

The Polar Express

First Reading: Illustrations

The Caldecott-winning illustrations are rich in color and detail. Enjoy having them as a single focus!

*When numbering the pages: Page 1 is the first page of text.

Pages 1 - 2:

- Can you tell if the story takes place long ago or now? (The toys and furnishing seem to be from the past.)
- It looks like a light is shining in the window. What could be making the light? What could the boy be seeing out of the window? (It could be The Polar Express.)

Pages 3 - 6:

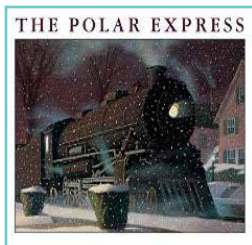
- Were your predictions about the source of the light and what the boy might be seeing from his window correct?
- Which window do you think is the boy's bedroom window?
- Find the boy in the illustration. (He's getting on the train)
- On pages 5 and 6, what is happening on the train?
- Why do you think the waiters might be the only adults on the train?

Pages 7 - 14:

- Where do you think the train is going? Is it a long journey or a short one? How can you tell? (long: through forests, up mountains, through a city)
- On pages 11 through 14, it looks like there is activity in the city. What evidence of activity do you see? (lights, smoke coming from big smokestacks)

Pages 15 - 16:

- What do you see? (people everywhere)
- What might the source of the bright light be?



The Polar Express

First Reading: Illustrations

Pages 17 - 22:

- Who are all of the people?
- On page 17, what do you think is in the big bag that is being pulled?
- What might Santa Claus be saying to the people?
- What night do you think it might be?
- On page 20, who is with Santa Claus? What does Santa have in his hand?
What might Santa be saying?
- On pages 21 - 22, do you see anything similar to what Santa had in his hand?
(from the reindeers' harness) What do you think it might be?

Pages 23 - 24:

- What is happening here? How does it look like the children are feeling? What might the children be saying to each other?

Pages 25 - END:

- Where is the boy? What is he doing?
- On pages 28, who might the girl in the illustration be?
- What day do you think it is?
- What could be in the box?
- Why do you think the last illustration in the story is of a sleigh bell?