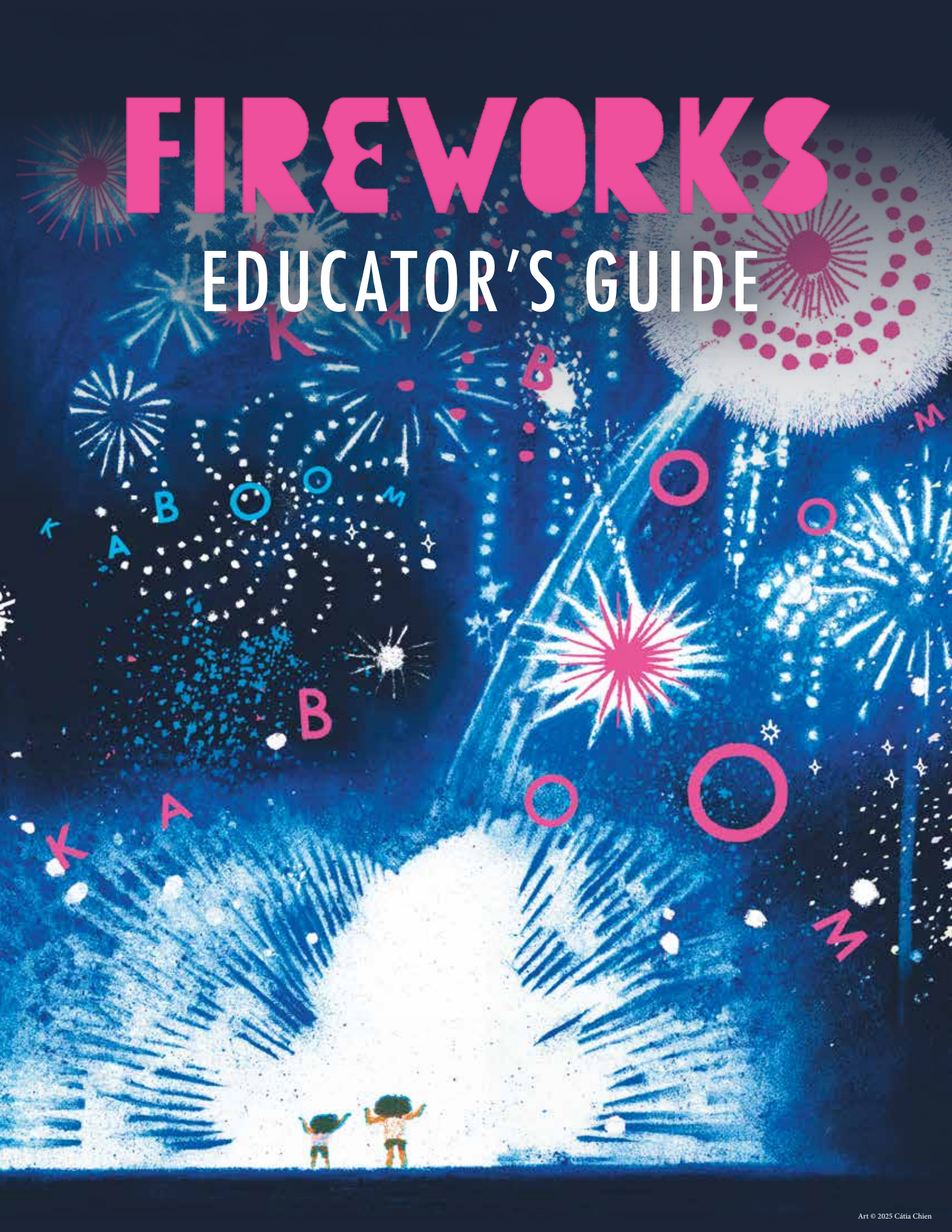


FIREWORKS

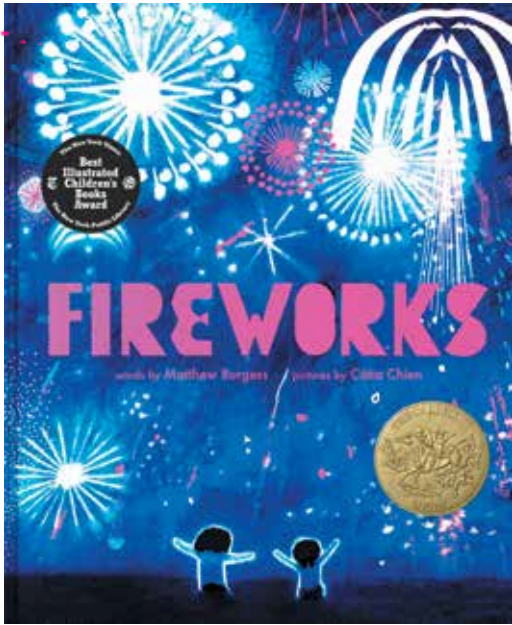
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



FIREWORKS EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

About the Book

During a hot summer day, two siblings find adventure in the city from breakfast to bedtime. When evening falls, the children settle on the rooftop to enjoy a magnificent fireworks show. Sounds, sights, smells, and other sensory details highlight this lyrical text, complemented by stunning, evocative illustrations. Part poem, part portable fireworks display, this book will transport readers so that they, too, can experience the joys of summer in the city.



Introduction

This book is brimming with themes to share with your young readers, including family, city living, outdoor activities, holidays, seasons, community, music, food, and culture. Children will thoroughly enjoy the alliterative and onomatopoeic text filled with sensory details of urban adventures.

This relatable, engaging story can be shared any time of year!

Discussion Questions

- ✱ Where do the children live? How do you know?
- ✱ What season is it? How do the children keep cool? How do you keep cool during the summer?
- ✱ What activities are taking place in the park?
- ✱ What holiday do you think the children are celebrating? How do you know?
- ✱ Where do the children watch the fireworks?
- ✱ Have you ever seen fireworks? What do they look like? Sound like?
- ✱ What bright color did the illustrator use for the fireworks? Why do you think she chose this color?
- ✱ Why do you think the illustrator used a foldout page for the fireworks finale?
- ✱ On what other special occasions might you see fireworks? (e.g., New Year's Eve, sporting events, etc.)
- ✱ What small, special moments throughout the children's day feel happy and exciting—like “little fireworks” that will sparkle in their memories?
- ✱ What do the illustrations show you about the children's relationship with their grandmother?
- ✱ Look at the last page. Why do you think the children are depicted this way?

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Activities

MAKE SENSE Discuss our five senses. Make a large chart with five columns, each labeled with one of our senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. While rereading the book, pause after each page and add sensory details featured to each column.

WE ARE FAMILY Discuss how the family members in this story take care of each other, and what they like to do together. Ask your readers to think about what they enjoy doing with their family. Have them choose a family activity, such as going to the playground together or having a family game night and depict it through writing and/or illustrating. Older children can write a personal narrative story about their family, while younger children can make a drawing or painting.

FIREWORKS FUN Take another look at the large foldout page and discuss why fireworks are so exciting. Did you know that fireworks explode due to a combination of chemicals and heat? As a class or community, take the opportunity to create your own fireworks show, but in a safe, creative way. Here are a few safe options for making your own fireworks:

1. Etch fireworks on scratch art paper (a type of multi-layered paper that features a colorful background with a black, scratchable layer on top) using tools such as a wood skewer, toothpick, or unbent paper clip. You can even make your own scratch art paper, as shown here: <https://youtu.be/FByNoNt32XA?si=8Q01lCl6Z2AYIwUq>.
2. On black paper, “draw” fireworks with glue and then sprinkle different colors of glitter atop the glue, as shown here: <https://youtu.be/trHAMOCMCp0?si=a1SHELgggzL68JTb>.
3. Learn to draw fireworks by following the steps in this Art for Kids Hub video: <https://youtu.be/6f9z8Y45C7E>.
4. Do some science experiments to make liquid fireworks using household items such as water, cooking oil, food coloring, turmeric, and milk! https://youtube.com/shorts/UJW_0n-qmXoA?si=cZY9RpQnR0bvM_K

SOUND OFF What is onomatopoeia? Look up a definition and then search for examples in the book. List the examples on a chart or whiteboard. Can you think of some of your own sound words? What words could you use for the sound a car makes? Or a piano? Or the rain? As a group, write a poem that uses onomatopoeia. Older children can write their own and then read their poems aloud to each other.

TRUE COLORS As a group, brainstorm a list of colors. Then, display one of these colors on a chart, easel, or whiteboard. What does this color make you think of? How does it make you feel? Repeat with several colors. Afterward, think of an experience that made you feel happy, sad, excited, angry, or scared. Using specific colors to portray your feelings, illustrate your experience. Older children can add a written description of their experience.

CAN'T WAIT! What special event were the children waiting for in the book? Do you think it was easy or hard for them to wait? What is something exciting you are waiting for (e.g., birthday, holiday, playdate)? How do you feel when you have to wait? With a partner, roleplay the experience of anticipating something special. (“Please, please can I open one present?” “Not until tomorrow when it’s your birthday.”) Can the feeling of anticipation be difficult and fun at the same time?

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT As a class, brainstorm a list of activities that would make up an amazing and memorable summer day. You might highlight the fact that the kids in this book live in a city and talk with students about the kinds of things that they love to do in the summer. As you record some of these details on the board, free-associate any sounds and/or sensory details that might help describe these activities (e.g., eating a triple-scoop chocolate ice-cream cone: *lick, slurp, yum*). Stay loose and playful in the brainstorming phase, collaging words and phrases on the board while skipping over anything that doesn’t spark ideas in the moment.

Once the room is buzzing, invite students to write their own poem that captures and guides readers through a perfect summer day, adding vivid descriptions and onomatopoeic words along the way. Give students permission to be wildly inventive when creating their onomatopoeic words and invite them to play with the placement of these words on their sheets of paper. Briefly open *Fireworks* to one of the full spreads and show them how the sound words often dance across the pages. They can make their words dance too!

Remember: you can adapt this exercise substituting “summer” with another season, a holiday, or even a birthday!



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Guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, an educational consultant
with 35 years of elementary teaching experience.

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About the Author



Matthew Burgess is a poet and educator and the author of many celebrated picture books, including *Mungo On His Own*, *Words With Wings* and *Magic Things*, and *Drawing on Walls: A Story of Keith Haring*. For *Fireworks*, he recently received a Charlotte

Zolotow Honor and a Golden Kite Honor for outstanding writing in a picture book text. Matthew's books have received many other accolades, including starred reviews, ALA Notable distinctions, a Eureka Gold Award for Excellence in Nonfiction, and inclusion on numerous best-of lists from the NYPL, the Chicago Public Library, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, *Kirkus Reviews*, ALA Booklist, Amazon, and others.

An Associate Professor at Brooklyn College, Matthew lives in New York City and Berlin.

About the Illustrator

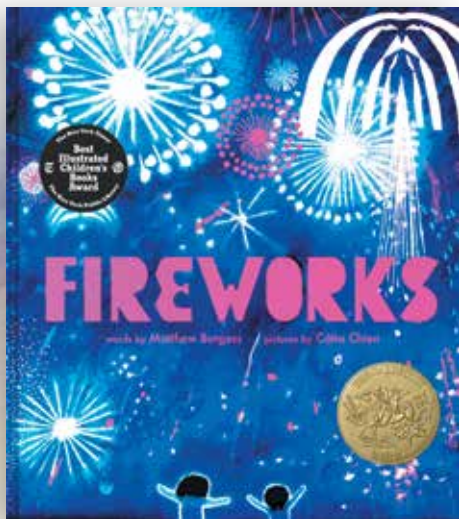


Cátia Chien is the 2026 Caldecott medalist, *New York Times*/New York Public Library Best Illustrated, and gold medal winner at the Society of Illustrators for original art for *Fireworks*. She is also the gold medal winner at the Society of Illustrators for original art for *The Bear and*

the Moon. A three-time Golden Kite Award for picture book illustration winner for *The Longest Letsgoboy*, *The Bear and the Moon*, and *A Boy and a Jaguar*, an ALA Notable Book, and a recipient of the Schneider Family Book Award. She was a co-editor and a contributor on the groundbreaking *Flight* comics anthology. Her art has been shown in galleries worldwide including the Beijing National Gallery and the Bologna Children's Book Fair exhibition. She is also the founder of A THOUSAND WORLDS—a curated picture book directory celebrating BIPOC creators.

She lives in the bay area with her family.

Winner of the 2026 Caldecott Medal!



Seven Starred Reviews



A *New York Times*/New York Public Library Best Illustrated Children's Book of the Year

The Society of Illustrators Gold Medal Winner

Kirkus's Best Books of the Year

Booklist's Editor's Choice Picks of the Year

School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year

Publishers Weekly's Best Books of the Year

A *Horn Book* Fanfare Pick

The New York Public Library's Best Books of the Year

Chicago Public Library Best of the Year

NPR's Best of the Year Roundup

A Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books Blue Ribbons Book

A Charlotte Zolotow Honor Book