

The 'WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE' Challenge

Grab a copy of the book. From the beginning of the story check out the size of the first of Sendak's illustrations. Now notice the size of the second illustration, the third and so on. Clearly they grow until the illustration ("his ceiling hung with vines and the walls became the world all around") occupies all of the page.

What I propose to the students is the question: Sendak was a great writer and illustrator but was he good at his maths - did he have a plan for the illustrations? Did he want the illustrations to increase proportionately? If the first one occupies, for example - 50% of the page does the second one goes to 60% then 70% or is it all a bit random. "You need to make a decision - YES he had a mathematical plan or NO he just had a guess - good, now prove it!"

Provide rulers and calculators and watch the students find area and then express it as a percentage of the area of the whole page AND then keeping doing this to establish if they are increasing proportionately or not.

I'm not going to tell you the answer - you'll need to find out for yourself - that way you know the maths the students will be in for!

Extension - What's happening when his illustration takes a page and bit and keeps growing until it's full 2-page spread?