

Title		Voices in the Park			
Author (Text & Illustration)		Anthony Browne			
Publication Year		1998	Publisher	Corgi	
Translated Versions		Japanese translation available			
Words	541	Pages	32	YL Level	N/A
Synopsis					
<p>Two pairs of parents and children enter. One is a mother and son (Charles), and the other is a father and daughter (Smudge). Each pair brings their pet dog to the park to play. As the two dogs start playing, Charles and Smudge start playing together as well. Charles' mother is annoyed with her son and dog, and constantly worries about them. Smudge's father sits tiredly on a bench reading job listings in the newspaper. Later in the evening, Charles gives Smudge a red flower. The two go home with their respective parent.</p>					
Introduction					
<p>If you just read the synopsis, you might be thinking, “What? That's it?,” but actually, this picture book has an unusual structure. As the title <i>Voices in the Park</i> suggests, it is made up of several voices. As I wrote in the synopsis, the story is a snapshot of daily life at a park, and nothing special happens. However, the same event is presented through four voices belonging to the two sets of parents and their children. In four chapters, from "First Voice" to "Fourth Voice," each person narrates the same event, from their point of view, occurring in the same place at the same time. In addition to the textual narration, the style and coloring of the pictures, the things highlighted or deliberately not depicted in the pictures (things that the character does not notice), and the fonts all contribute to the reader's awareness that, whether you like it or not, there is more than one truth or reality. It is not so difficult to get to the postmodern question, "Is there one single truth or reality?" from here. I think this is a great text to give the students of today, who come to university with inadequate reading experience, a taste of what it means to read a text. This picture book can be used as a foothold for reading postmodern novels or watching postmodern movies.</p>					
Related work/Reference URL					
<p>[Other recommended picture books by Browne]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Into the Forest</i> (Walker Books, 2004) (Japanese translation available) <p>More information about this book is available on our website.</p>					

- *The Tunnel* (Walker Books, 2008) (No translation)

More information about this book is available on our website.

[Browne's own Official Website]

- Anthony Browne Books (<http://www.anthonybrownebooks.com>)

A comprehensive list of Browne's picture books is available here.

There is also a recitation of *Voices in the Park* performed (with music) with the author as a guide. If you listen to the audio of the reading, you'll notice that the English spoken by the two sets of parents and children is quite different. This shows the difference in the social class to which they belong. In addition to silently reading the picture book, it would be a good idea to listen to the audio of this reading in the classroom and teach the students to pay attention to the non-verbal information that the words convey.

(Text: Motoko Fukaya)