

# An Educator's Guide to *I Know Here* and *From There to Here*

written by Laurel Croza, and illustrated by Matt James

An Educator's Guide for Grades 2, 3, and 4

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

## About the Books

*I Know Here* is a simple yet deeply felt and vibrantly illustrated story about a little girl who knows and loves the place where she lives but has to move away.

In *From There to Here*, a little girl and her family have just moved across the country by train. Their new neighborhood in the city of Toronto is very different from their home in the Saskatchewan bush, and at first everything about “there” seems better than “here.”

## About the Author and Illustrator

Laurel Croza lived near four dam sites when she was a child, moving nine times and attending six schools before she was fourteen. Her experiences inspired her stunningly successful first picture book, *I Know Here*, illustrated by Matt James. Laurel lives with her family in Toronto. Visit Laurel Croza's website, [laurelcroza.com](http://laurelcroza.com).

Matt James is a noted painter, a multiple award-winning illustrator and a musician. He lives in Toronto. Visit Matt James' website, [mattjamesillustration.ca](http://mattjamesillustration.ca).

## Praise

### *I Know Here*

“A simple and profound book.” — *New York Times*

“While the text is deliberate and declarative, the illustrations, while respecting all the details important to the girl, are extravagantly expressionistic.” — *Horn Book*, starred review

### *From There to Here*

“Once again, a low-key, emotionally true approach to a common and usually upsetting childhood experience.” — *Kirkus*, starred review

“The palette of the Toronto scenes is predominately blue-sky sunny, reflecting the story's ultimate optimism . . . we know that the ride begun at the close of the book promises both amity and adventure.” — *Horn Book*

## *I Know Here*

### Pre-reading Questions and Activities

Review the book with students showing them the front and back covers, endpapers, copyright and title pages. Tell them the names of the author, illustrator and publisher. Ask students what they think the book is about.

#### *Vocabulary*

Some words may be unfamiliar or may be used in a different way than students have seen previously. Possible words for study include:

- bursting
- deliver
- disappear
- leaving
- prairies
- squishy
- swooped
- tobogganing
- wooden

### Post-reading Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Ask students to tell the central idea of the story. How do they know what that is?
2. Why does the author repeat the words “I know here” and “I know” throughout the text?
3. Ask students to summarize what they know about the narrator. How does she see herself? What is the most important thing they learn about the narrator? Do they think her brother feels the same? How does the narrator feel about where she lives? How do they know? “Have the people in Toronto seen what I’ve seen?” (page 16) What is she really asking? Have students describe the narrator’s feelings about moving at the beginning of the story and at the end. What is the difference?
4. Do students think the author lives, or has lived, in Canada? Why or why not? Do they think she has experience moving from one place to another? Why or why not? Have any students ever moved? Did they feel the same or different as the narrator did?
5. On page 2 she says “Soon we will all be leaving.” Who is the “we” in this sentence? Does it make a difference that it’s not just the girl and her family that are leaving?
6. Ask students to describe the words the author uses to show a change in the story. Why is this text important to the story?
7. There are examples of both literal and non-literal language in the story, such as:
  - “He’s bursting with news.”
  - “needles soft like a quilt”
  - “gravel jumping up and dancing”
8. Literal language means exactly what it says, while figurative (non-literal) language uses similes, metaphors, hyperbole and personification to describe something often through comparison with something different. Lead a discussion about the types of non-literal language shown in the examples, and then ask students for examples of others.

9. On page 11, the girl says “The man inside the truck . . . delivers groceries.” What does this text tell students about where she lives? How does the author, through words, and illustrator, through pictures, show the road she lives on?
10. Can students describe the mood of the story? How does the text capture the mood? How do the illustrations create the mood? Is it important that the mood of the words and illustrations “match”?
11. Ask students to examine the illustrations and then describe the art, pointing to different pictures that support their description. What is unique about the illustrator’s style? Students can choose a part of the story and illustrate it in their own style.
12. Ask the students how they know “here” and to describe their sense of place. Do others in their family share their point of view? Ask students to choose an important place in their community and write about it.
13. Students who have moved can write about their experience. Students who have not can write about a place they’d like to move to.

## ***From There to Here***

### **Pre-reading Questions and Activities**

Review the book with students showing them the front and back covers, endpapers, copyright and title pages. Tell them the names of the author, illustrator and publisher. Ask students what they think the book is about.

#### *Vocabulary*

Some words may be unfamiliar or may be used in a different way than students have seen previously. Possible words for study include:

- asphalted
- Aurora Borealis
- direction
- exhibition
- graveled
- roosted
- shimmered
- stretching
- tarp
- whistle

### **Post-reading Discussion Questions and Activities**

1. Show students the illustrations on the opening pages before the story begins. What do these illustrations tell them?
2. Ask students who is telling the story. Ask them to name the main and secondary characters and make a list that all can see. Ask each student to retell the story in their own words; then work in pairs to share the written work, reading one another’s summary. If there are disagreements, students can ask for clarification.
3. What words and phrases are particularly vivid in describing living in the city? Living on the prairies? Is either place familiar to someplace students know? Where would students rather live? Write a paragraph explaining their choice.

4. What is the author's purpose in repeating the words "there" and "here" while telling the story?
5. How does the illustration on pages 11-12 help students understand the difference between "there" and "here"? Why do they think the illustrator created one picture and not two?
6. Make a list of the ways living in Toronto is different from living in rural Saskatchewan using students' input. Are there any similarities? What is the most significant difference? Ask students to compare life where they are with both Toronto and rural Saskatchewan.
7. What is the most important message that the author shares with readers? How do students know?
8. The first sentence reads "It's different here, not the same as there." The last sentence reads "It was different there. Not the same as here." Ask students what is the difference between the two sentences?
9. Ask students what words describe the narrator at the beginning of the story? At the end? What has changed?
10. Let students choose two places they are familiar with and write about or draw pictures of the similarities and differences.

## **Post-reading Discussion Questions and Activities Using Both Books**

1. Can students tell what art elements are carried through in both titles?
2. How does having read *I Know Here* enhance students' understanding of *From There to Here*?
3. Show students the endpapers in each book, noting the yellow circle and the red star. What do students think the circle and star represent? Are the circle and star used elsewhere in the books? Why?
4. What role does friendship have in each book? Ask students to discuss why having friends is important.
5. How do the illustrations contribute to the sense of place in each story?
6. Lead a discussion about moving from one place to another. Why is it difficult? What are some good things about moving?