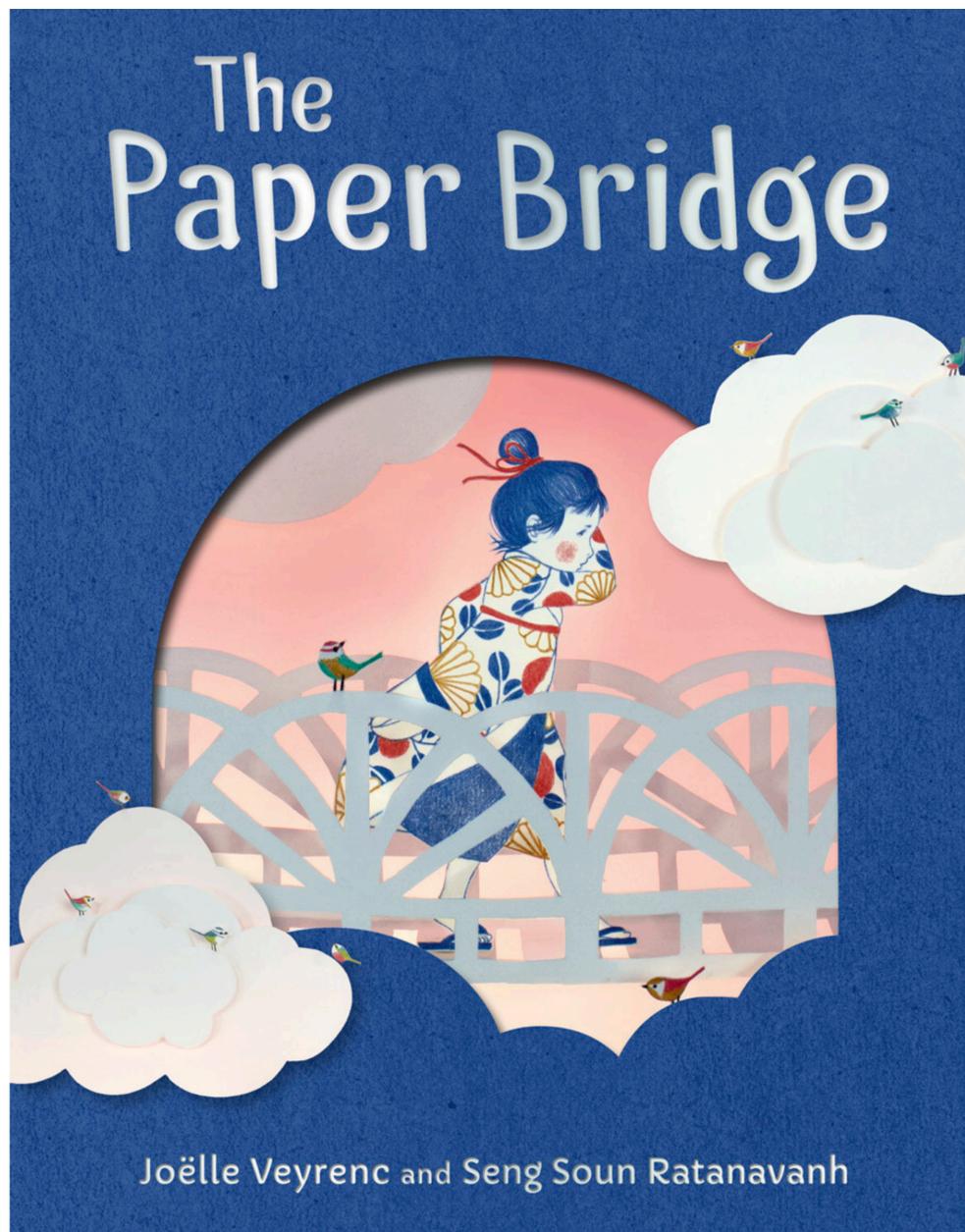
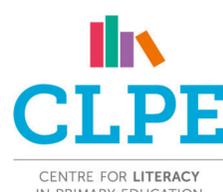


# The Carnegies



## The Carnegie Shortlist 2026 Shadowing Resources



# The Paper Bridge

## Carnegie Medal for Illustration

**Illustrator: Seng Soun Ratanavanh**  
**Age range: 4+**

### Description:

Although the windy season is over, Anya is surprised by the gusts of wind and is keen to find the cause of this, building a paper bridge to cross into the next village. There's an exquisite quality to the way art is used to create core memories which engage and enchant readers. Clever composition and placement on the page really draw readers in and the use of blue and white feels reminiscent of traditional porcelain in this distinctive book.

Themes:

- Community
- Craft
- Fable

### Shadowing Ideas:

1. Consider kirigami. What is it? What are its origins? What is the difference between kirigami and origami? The following blog post offers a nice starting point for wider research. [The Paper Bridge: Discover Kirigami - Floris Books Blog](#)
2. Create your own 3D scene made of paper or cardboard. You could feature your local area, your home or school, or perhaps a park, garden or beach. Create a display in your classroom or library.
3. Compare the colours in Paperlee and Forestlee. What differences do you see? Are there any similarities? What do you think they mean? Create the same drawing in each colour palette to explore how the changes impact the overall effect.

## Teaching Ideas for the Carnegie Medal for Illustration Shortlist 2026

*These notes have been written by the teachers at CLPE to provide schools and settings with ideas to develop comprehension and extended provision around Carnegie-shortlisted picturebooks and illustrated texts for children of all ages. They build on our work supporting teachers to use high-quality texts to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. We hope you find them useful.*

*These notes have been written with children aged 6–9 in mind. However, this is a sophisticated picture book which has scope for it to be interpreted in different ways with pupils of different ages.*

### Introduction:

- Evoking a timeless folk tale or fable, Joëlle Veyrenc and Seng Soun Ratanavanh have collaborated to produce a unique picturebook which celebrates creativity, bravery, compassion, empathy and the importance of community and collaboration. The fantastical world (with echoes of Ghibli, Lilliput and puppet theatre) draws upon the colours, textures and design of classical Chinese art and ceramics while situating them in a 3D world painstakingly created and then photographed by illustrator Ratanavanh using the art of kirigami (paper cutting and folding).

### Reading the book and close reading of illustration:

- Begin by exploring the front cover together. *What do notice first on the cover? How does it make you feel? What does it make you wonder? Does it remind you of anything you've seen before?* Children might discuss the feeling of depth from the three layers on the cloud designs, the shading on the title font, the characters situated between the two handrails, and the construction of the cover for the hardback book that has the character illustration positioned within a cut out window. They might discuss the possible significance of the cloud motif, the small birds, the blue background.
- *What do you notice about the character on the cover? What do their gaze, facial expression or body language suggest about how they might be feeling?* Children might comment on the posture — the way the character is moving from left to right, leaning slightly forward as if pushing against some force, the arm held up in front of the face, the string tying up the hair flying backwards. *Why might this be, what might it suggest about them and their potential story? What might a book with this cover and title be about?*

- Share the front endpapers — which replicate the cloud motif from the cover — and the title page which provides a further opportunity to draw out our impressions of the character from the cover as well as potentially suggesting something about the tone, genre of the story within the book and the children’s expectations.
- Turn to the first double-page spread. Before starting to read the story, take some time to explore and respond to the right-hand illustration. *What do they notice? How do they imagine it feels to be in this place? What sounds, textures, scents or tastes are suggested to them? What does it suggest to them about the world of this story and the people who live here?* As part of their response to the illustration, as usual children might refer to composition, layout, colour, light, lines, patterns as well as the characters and props depicted in the image. Children may also wish to tentatively investigate and suggest the techniques and materials used to create this illustration. *How does this look similar or different to other illustrated texts?* The illustrator hasn’t hidden the folded paper platforms on which the characters stand, or the shadows cast by the cut-out semicircles in the foreground of the image. If children aren’t already aware of the technique, discuss the choice to construct the environment of the book in three dimensions — building, decorating, layering and composing the environment before photographing it. *Why might the illustrator have chosen this technique? What does it suggest to us about this world and this story?*
- On the next spread, we are introduced to the character of Anya that children will recognise from the cover and title page. *What more do we learn about Anya from the text and the illustration? How does this compare with our first impressions from the cover images?* Take the time to pore over all of the details included by illustrator Seng Soun Ratanavanh and what they suggest to us about the character and world of the story. *What do they like about this style of illustration, and does it remind them of anything they’ve seen before?*
- As they continue to read and explore the opening of the story and the threat faced by the community of Paperlee becomes clear, continue to reflect on the choice of technique used by the illustrator in communicating the story visually. You might also consider the impact of the authors use of single-page full bleed spreads, double-page spreads, as well as individual vignettes — including the shape of the outlines of these smaller images. Discuss, too, the sense of scale: the set square, compass and scissor props, along with the image of Anya in the crane’s nest echo the fantast worlds of Mary Norton’s *The Borrowers* or the Studio Ghibli adaptation, *Arrietty*.
- As Anya crosses the bridge into Forestlee, discuss the change in style and the method of construction. *What is similar and different between the communities of Forestlee and Paperlee? How has Ratanavanh communicated those similarities and differences through the illustration?*

- After reading to the end of the book, discuss how they feel about the book overall, the end of the story – and the collaborative solution that is found to overcome the dangers faced by Paperlee. *What do they like about ending? How has life changed for the inhabitants of both villages? How is that demonstrated in the final illustration? Do they think that the book has a particular message or theme? What has it made them think about?*
- Allow plenty of time and space to revisit the book to develop deeper understanding of the meanings being created by the illustrator in collaboration with the author and encourage them to share their thoughts. *What did they like and/or dislike? What did it make them think? How did it make them feel? How do Seng Soun's illustrations deepen their engagement with and understanding of the story?* Read and share the short afterword about the making of the book, which includes behind the scenes photographs showcasing two different styles of models used for the illustrations. On YouTube, there is a very short video showcasing one of the Forestlee models as well.

### Engaging in illustration:

- Seng Soun Ratanavanh's illustrations for this story are sure to invest the reader in a sense of awe at their construction. As well as reflecting on its connection with other forms of storytelling (stop-motion film-making like Wallace and Gromit or Kubo and the Two Strings; or puppet theatres), children might want to explore other picturebook titles that use model photography of created or found objects to illustrate their stories. For example:
  - *The Princess and the Pea*, Lauren Child and Polly Borland (Puffin)
  - *Naughty Bus*, Jan and Jerry Oke (Little Knowall Publishing)
  - *Waiting for Goliath*, Antje Damm (Gecko Press)
- Support the children to create their own three-dimensional constructed scene that illustrates a moment from a known story. Start by working together to choose a story to work with that the class know well. A familiar folk tale or traditional tale would work well, but a class novel that children have recently worked with would also work well.
- In small groups, children select one memorable moment from the story (Note: if you wished, one story could be divided into 6 or 7 story beats and each moment allocated to a different group so that collectively they illustrate the whole tale).

- Once the moment is selected, the children should discuss – and perhaps loosely sketch out – what that scene could look like. *Where does it take place? What would the background look like? Is it interior or exterior? How should it feel? What characters are in the scene? Would additional background characters be needed? Are there any key props that would help tell the story?*
- Each group can then work collaboratively to create a shoe box diorama of the scene that could later be photographed. Remind the groups that they should feel free to include found objects – they don't have to make everything from scratch. For example, if the scene is set in a forest, trees could be drawn and cut out (remember, you could just draw one tree and photocopy it to get more), but you could also collect twigs and stand them up with some small pieces of plasticine. Leaves could be cut from green, red, orange or yellow paper, or wool or thread could be wound around the upper 'branches' to give the impression. Alternatively, toys or construction materials could be used to create a town. Similarly, characters could be carefully drawn, decorated and cut out, but could also be represented by small scale toys: action figures, small plush toys, Lego or Playmobil all give you an opportunity to play around with a sense of scale. If appropriate to the selected story, characters could even be photographed directly in real world environments, such as a small school garden, pond, or wooded area.
- Afterwards, in a photo editing app, the image could be manipulated to play with colour, tone, cut out or crop extraneous details, or replace backgrounds with block colours or photographs to give an impression of the wider world.
- Print and share the final images. Discuss how the text would be placed alongside the image. Reflect on the process of creating this style of illustration. *What are the advantages and/or challenges of working in this way? What did it make you think about? What did you find yourself thinking about as you worked together on your scene? What did you want the reader to notice in your scene? How did you want them to feel?*

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE, a UK-based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at [www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk).