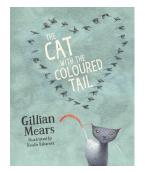


Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Cat with the Coloured Tail

by Gillian Mears Illustrated by Dinalie Dabarera ISBN: 9781922077400 ARRP: \$19.95 NZRRP: \$24.99 September 2015 *Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Mr Hooper and The Cat with the Coloured Tail travel through the countryside in their icecream van. They enjoy looking for heart shapes (their favourite game) and making people happy with their delicious moon-creams. But a dark feeling is following the cat. Something is wrong. When the ice-cream van enters the forest, Mr Hooper and the cat realise the heart of the world is in danger. Will they be able to save it? A lyrical fable about love and healing.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Gillian Mears has been long loved for her novels and short stories, including the 2012 multi-award-winning novel for adults *Foal's Bread*. She wrote *The Cat with the Coloured Tail* while camped in the South Australian mallee, in her converted ambo camper, Ant and Bee. She is presently working on a new novel and a second book for children.

Dinalie Dabarera is a freelance illustrator based in Sydney. She specialises in pencil sketches of imaginary worlds and strange occurrences. *The Cat with the Coloured Tail* is her first book. See what she's up to at <u>dinalie.com</u>.

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 note for: • Ages 8 • Primary yo 3-6 | + | Key Learnin Areas: • English • Visual Arts | • Illustra Fictio | ted n | Fhemes/Ideas: Sadness Friendship Helping Others Bullying |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| | English Year 3 ACELA1 ACELT1: ACELT1: ACELT1: ACELY1 ACELY1 ACELY1 ACELY1 | Year 4 483 ACELA145 594 ACELA145 596 ACELA145 599 ACELT160 601 ACELT160 675 ACELT160 676 ACELT179 678 ACELT178 | 6 ACELA1512 8 ACELT1610 3 ACELT1611 4 ACELT1611 5 ACELT1611 6 ACELT1610 7 ACELY1699 7 ACELY1796 4 ACELY1709 9 ACELY1701 0 ACELY1704 | Focus:* Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613 ACELT1800 ACELY1709 ACELY1709 ACELY1711 ACELY1801 ACELY1714 | *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

Before reading *The Cat with the Coloured Tail* view the cover and title of the book. 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? Revisit your answer to these questions after you have finished reading the book. Were your predictions correct?

Exploring the Text

Now that you have finished reading the book, if you could give it a new title, what would it be? Write about your title and why you chose it. Use examples from the book to persuade your reader that this is a good choice.

What are the themes in this novel? As a class, or in small groups, identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar 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.

The term "ambiguous" means to have more than one possible meaning. As a class, discuss how authors can intentionally make a story ambiguous to allow readers to create their own meaning or interpretation of the story. Invite students to share their interpretation of the heart of the world from this story.

Exploring the Illustrations

How do the illustrations enhance the reading experience? How do you think the story would be different if there were no illustrations? Choose a key scene from the novel and illustrate it in your own style.

Compare the illustrations and design in chapter 5 to the other chapters in the book. What is different about this chapter (i.e. the text is surrounded by dark illustrations, whereas the text in the other chapters isn't enclosed by illustrations.) What effect does this have on the reader?

Colour

Discuss the use of colour in the illustrations: How does the illustrator capture the mood of the text and add to the reader's experience with her choice of colour? Some illustrations are black and white with a single element in colour (for example, the cat's tail on page 23 or the Moon-Cream on page 27). Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to use this style? What effect does it have on the viewer?

Many colours have symbolic meaning and illustrators can use this symbolism to add depth to their work. As a class, create mind-maps with the name of a colour at the centre, and the symbolic meaning surrounding it. Use the below mind-map as an example. After the mind-maps are complete, identify the symbolism used in the illustrations in *The Cat with the Coloured Tail*.



What does the storm on page 49 symbolise?

Themes

Friendship

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Mr Hooper and the cat are best friends who share special moments and have games that they like to play together. Is it important to have friends? Make a list of the great things about having friends.

Mr Hooper and the cat like to find heart shapes wherever they appear. Do you have any special games that you like to play with your friends? In pairs, walk around your school grounds looking for heart shapes like Mr Hooper and the cat like to do. Make a list or take photos of all the heart shaped objects you can find. Share your finds with the class.



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Sadness

If Mr Hooper and the cat were visiting you when you were sad, what colour would the cat's tail become and what flavour of Moon-Cream would Mr Hooper make for you? Draw a picture of the cat with his tail in your favourite colours and a picture of what your Moon-Cream would look like.

What can make people sad? Is it ok to feel sad sometimes? What are some ways to make yourself feel better when you're feeling sad? What are some ways you can help a friend when they are feeling sad?

In chapter 2, Mr Hooper and the cat find and help an old lady by reminding her of happy memories from her younger days. Think about your happiest memory and write it down on a piece of paper. Include some illustrations of your happy memory. Keep this special happy memory letter with you for whenever you are feeling sad, you can read your letter and look at the illustration and feel a bit better.

Bullying

In chapter 3, Mr Hooper and the cat find a boy who is being bullied by a group of mean children. What does "bullying" mean? What are your school's rules about bullying? Can you think of any ways to improve these rules?

Have a class discussion on bullying, including these questions:

- · Can someone be a bully without meaning to be?
- What is the difference between bullying and just fooling around?
- What would you do if you saw someone else being bullied?
- What would you do if you were being bullied?
- What are some possible reasons a person might be a bully?

Further Activities

Create a comic strip of a key scene from the novel. Remember that comic strips tell stories mostly through the illustrations and dialogue, rather than descriptive language like in a novel.

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. For example, rewrite the scene where Mr Hooper and the cat help the old lady from the old lady's perspective.

Make a poster advertising Moon-Creams. Before creating your poster, have a discussion about the purpose of advertisements. What techniques and strategies can you use to fulfil this purpose in your Moon-Cream poster?

Design your own book cover for *The Cat with the Coloured Tail*. Make sure to include all the elements that make up a book cover (such as title, author name, illustrator name, publisher, blurb, barcode, etc.)

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



Illuminated Adventures Kate DiCamillo K. G. Campbell 9780763660406 HB 9780763676711 PB Classroom ideas available

Flora & Ulysses: The



Half A Man Michael Morpurgo Gemma O'Callaghan 9781406351330 HB 9781406360769 PB Classroom ideas available



Jim's Lion Russell Hoban Alexis Deacon 9781406346022 HB 9781406360714 PB Classroom ideas available



Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made Stephan Pastis 9781406339802 HB 9781406347876 PB Classroom ideas available

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