



Reading Roundup

This is the Rope

Written by Jacquelyn Woodson
Illustrated by James Ransome



Reading Roundup
Partners



Introduction

Gather the students around you so that they are able to see the illustrations of the book. Most classrooms will have an area rug defining this space. Introduce yourself and tell the students that you are excited to share This is the Rope, written by Jacquelyn Woodson and illustrated by James Ransome.

Before Reading

To truly understand this beautiful story, we need to pay close attention to the words but also to the illustrations. The story takes place over a few generations. It begins when the narrator's grandmother (Grandma) is a young girl, long before the narrator was born. As we read together, think about how Jacquelyn Woodson and James Ransome work together to show the passage of time.

During Reading

- Begin reading the book by starting on the title page. Hold the book so that students are able to see the illustrations. Give plenty of time for students to “read” and think about the pictures. Continue to read through **page 3**.

- **Page 3 – T/T** – *Jacquelyn Woodson, author of This is the Rope, writes, “I thank you for making a way out of no way.” I wonder what her grandmother and mother did to “make a way out of no way.”* (The author was thanking those who were brave enough to do what needed to be done even when it seemed impossible. Note: If children don’t have an answer, consider inviting them to think about this as you continue to read.)

- **Page 7 – T/T** – *The story begins when the grandmother was a young girl. After reading the words and closely looking at the illustration, how do we know the grandmother isn’t a young girl anymore? How has the use of the rope also changed over time? Turn and talk to your partner about that.* (The words say, “...my grandmother, who was a mother now...” The grandmother is no longer jumping a rope in the yard. Now, she is holding her own baby. The rope, once used as a toy, is now holding everything the family owns to the top of the car.)

- **Page 17 – T/T** – *Studying the illustration helps us understand the passage of time. The narrator’s mother is no longer a baby. She’s moved to a new neighborhood and is trying to make friends. Look at the illustration. What does it tell us about the neighborhood girls? What might they be saying?* (The girls have their hands on their hips and have mean looks on their faces. They clearly don’t want to be friends. They might be saying, “We don’t want to play with you. We don’t even like to jump rope. We like hopscotch, and you can’t play.”)

- **Page 23 – P** – *This rope has been around for a long time. Let’s think about when we first learned about the rope. Where did we first see the rope in this story?* (Grandmother, as a young girl, was jumping rope in the yard.) Now, Mama is using the rope to help move her to attend college.

- **Page 31 – T/T** – *As the story ends, we see this rope in the lap of Grandma. This rope is worn and grey. Why would Grandma not throw the old rope in the garbage? Why is she holding it tightly in her lap?* (This rope has been an important part of her life. It was a favorite toy as a young child, a tool for moving to a new city, a way to reach out to new neighbors....)

After Reading

What a thoughtful ending to a beautiful story. The author and illustrator take us back to Grandma “and her long -ago memory of sweet-smelling pine.” – P – This is the Rope is about the passing of time over many years. Why do you think the book ends with memories of long ago? (The author and illustrator want us to understand the importance of remembering our pasts. They want us to appreciate that the events of our lives make us who we are today.)

Vocabulary

reunion – get-together after a long time, p. 28

threadbare – well-worn, p. 31

**WORD
WAGON**

