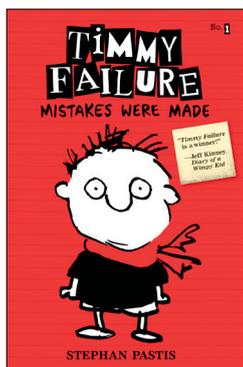




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made

Author/Illustrator: Stephan Pastis
ISBN: 9781406339802
ARRP: \$17.95
NZRRP: \$19.99
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia
Locked Bag 22
Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

Ph +61 2 9517 9577
Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Steve Spargo.
For enquiries please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

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Outline:

Meet “detective” Timmy Failure, star of the kids’ comedy of the year. Created by New York Times best-selling cartoonist Stephan Pastis.

Take eleven-year-old Timmy Failure—the clueless, comically self-confident CEO of the best detective agency in town, perhaps even the nation. Add his impressively lazy business partner, a very large polar bear named Total. Throw in the Failuremobile—Timmy’s mum’s Segway—and what you have is Total Failure, Inc., a global enterprise destined to make Timmy so rich his mother won’t have to stress out about the bills anymore. Of course, Timmy’s plan does not include the four-foot-tall female whose name shall not be uttered. And it doesn’t include Rollo Tookus, who is so obsessed with getting into “Stanford” that he can’t carry out a no-brain spy mission. From the offbeat creator of *Pearls Before Swine* comes an endearingly bumbling hero in a caper whose peerless hilarity is accompanied by a whodunit twist. With perfectly paced visual humour, Stephan Pastis gets you snorting with laughter, then slyly carries the joke a beat further—or sweetens it with an unexpected poignant moment—making this a comics-inspired story (the first in a new series) that truly stands apart from the pack.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Stephan Pastis is the creator of *Pearls Before Swine*, an acclaimed comic strip that appears in more than six hundred newspapers and boasts a devoted following. His 2011 compilation *Larry in Wonderland* debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list for paperback graphic novels. *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made* is his first book for young readers.

How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 2+
- Ages 7+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Illustrated fiction
- Novel

Themes/ Ideas:

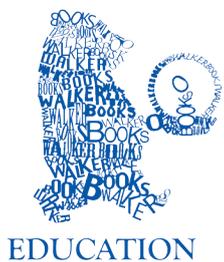
- Detectives
- Mystery
- Friendship
- Family

National Curriculum Focus:*

English content descriptions:

Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
ACELA1462	ACELA1477	ACELA1489
ACELA1463	ACELT1594	ACELA1490
ACELA1469	ACELT1596	ACELT1602
ACELT1587	ACELT1598	ACELT1603
ACELT1589	ACELT1599	ACELT1604
ACELT1590	ACELT1600	ACELT1605
ACELT1591	ACELT1601	ACELT1607
ACELT1593	ACELT1791	ACELT1794
ACELY1665	ACELY1675	ACELY1690
ACELY1666	ACELY1678	ACELY1694
ACELY1668		
ACELY1671		

*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.



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Discussion Questions and Activities

Before reading *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*, view the cover and title and identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the title/cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

After reading, examine the structure and features of the book. Identify the following:

- Chapter headings
- Title page
- Dedication
- Page numbers
- Paragraphs
- Illustrations
- Quotation marks

What are the themes in *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*? Write a statement of belief for each theme, then assess how *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*'s treatment of these themes makes you feel.

What kind of text is *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made* (i.e. narrative, procedural, persuasion, information)? What features of the text make this apparent?

Write a character report for Timmy, Rollo, Molly, Corrina Corrina and Timmy's mum. Include a description of their appearance, personality and character development throughout the novel. Pick out one pivotal scene from the book for each character and explain how the author makes the reader care about this character.

"In media res" is a Latin term used for when a story starts at a mid-point or at the conclusion rather than at the beginning. Why do you think the author has used this technique with *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*? How would the novel be different if it was told in chronological order?

Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made is narrated from Timmy's point of view, which means the reader is only hearing Timmy's side of the story. Is Timmy a reliable narrator? Why do you think that? Choose a scene where you think Timmy is not telling the truth and re-write it from a more objective perspective.

Imagine you are creating your own detective agency. What would your agency be called? Would you have any colleagues? Who are they? Write a story about your

detective agency's first case. Remember to include a crime, suspects, clues and a conclusion.

What is a genre? What genre is *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*? Can books fall into more than one genre?

What do these common detective words and phrases mean?

- Suspect
- Red herring
- Interrogation
- Client
- Scene of the crime
- Witness
- Investigation

How do the illustrations add interest to the story? How would the book be different without them?

As a class, discuss Timmy's relationship with Rollo? Do you think Timmy treats Rollo the way friends should treat each other? What suggestions would you make to Timmy or Rollo to help their friendship?

Write an account of an entire day in the same style of Rollo's account of his infiltration of the CCIA (pages 128-133). Make sure to keep a note pad with you on the day you write the journal so you can record everything. Draw quick sketches of interesting things you see.

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that you don't know and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

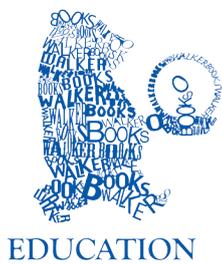
What do you think Timmy will be like when he's older? Will Total Failure Inc. be a success? Write and illustrate a short story about Timmy at age 35.

Write a book review of *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*. Include what you liked about the book, books that are similar to it and who you would recommend it to.

Design a persuasive poster advertising the benefits of using your detective agency (see page 154 for an example).

Write and illustrate a short picture book in a similar style to the books Timmy writes for Total (see pages 40, 192-194 for an example).

What is black humour? Where is it used in *Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made*?



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As a class, read another book (or an excerpt) about a detective. How is this detective similar or different to Timmy? What language choices has the author made to present these different characters? Which do you prefer? Why?

Visit www.timmyfailure.com for more information on the book and author along with fun games and the Timmy Failure blog!

Fill in the blanks.

Timmy's first case is investigating Gunnar's missing _____.

Total is a 1500 pound _____.

Old Man Crocus moves Timmy to a group of desks with the "smart" kids: _____, _____ and _____.

The Total Failure Inc. office is in a _____.

When the segway is stolen, Timmy creates a new form of transportation called the _____.

Timmy gives away free _____ to attract clients.

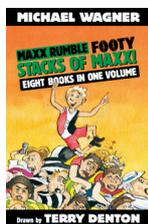
Timmy creates a mascot for the agency called _____ man.

Timmy puts on a play called "A _____ called _____."

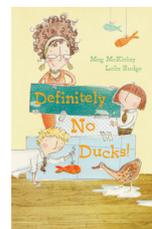
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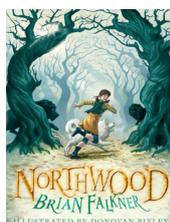
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