

ONE & EVERYTHING

Sam Winston

Walker Studio

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Themes

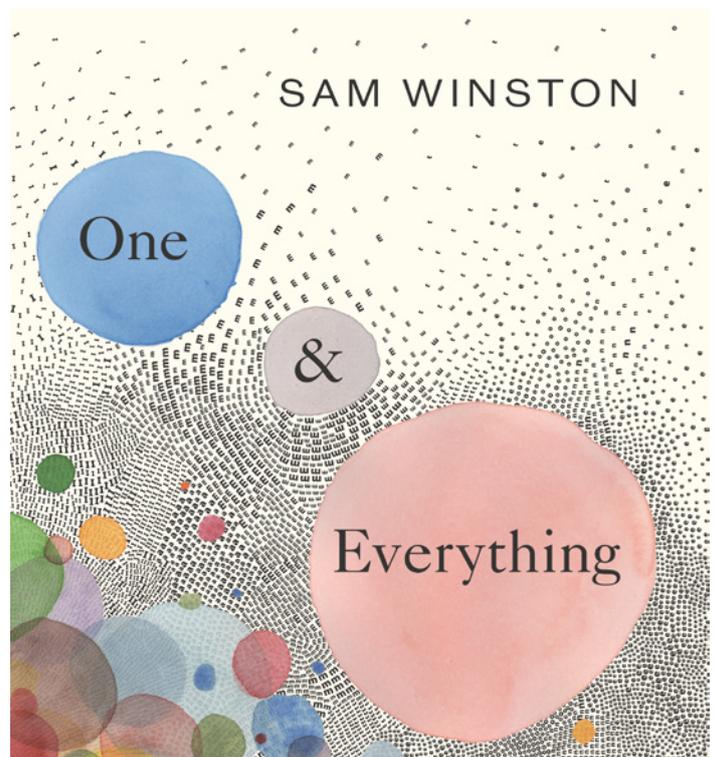
- Language and languages
- Writing
- Diversity
- Storytelling

Summary Once there were many stories in the world. Some had beautiful sunsets, some lived at the bottom of the sea, and some were simply about dogs. Until one story decided that it was going to be the most important story ever. It called itself the One and started to consume every other story in existence. Soon it seemed that the One was all that was left ... or was it? Inspired by the Endangered Alphabets project, aimed at preserving cultures by sharing their unique scripts, author-illustrator Sam Winston uses writing systems such as cuneiform, Canadian Aboriginal, Egyptian hieroglyphs and ogham to illustrate this book in his signature typography-based style, using symbols and letters that have relayed the world's stories over the centuries.

Judges' Comments This stunning and thought-provoking book can be appreciated on multiple levels as it brings the reader on a round-the-world journey through the importance of stories and storytelling. A meditation on language and script, on how we communicate, and on the perils of thinking that one single story is the most important story of all, this is an original and unusual book that – through text and illustration – celebrates the power of stories and the excitement they bring to our existence.

About the Author-Illustrator

Sam Winston's practice is concerned with language not only as a carrier of messages but also as a visual form in and of itself. Initially known for his typography and artists' books, he employs a variety of approaches including drawing, performance and poetry. His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. His first mass-market book in collaboration with Oliver Jeffers, *A Child of Books*, won the Bologna Ragazzi Award for fiction and has been translated into twenty languages. All Winston's projects look to introduce audiences to new ways of thinking about and engaging with language.



QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Look at the cover from a distance. What do you see? Do the shapes, colours and general composition (how everything sits on the page) remind you of anything?
2. Take a closer look. What are the black marks made out of? Are there any symbols you don't recognise? What is the overall effect?
3. Does the title give any clues as to what the book might be about? Why do you think each word is in a separate circle of colour?
4. What do you expect from this cover? A story? A fact book? Poetry? Something else?

AS YOU READ

We suggest you read and discuss the story before exploring the author's notes at the end of the book. Some readers will pick up on the symbols and alphabets on a first reading, some won't, and that's all fine!

1. Who are the characters in this story? What do they look like?
2. Is there a hero or heroes?
3. What happened to the text on the sea page? Why do you think Sam Winston chose to write it that way?
4. What is different about the One Story? Can you make out what it says on each page?
5. How do you feel about the other stories getting gobbled up? Why does the One do it?
6. "'Hey!' said the One." What does 'The One' look like now? What is it doing? How do you feel reading this page? What's going to happen next?
7. Why is the following page completely black?
8. What do the older stories do once they've all been swallowed? What happens during the 'long pause'?
9. "'It seems to me that you're not the One Story then. You're Every Story!'" What does this mean? What happens once the One has realised this? Is there any trace of the One left then?
10. 'And all that was left was a question.' What is that question? And *can* you answer it?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Does the book end where the story ends?
2. Read 'Some Characters to Be Found in *One & Everything*' then go back to the story. Does it change how you understood it? What is the One Story made of? What do you think it means? Can it happen in real life?
3. How many languages can you think of? How many do you think exist in the world? Read the author's note to find out.
4. Why are languages disappearing around the world? In favour of which language(s)? Does it matter? Why or why not?
5. Look at the cover again. Does the title make sense now? Is the cover image a good representation of what's inside and what happens in the book?
6. How many different alphabets can you think of? How many can you read? Which ones would you like to learn?
7. What can you find out about 'the magic Ogham words' and the 'Adlam letters'?
8. Did you enjoy this book? How many hieroglyphs out of five would you give it?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. How well does each script match the page it is featured on?
2. What is personification? How are the stories personified in this book?
3. What is the language of the One Story? What are the advantages and problems of a language taking over from others? How do you think English got into this position today?
4. Think back on what you know of world history. Has the one-language phenomenon occurred before? What happened to that language over time? Could the same thing happen with global languages today? What do you think 'the language of the future' might be?
5. What does 'endangered' mean? What do you associate it with? What does it mean for a language? Should some languages be protected? What might be lost if they disappeared? Would it matter? How could a language be protected?
6. 'Languages, like people, do not sit still.' What does that mean? Does it happen with your own language(s) too? Can you think of examples?

ACTIVITIES

- **Language quiz.** How many languages can you speak? How many are used in your school or classroom? How many more can you name? How many other languages exist around the world? Take a language quiz online (for a quiz on languages with different scripts, try this Britannica ‘Guess the Language Quiz’: <https://www.britannica.com/quiz/guess-the-language>; for an audio quiz, try this ‘Guess the Language by Voice’ quiz on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/-nwaYkDyHg>). Finally, take a world tour of endangered languages on the Endangered Languages Archive map: <https://elararchive.org/map/>
- **Something old, something new, something borrowed ...** What connects ‘baguette’, ‘zero’ and ‘robot’? All these words, now used in English, came from a different language originally (French, Arabic and Czech, respectively). Can you find more words that English ‘borrowed’ (or adopted) from other languages? What about Irish? If you speak another language, which words from it do you think English or Irish should adopt? Can you convince your class to try using them?
- **Language warriors.** How can a language be protected? How can we make sure it doesn’t disappear? Brainstorm some ideas with your group or class; they can be realistic or crazy! When everyone (or every group) has chosen an endangered language (using the Endangered Languages Archive map: <https://elararchive.org/map/>, for example), design posters showing your plan to protect it.
- **Past, present and future.** Did you know languages changed over time? Listen to user854706492 read a piece from the poem *Beowulf* on SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user854706492/beowulf-old-english>. What language is it in? Do you understand it? It’s Old English, as it was spoken a thousand years ago! New words are added to dictionaries all the time. Can you find some recent additions? How do you think words are born? Can you invent your own new words? And can you tell a story in this language of the future?
- **Codes and code-making.** A script is a system used to write down words and ideas. Research different ways of writing, for example cuneiform, Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, Gaelic type (*cló Gaelach*) or the three systems used in Japan today. What are the differences between them all? Do you have a favourite system? Could you invent a new script and write a message to your friends using it? Don’t forget to give them the key to crack this new code!
- **Make your own mark.** A script is a bit like the fingerprint of a language: it’s how it makes its mark on the world. What does your name look like in Cyrillic? Armenian? Korean? Khmer? Tamil? Check it out on

a site like Google Translate (<https://translate.google.com/>). Now ink up one of your fingers and leave a clean mark on a sheet of paper. Enlarge your fingerprint using a photocopier. Write your name between each line of the print using a different script every time.

- **Pen, paper and beyond.** Paper is quite a new invention. People didn’t always write on paper. Research other materials that have been used over time for writing and drawing. Which sound easier or trickier to use? Make your predictions then try them out! Try writing on fresh clay, broken pottery (try flowerpots), fabric, rocks ... What about writing tools? Try keyboards, quills, fountain pens or nib pens, reed pens, brushes, a stylus ...

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- **Letters and numbers.** Run a survey to find out how many different languages are used in your class or school. Investigate how many people speak these languages in Ireland and then worldwide. How does it translate into percentages of the population? How do these numbers compare with your class or school? How are these various languages related to one another (if at all)? How could you represent this data visually? Find some data for Ireland in the Data section of the Central Statistics Office website: <https://data.cso.ie/table/EY025>. Find some data for the world in the Wikipedia entry ‘List of Languages by Total Number of Speakers’: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_total_number_of_speakers; and ‘All World Languages in One Visualisation’ on the Visual Capitalist website: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/a-world-of-languages/>
- **In person.** When talking about this book, Sam Winston said: ‘A mean sentence has a look. A joyful sentence has a feel to it.’ Choose a sentence with a strong feeling at its core. It could be something somebody said to you, a slogan, the title of a song, the words on a tattoo. Personify it: give it a shape (e.g. human, animal, vegetal), a colour, give it detail and give it a voice. Think about what it wears, how it gets places, what it eats, what it wants more than anything in the world, what it’s scared of and so on. Bring your personified sentence to life in a picture, a poem, a song, a story, a short film ...
- **Language obituary.** Choose a language that is now extinct and research it. Who used it? Where? When? How did it disappear? Pick aspects of or words from this language that you find particularly interesting. Then write an obituary for this language as if it was a person: recount its ‘life’, its last ‘moments’ and some of its greatest achievements. You could also turn your obituary into a spoken word poem, a song or a rap.

- **Natural alphabets.** In the article ‘Saving Endangered Languages’ in the *Bookseller* (<https://www.thebookseller.com/comment/saving-endangered-languages>), Sam Winston talks about ‘correlations between language diversity and biodiversity’. How do you understand this? How can a language be linked to a natural environment? Go outside and pick up safe natural materials: pebbles, sticks, leaves, feathers ... Select them for their shape and look. Make them into your new alphabet. What sound does each represent? Does the sound change when you put two or more together? How will you write them? What on? Get writing!
- **Letter art.** Can the letters in your name become art material? Try to create a picture or logo using the shapes of your letters, turning them around, flipping them, angling them ... You can take them apart and use each letter stroke separately or you can keep them whole. It might help to work digitally or to recreate your shapes in play dough for easy manipulation. What will you create? What does your picture say about you? For an extreme version of this activity, check out Sam Winston’s Romeo and Juliet project on his website: <https://www.samwinston.com/projects/romeo-juliet>.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Watch Sam Winston talk about the making of *One & Everything* and enjoy seeing some pages coming together in the YouTube video ‘One & Everything: Behind the Scenes’: <https://youtu.be/OQuzihMsgK0>
- Read Sam Winston’s article ‘Saving Endangered Languages’ in the *Bookseller*: <https://www.thebookseller.com/comment/saving-endangered-languages>
- Explore books about the history of the written word, such as *My Name Is Book* by John Agard and Neil Packer (ages 8+), or the wonders of world languages, such as *A Is for Bee* by Ellen Heck (ages 6+) and *It’s a Wonderful Word* by Nicola Edwards and Luisa Uribe (ages 6+).
- Celebrate the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032 by listening to the ‘International Mother Language Day’ Spotify playlist of songs in Maori, Quechua, Navajo and more: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/50L1MNvN5TojjyxY9PCVtZ>
- Visit Mother Tongues’ Interactive Museum of Languages for Young Audiences online: <https://mothertongues.ie/museum-of-languages-for-young-audiences/>
- Find more languages-inspired activities in the resources for *Goodnight, World!* by Nicola Edwards and Hannah Tolson (ages 3+), on pages 14 to 15 of Children’s Books Ireland’s Small Print resource pack: <https://childrensbooksireland.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/CBI-Small-Print.pdf>.