

Walker Books Classroom Ideas



View From the 32nd Floor

Author: Emma Cameron
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Something special has been gifted to you. Join your neighbours, Saturday, 6.00 pm, on the roof.

Living on the thirty-second floor of an apartment block, William has a clear view of the building opposite. He sees his neighbours eating ice-cream, watering potted palms, painting pictures ... or as shadows behind closed curtains. Shadows worry William. With his new friend Rebecca, and helped by lots of cake, a dictionary of names, tai chi, and banana-shaped sticky notes, he plans to tempt his lonely neighbours back into the world. Can they succeed? Always always.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Emma Cameron lives on the South Coast of NSW. While raising two children, she worked in school libraries where she enjoyed being surrounded by books and children. In 2005 she rekindled her interest with writing stories and has completed Certificates in Creative Writing, Short Story Writing, Writing for Children and Editing. Her writing skills have been recognised in writing competitions for both short stories and novels, and her first publication was in anthologies, school resource kits and magazines.

Emma enjoys interacting with others who have stories to tell and enjoys the opportunity to help others explore ways to improve their own writing skills. *Cinnamon Rain* was her first novel.

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 4-6
- Ages 8-12

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel
- Fiction

Themes/ Ideas:

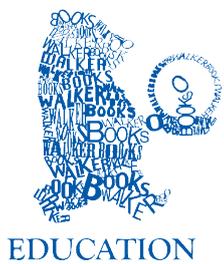
- Community
- Caring for others
- Loneliness
- Individuality

National Curriculum Focus:*

English content descriptions:

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
ACELA1488	ACELA1501	ACELA1515
ACELA1490	ACELA1504	ACELA1518
ACELA1492	ACELA1512	ACELT1613
ACELT1603	ACELT1609	ACELT1615
ACELT1605	ACELT1610	ACELT1618
ACELT1606	ACELT1611	ACELT1800
ACELT1607	ACELT1612	ACELY1710
ACELT1794	ACELY1700	ACELY1801
ACELY1687		
ACELY1688		
ACELY1689		
ACELY1690		

*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.



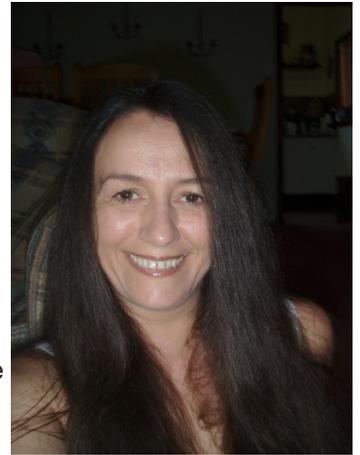
Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Emma Cameron on *View From the 32nd Floor*

When I hear on the news that a person living alone passed away but that nobody noticed for months, I wonder how this happened. I've stayed in an apartment on the 32nd floor and while I ate breakfast on the balcony I could see a man on his balcony across the road, also eating breakfast 32 floors up. It made me think about how people in crowded cities can easily forget that they are actually neighbours and should still look out for each other. Of course, we are also told not to be nosy so that made me think about how best to make sure people aren't forgotten.

As I began writing the story I thought about how the simplest things, like food, music and activities, connect us. I used these things to show how easy it is to join with others and, by making a bit of effort, nobody needs to be forgotten. Sometimes people shut themselves away but if we pay attention, without being nosy, we may find that a simple smile, a hello, or a cup of tea can mean they don't do this.

My favourite books are dictionaries, including those containing names. Like all words, names have particular meanings and I enjoy finding out what these are and where they came from. I relish listening to, or reading, song lyrics. Some don't say much but others do, and writers of these took great effort to select their words so that anyone listening would understand what the song is about. I always pay attention to lyrics and I hope people who don't might start doing so after reading my story.



Discussion Questions and Activities

Before reading *View From the 32nd Floor*, 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 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 *View From the 32nd Floor*? Write a statement of belief for each theme, then assess how this book's treatment of these themes makes you feel.

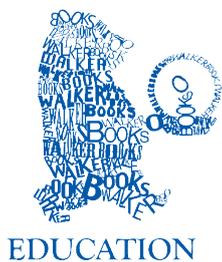
Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that you don't know and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

How can the reader tell when a character is speaking? How can the reader tell which character is speaking when there is a lengthy conversation between two or more characters? Look at chapter 10 as an example.

Write a book report on *View From the 32nd Floor* stating what you liked/disliked about the book, who you think would enjoy the book and mention any books that it is similar to. Use some quotes from the book to illustrate your statements. Create a class blog or Wiki to post your reviews and share them with other students. You can use this blog to post book reviews of any other book you read as a class or on your own. You can use Blogspot (www.blogger.com) or Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) to create your class blog. Walker Books loves reading book reviews, send your class book reviews to educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au.

"This way." Mrs Stavros righted the shoe. "Always this way. Is bad luck other way." Page 80
What are superstitions? List five superstitions that you or your family believe. Do you believe in superstitions? Why or why not?

Mrs Stavros keeps a cactus (*cleistocactus winteri*) in a pot and William is concerned it is not getting enough light. Write a procedure on the best way to care for a cactus or cacti.



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“Though William knew he could not have grown since they last saw him, Mr Crispin seemed somehow taller today.” Page 105

Why does Mr Crispin seem taller? What can body language show about a person’s emotions?

“Crinkled wrinkles splayed out on their faces like a roadmap, tracks wriggling in every direction.” Page 105

A simile is a figure of speech that expresses a resemblance between things of different kinds (usually formed with “like” or “as”).

(www.dictionary.kids.net.au). Can you find any other examples of similes in *View from the 32nd Floor*? Try writing your own example of a simile.

Mrs Stavros likes to cook traditional Greek food like keftedes, baklava and spinach and fetta pastries. What foods are made traditionally in your culture?

Onomatopoeia describes words that sound like the noise they are describing. You pronounce the word on-oh-mat-oh-pee-ah. Some common examples are boom, fizz, creak, knock, ping, thud, whoosh and bang.

“He smashed the base of it into the door’s timber, beside the handle. Bang. Bang. Crack.” Page 61 Rewrite this sentence without using onomatopoeic words. Write a short story using as many onomatopoeic words as you can.

Chapter 9 ends on a cliff-hanger. What does cliff-hanger mean? How does it add suspense and interest to the story? Where else might you find cliff-hanger endings?

“I o-o-only wanted t-t-o put the ket-t-le on for t-tea,” he said. Page 63

Why has the author written this dialogue like this? What effect does it have on how you read the text? How would it be different if the dialogue was written normally?

Rebecca likes to keep lists of all sorts of things. Make a list of all the characters William and Rebecca meet and include their apartment number and a description of their apartment.

William and Rebecca keep lists. Do you think this helps them think about what is worrying them? Do the lists help them do something about what worries them?

William likes to pick a new name for himself every day. Hold a “choose your own name” day in your class where students can pick a new name for the day. Wear a name tag to display the new name. Each student can prepare a presentation to explain what their new name means and why they chose it. Have each student create a collage to illustrate the meaning of the name.

William chooses his name based on its meaning. Have students research the origin of their name on www.meaning-of-names.com or www.behindthename.com. Also have students ask their parents why they chose their names. Do you think the name describes you at all? Students can present their findings to the class.

Some meanings of the names of characters in *View From the 32nd Floor* are given in the story. Others aren’t. List those you know already and look up those you don’t. Do you think the names of the characters suit them?

What does the amount of people on each person’s funeral guest list signify? Why do Rebecca and William think this is important?

““We have to make this ourselves” explained William. “The lady we are giving it to doesn’t like old people.”” page 74

Why might this statement offend Mrs Bassett? What else could William have said that would not have made Mrs Bassett’s brow crinkle?

“William felt like an angler who could see a fish close to the end of his line, but not quite hooked.” Page 115 The author is using metaphor as a literary device in this line. What is a metaphor? Can you find other examples of metaphor in this book or other books?

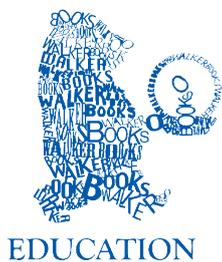
“William decided that, if sounds could be seen, this would look like sun sparkling off the ocean on a bright day.” Page 118

Imagine if other sounds could be seen and describe what the following would look like:

- Electric guitar
- Car horn
- Lion’s roar
- Maracas

What is the moral of this book? Hint: read chapter 22. Why do you think this moral is important? Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

Songs tell stories. How much do you listen to what songs say? Find a song and pick your favourite line or verse. Why is it special to you?



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William's Dad uses songs to keep connected to William each day. How do the songs show that he knows what is happening in William's life? Ask if students can name any of the songs that are mentioned in the book. Refer to the list below and search for the songs on www.youtube.com. Play them for the class and then have a discussion about what the song means and why William's dad may have chosen it.

- Page 13: *Up on the Roof* by Carol King or The Drifters
- Page 45: *Forever Young* by Bob Dylan
- Page 51: *What a Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong
- Page 67: *That's Just the Way It Is* by Bruce Hornsby
- Page 71: *Comes a Time* by Neil Young
- Page 91: *Sound of Silence* by Simon and Garfunkel
- Page 103: *I Can See Clearly Now* by Johnny Nash, Jimmy Cliff or Bob Marley
- Page 111: *Clean Up Time* by John Lennon
- Page 116: *I Could Have Danced All Night* from *My Fair Lady*
- Page 121: *From Big Things Little Things Grow* by Paul Kelly
- Page 123: *I Like to Move It* by Sacha Baron Cohen from *Madagascar*
- Page 126: *Dance With Me* by Orleans

Community

William and Rebecca slowly but surely bring all their neighbours together to form a community. What are the benefits of a close, friendly community?

Make a list of things that William and Rebecca do that means others aren't forgotten.

Loneliness

Early in the novel William wishes that he and Rebecca will be friends even though he doesn't know much about her. Why do you think he is desperate for a friend? Why is it important to have friends?

Do you have old people in your family? Do you know old or lonely people who don't have friends or family around them? What could you do to help them?

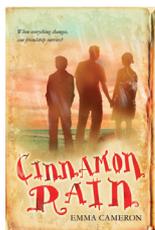
Caring for Others

William's mother thinks that looking at the neighbours with binoculars is an invasion of privacy. Do you think William intended to invade his neighbour's privacy? What do you think his intentions were?

Individuality

William likes to keep unusual books such as a dictionary of plants or ridiculous words. Do you collect, create or do anything that adds to your individuality?

Other great titles from Walker Books



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Emma Cameron
9781921720451
AU\$22.95/NZ\$24.99

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Susan Green
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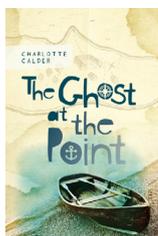
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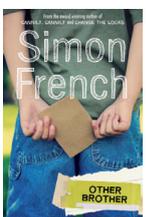
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