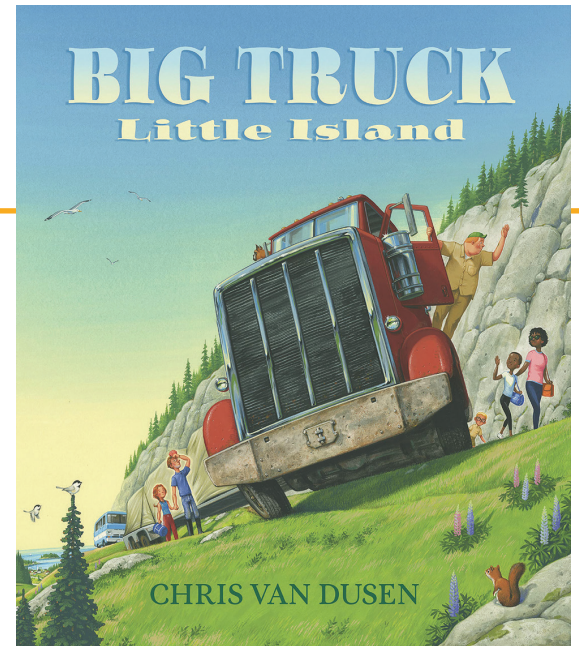


EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Activities, tools & resources for learning with this book!



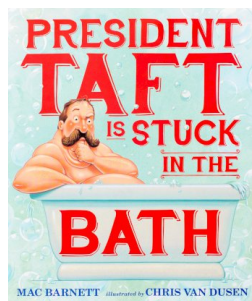
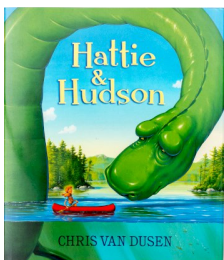
Meet Chris!



As a child, Chris didn't have video games or computers for entertainment so instead he would spend hours drawing pictures. His specialty was aliens, robots and monsters. For more than ten years he worked as a freelance illustrator specializing in art for kids. One day he started thinking about drawing a picture of a boat stuck high up in a tree. At the same time, a refrain kept running through his head- "Mr. Magee and his little dog, Dee/ Hopped in the car and drove down to the sea". The combination of these two things eventually became his first book, "Down to the Sea with Mr. Magee" which was published in 2000. Chris has been busy writing and illustrating children's books ever since.

WWW.CHRISVANDUSEN.COM

Just a few favorites from Chris!



"Sometimes I both write and illustrate books, and sometimes I illustrate other people's stories. Either way, I think it's the best job in the world."

-Chris Van Dusen



EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

LET'S BEGIN! BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Use the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) questions below to orient readers, and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket, allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)*
- *What more can we find?*

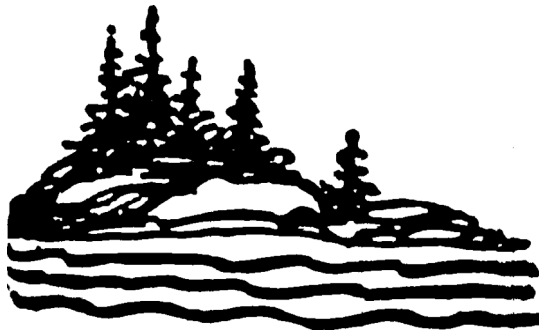
Watch this [VIDEO](#) for a quick VTS demo

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact Alison Johnson at Island Readers & Writers, 207-460-6828 or ajohnson@islandreadersandwriters.org.

If Once You Have Slept on an Island

If once you have slept on an island,
You'll never be quite the same;
You may look as you looked the day before
And go by the same old name,
You may bustle about in street and shop;
You may sit at home and sew,
But you'll see blue water and wheeling gulls
Wherever your feet may go.
You may chat with the neighbors of this and that
And close to your fire keep,
But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse bell
And tides beat through your sleep.
Oh, you won't know why, and you can't say how
Such change upon you came,
But – once you have slept on an island
You'll never be quite the same!



– Poem & Illustration by Rachel Field

STANDARDS Covered throughout this Explore More Book Guide:

SL.1. Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

SL.3 Present information and supporting evidence appropriate to task, purpose, and audience so listeners can follow the line of reasoning and incorporate multimedia when appropriate.

R.4. Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts.

R.5 Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.

R.6. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.8 Analyze the structure of various texts, including how the features and components relate to each other and the whole.

R.9. Assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of various texts.

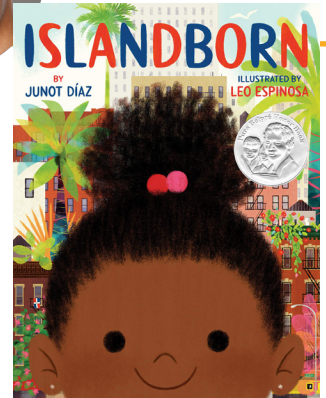
R.10 Evaluate the argument and specific claims in various texts.

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Let's Talk!



Read Rachel Field's poem (see the previous page) to get you thinking like an islander, then read the recommended companion book, *Island Born*, by Junot Díaz. In this story, Lola has an assignment where she asks locals what they remember and then draws "from their memory." Interview some local people and actually draw what they remember.



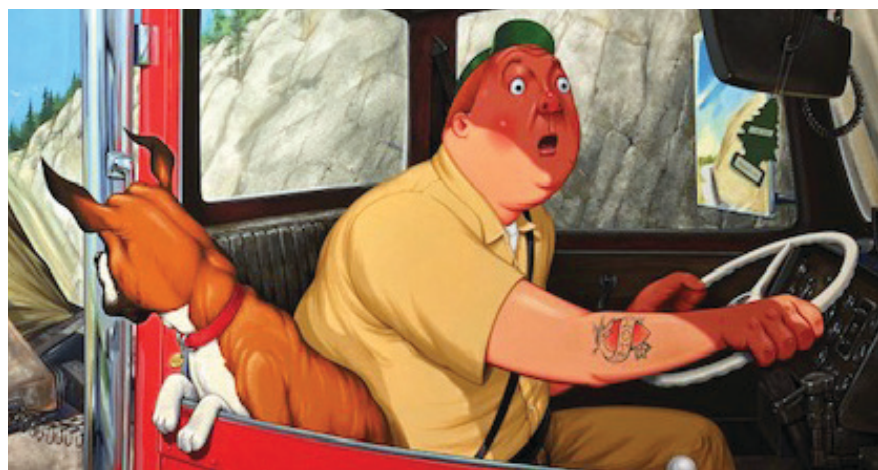
- What stories did your parents and grandparents share with you about your ancestors?
- What events impacted you the most while you were growing up?
- What was your favorite thing to do for fun?
- What was your least favorite chore?
- Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members?
- Would you ever want to go back to live in your old neighborhood?
- What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you?

– Excerpt from *Sister Ships*, by Mary Cerullo. Used with Permission.

The kids in *Big Truck Little Island* come up with the answer to a big problem, which was inspired by "the way the islanders resolved the real-life problem."

- Have you ever had a problem that seemed too big to fix?
- What did you do about it?
- Have you ever come up with a clever solution like these friends did?
- Host a class discussion about creative problem solving.

- In which time period does this book take place?
- Is it during modern times, in the future, or a long time ago?
- What do you see in the pictures or hear in the words that make you think this?



EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Let's Talk!

WHOLE BOOK APPROACH SCAVENGER HUNT

Let's Lay the Foundation (Teachers)

The Scavenger Hunt activity below requires some familiarity with the language used when talking about books. We recommend educators prepare themselves and their students as noted below prior to embarking on the hunt.

1. Familiarize yourself with the Whole Book Approach (WBA), book elements and their definitions on the side bar.
2. Watch Alison's Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) [VIDEO](#) preview.
3. Provide a whole group discussion with Chris' book appropriate for your grade level(s), describing and familiarizing your kids with each element.
4. Have students complete the Scavenger Hunt (located in the printable Appendix section of this Explore More Book Guide) individually, with a partner, or together as a class.

The Whole Book Approach copyright is held by the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. To learn more about the Carle Museum visit their [website](#).

Whole Book Approach (WBA): Anatomy of a Book

Jacket & Cover: The jacket of a book can tell a story all on its own. It is a hint of what is to come. Spend time with the children asking the three questions about the jacket picture and let their imaginations guide you and them. Make sure to check the back to see if the illustration continues as a "wrap around" or if there is something new. Slide the jacket up to reveal the cover underneath, is it different or the same? (You may not want to reveal what is under the jacket until the end depending on what is hidden there.)

Endpapers: The endpapers are the linings on the inside of the cover of a book. They are a design choice even if they are only one color. Make a point of asking children what they see and if they can make any connections with the cover or jacket. Be sure to check the back, sometimes it is different.

Front Matter: The front matter of a book consists of the title page, dedication page and copyright page. Pay attention to any pictures that the illustrator may have added here, they could surprise you and may be important to the story line. Notice the typography. Does the lettering tell you anything?

Full Page Spread: A spread is simply a set of pages (usually two) viewed together. It's how you see the book when it's open and both pages are showing. A set of pages viewed together without separation.

Book Format: Portrait? Landscape? Square?

The book format or shape is another way the publishing design team gives us a clue of what the book is about without even opening the cover. Depending on the subject, a book can be tall for a mountain or long for a train, it can have cut-outs or other shapes.

Gutter: So much can happen in or out of the gutter of a book. The gutter is where the two pages of a spread meet the binding. Illustrators use this space to create tension, humor, and to help move the story along. Keep your eye on the gutter.

Typography & Design: This is referring to the font size, style, placement, color, and any other choices the illustrator or publisher made about the lettering or type. Sometimes type is small which might mean it should be spoken softly or large type may mean that the reader yells these words. Look for and point out other interesting design choices.

Back Matter: The back matter of a book can be full of information to broaden learning particularly in nonfiction books. This can include, an index, glossary, historical information, author and illustrator information and other items.

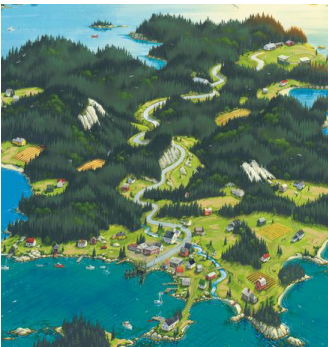
Medium & Style: How does the artist's choice and use of medium(s)(mode of artistic expression), suit the story? How does the medium influence and generate particular attention to art elements (color, line, shape, etc.) and principles?

Spine: Does the jacket image wrap around the spine? Consider the spine's lettering.

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Let's Create!

1. *Make your own thought bubble or vignette:* There are two pages where the children have **thought bubbles** that show what they are thinking about where they are supposed to be going. There are also pages where **vignettes** are displayed. After exploring the definitions provided (right), and looking closely at each example, choose one to create on your own. You might wonder what the ferry worker is thinking as he directs the big truck onto the ferry. Or, you might wonder what the truck driver or the dog is thinking as their rig slides off the road! Maybe you can draw a vignette of the car exchange happening, or maybe you can zoom in on the people in the Ferris Wheel car and draw a vignette of them.



2. Choose a Maine Island (there are many!) to research. Draw an image of your island similar to the image where Chris introduces us to Vinalhaven—a **bird's eye view**. Include informational bits about your island:

- When was it incorporated as a town?
- What industries exist?
- How many residents live on the island (winter vs summer).
- Are there any stores in operation now?
- How often does the ferry go to the mainland?

3. Make a diorama of a scene from the book: include a Ferris Wheel, cars and trucks, houses and trees. What animals can you find to include?

4. **Framing and Reframing:** Chris Van Dusen uses perspective to bring your attention to the scene. You can try this yourself: walk around until you find a scene that is pleasing to you. There could be action, moving pieces, or perhaps it holds colors and light in a way that catches your eye. Make a picture in this space (either with a camera or drawing). Next, walk around, look up, look down, get closer...and make another image. Try to see the very same scene from a completely new and different perspective. What do you notice when you look again? What happens when you zoom in? What happens when you zoom out?

AABB POEM EXAMPLE:

Two cars in a hurry arrived from the **north**.
Then from the south came a third and a **fourth**.
They waited and wished that the traffic was **flowing**.
They had things to do and they had to get **going**.

—"Big Truck Little Island" by Chris Van Dusen

Thought Bubbles: A cloud shape containing the words which represent a character's thoughts.

Vignettes: A small illustration which fades into its background without a definite border.

5. Chris wrote this story using a form of poetry called AABB rhyme scheme. This is a four-line stanza where the first two lines rhyme with each other (AA) and the second two lines rhyme with each other (BB). Have your class try writing a group poem using this scheme.

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Let's Dig Deeper!

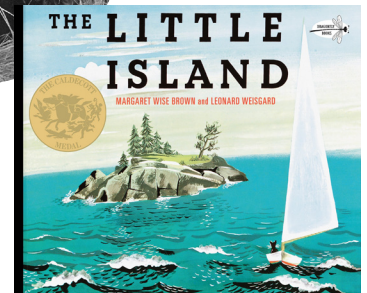
Learn about [FAIRS](#) in Maine.

Two stories about the wind turbines arriving on Vinalhaven.

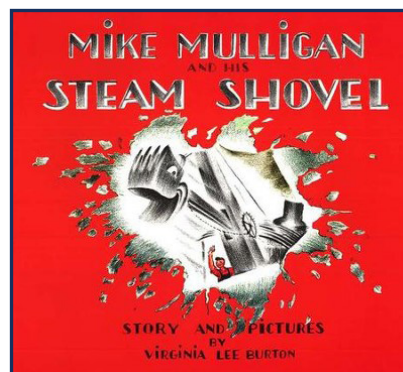
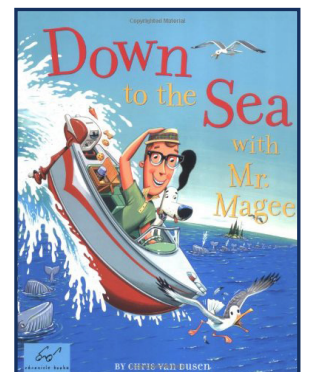
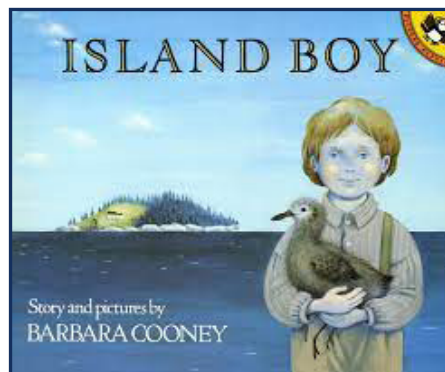
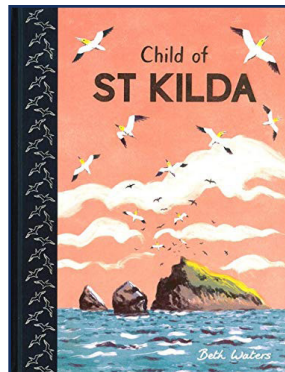
[WORKINGWATERFRONTARCHIVES.ORG](#)

[AEINews.ORG](#)

Did you know that Margaret Wise Brown, another prolific and well-known children's author/illustrator, summered on Vinalhaven?



Let's Read More!



EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Appendix

BIG TRUCK LITTLE ISLAND SCAVENGER HUNT

Now that you are familiar with the WBA and VTS, let's have a bit of fun exploring *Big Truck, Little Island* by going on a Scavenger Hunt. Use the cards below to discover what you **Know**, what you **Want** to know, and may need to **Learn** more about the elements of a book. Feel free to refer back to the list of definitions in the sidebar should anyone need a refresher.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITY:

- What do we **Know**
- What do we **Want** to know?
- What have we **Learned**?
- Why should we **Care**

STANDARD: DISCIPLINARY LITERACY – VISUAL ARTS: Students show literacy in the art discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes. A3 Media, Tools, Techniques, and Processes

#1 Take a look at the **Endpapers**. There is always a reason why endpapers are either a plain color or have a specific pattern. What do you notice about these endpapers, and is it a clue to anything you might see in the rest of the book?

#2 Notice the two-page spread that contains three elements; the title, dedication, and copyright, which are all part of the **Front Matter**. What do you notice in the dedication that makes it special to IRW? Who is the Publisher and what year was it published?

#3 Most of Chris's illustrations are **full page spreads**, how many are NOT? Look through the whole book to find out!

A full-page spread includes two pages viewed together as one image.

#4 Find a page with an example of **onomatopoeia**. Which book element does this represent?

- Gutter
- Typography/Design
- Spine

Onomatopoeia: The naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with (such as Buzz! Hiss! Bam!). Words that sound like the noise they describe.

#5 Find the page that has the dog's leash crossing the **Gutter**.

#6 The **Front Matter** in this book gives us a clue as to what time of day our story begins. What time of day is it and what do you notice in the story that makes you say that?

Morning / Afternoon / Evening

Because I/we noticed:

#7 Find the page with the only real **photograph**, not a drawn illustration. *Hint:* It is located in the Author's Note. Which element includes the Author's Note in this book?

- Cover
- Format
- Back Matter

#7BONUS: Find two more author friends of IRW. Hint: They can be found on IRW's website under authors and illustrators.

#8 Every artist uses a different **medium**. You can often find this information within the front matter. What medium did Chris use to create the illustrations in the book?

- Graphite pencils
- Watercolor
- Gouache

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

Appendix Answer Key

- #1 Did you notice how the yellow of the endpapers ties in with the very first illustration we see of the barge on the water? That pale yellow also carries over onto the dedication and title page. In fact, yellow is used throughout the book to depict the glow of light.
- #2 What makes it special? Dedicated to Jan Coates, the Executive Director of Island Readers & Writers. Publisher: Candlewick Press; Year published: 2022
- #3 There are 5 images that are not full-page spreads.
- #4 THUD! Is on the page where the wheel of the truck is stuck. (on page 11 of the book proper) **Typography and Design** is the element. (Book Proper: The book proper is after the front matter and where the story actually begins.)
- #5 The dog is on the 2nd to last page in the scene of the fair with the Ferris Wheel.
- #6 Morning: We know this because the story takes us from the beginning of the day to the end with the final scene being the fair at night when the moon and stars are out.
- #7 The photo is on the very last page under the author's note which is part of the back matter.
- #7 **Bonus** Matt & Maya Myers
- #8 As noted in the Copyright information in the front matter, the illustrations were done in gouache (an opaque watercolor).