

MOVING WORDS

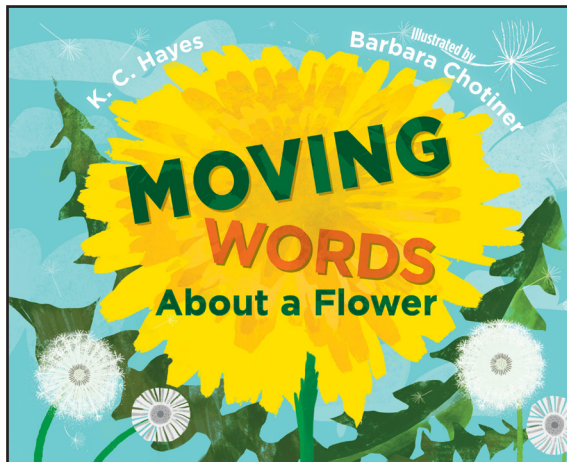
About a Flower

ACTIVITY KIT

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“The book’s playful imagery . . . makes for an engaging read . . .”
—*Horn Book*



K. C. Hayes
Illustrated by Barbara Chotiner
978-1-62354-165-1 HC
e-book available

About the Book

The inspiring story of a dandelion that survives against all odds, ingeniously told through shape poems (also called “concrete poems”) full of visual surprises. When it rains, letters fall from the sky; and when seeds scatter, words FLY!

Each playful page will have readers looking twice. The back of the book includes more information about the life cycle of the humble, incredible dandelion.



About the Author

K. C. Hayes has been a guitarist in a rock band, the inventor of a patented kid’s playhouse, a writer and designer of greeting cards, and the creative director of an advertising agency, but these days he’s venturing into new creative fields. This is his first picture book.

About the Illustrator

Barbara Chotiner combines traditional techniques with modern approaches to create organized chaos. She loves making people smile with her sophisticated yet whimsical illustrations. This is her sixth illustrated book.

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Discussion

Use these questions to kickoff classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Poetry & Language

1. *Moving Words About a Flower* is written in a style called concrete poetry. What is a concrete poem? Review some other examples as a class; what do they have in common with the poems in *Moving Words About a Flower*? What are some differences?
2. How would the experience of reading this book be different if the text were plain and not part of the illustrations?
3. What's the difference between poetry and prose? How do you know when you're reading a poem?
4. Aside from the physical styling of the words, what are other poetic techniques that you see in *Moving Words About a Flower* (such as rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc.)?

Science

1. What do you know about the life cycle of a dandelion? Where did you learn? What are the different stages in this life cycle? Review the spread "A Dandelion's Life" at the back of the book. Did you learn any new information from this spread? Do you think it's a good representation of the dandelion's life cycle?
2. This book covers all four seasons; which season are you currently experiencing? Are there dandelions outside? What are the dandelions doing right now in your backyard, window box, or garden?
3. Pages 21-22 ("Spring arrived . . . into the rich brown soil.") show a cross-section of the soil. What do you see under the ground in this illustration? Why do you think the artist included worms and bugs in this picture?
4. What are some animals and insects that appear in *Moving Words About a Flower*? What do you know about these creatures, their habitats, and their life cycles?

Art

1. Do you have a favorite page in this book? Why is it your favorite?
2. The illustrator of this book, Barbara Chotiner, works in many different media. Can you identify some of the materials and techniques she uses in these illustrations?
3. Weather plays an important role in this book. How do the art and the words work together to show the reader different kinds of weather?

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Move Your Words!

Choose three words from the word bank below and use them in a sentence. Then use the space to make a concrete poem out of that sentence. Experiment with shape, color, texture, and placement to make your words come to life.

**SEED
FLOWER
RAIN**

**DANCE
FLY
PUDDLE**

**BRIGHT
SLOW
SPRING**

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Science Acrostic

Pick a word from the word bank and use the space below to build an acrostic poem from that word. Think carefully about the scientific meaning of the word as you work.

**CYCLE
FLORET**

**VORTEX
PAPPUS**

**TAPROOT
PERENNIAL**

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Poetry Plants

Bring together biology and poetry in this immersive project!

You will need:

- A packet of mixed flower seeds
- Disposable paper cups
- Potting soil
- Water
- An assortment of children’s poetry books (see the “further reading” section on page 6 if your classroom or school library does not have a poetry section)
- Construction paper
- Plain printer paper
- Staplers, string, and other binding methods
- Markers, paint, and other decorative materials

Procedure:

- 1. Review the life cycle together.** As a class, review the life cycle of flowers using the “Life Cycle of a Dandelion” spread at the back of *Moving Words About a Flower*. Encourage students to ask any questions they have about the life cycle.
- 2. Introduce the flower seeds.** Without showing the packet, display the seeds for your students to examine, either via a projector system or close up. Invite students to guess what the seeds will grow into. Guesses by elimination (“These are clearly not beans or corn!”) are just as good as positive guesses (“These will be daisies!”)
- 3. Create your plant journals.** Distribute construction paper, printer paper, binding materials, and decorative materials and give students time to make their own plant journals with enough paper to track a few months’ worth of changes. They may decorate these journals as they wish and fill them with sketches, bulleted lists, paragraphs, charts, diagrams, or whatever other notes make sense to them.
- 4. Plant the seeds.** Distribute cups pre-filled with potting soil, and 5–8 seeds per student. Direct students to plant the seeds according to the instructions on your packet. Provide 10–15 minutes for students to make their preliminary observations. Each student should label their cup with their name and place it in a sunny spot.
- 5. Establish daily plant time.** For the next few months, set aside 15–20 minutes every day for plant time. Students may use this time to water their plants, rotate their cups, and jot down their observations in their plant journal. Once these activities are done, invite students to take a poetry book and read a poem of their choice to their plant. This is individual read-aloud practice, not a performance; the goal is to get students to read a poem aloud every day.
- 5. Wrapping up.** When the flowers have sprouted, ask students to close out their plant journal by writing a poem about their plant. Their plant can then go home with them or be planted in a school or community garden.

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Further Reading

Gardening & Life Science

Arnold, Caroline. *Planting a Garden in Room 6*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2022.

Lin, Grace. *The Ugly Vegetables*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 1999.

Mullen, Diane C, and illustrator Oriol Vidal. *One Little Lot*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2020.

Vast, Émilie. *Plants on the Move*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2021.

Seasons & Nature

Gerber, Carole, and illustrator Leslie Evans. *Spring Blossoms*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2013.

Lin, Grace, and Ranida McKneally. *Our Seasons*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2007.

Salas, Laura Purdie, and illustrator Micha Archer. *Snowman - Cold = Puddle*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2019.

Poetry

Shapiro, Karen Jo, and illustrator Matt Faulkner. *Because I Could Not Stop My Bike*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2005.

Schaub, Michelle, and illustrator Carmen Saldaña. *Finding Treasure*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2019.

Schaub, Michelle, and illustrator Amy Huntington. *Fresh-Picked Poetry*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2017.

Latham, Irene, and illustrator Amy Huntington. *Nine*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2020.

Harrison, David, and illustrator Giles Laroche. *Now You See Them, Now You Don't*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2016.

Swinburne, Stephen R., and illustrator Mary Peterson. *Ocean Soup*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2010.

Gray, Rita, and illustrator Ryan O'Rourke. *One Big Rain*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2014.

Lin, Grace, and Ranida McKneally. *Our Food*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2018.

Harrison, David, and illustrator Giles Laroche. *A Place to Start a Family*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2018.

Hauth, Katherine B., and illustrator David Clark. *What's for Dinner*. Charlesbridge Publishing, 2011.

