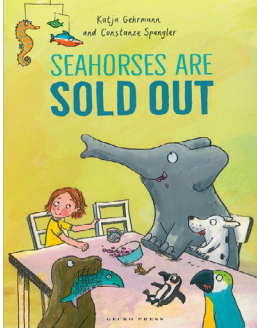




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Seahorses Are Sold Out

Constanze Spengler
illustrated by Katja Gehrmann
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Mika's father works from home and he's very busy! He can never find time for the promised swimming trip. So Dad allows Mika to choose a pet from the store while he finishes the project—something quiet like a mouse. And so begins a wonderfully turbulent story in which Mika brings home one animal after another... The mouse gets lost so they need a dog to find it. The dog is followed by a seal, the seal a penguin. How many animals can come to stay before a harassed father notices?

This is a high-spirited story about an enterprising only child and a father's juggle to work from home.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Constanze Spengler is an author and illustrator living in Hamburg, Germany.

Katja Gehrmann writes and illustrates children's books. She studied illustration in Mexico, Spain and Hamburg, Germany, where she now lives.

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:
• Ages 3-7
• Years F-1

Key Learning Areas:
• English

Example of:
• Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:
• Family
• Pets
• Imagination



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Seahorses are Sold Out*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author and 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? Write your own story using the title *Seahorses are Sold Out*.

Exploring the Book

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *Seahorses Are Sold Out* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Throughout the book Mika's dad can't play with Mika because he is busy working. Have your parents worked from home? How did it feel when they couldn't play with you? What are some ideas for what Mika could have done to be entertained instead?

Look at the spreads in the pet shop. Identify as many animals as you can and make two lists: one list of pets you think might have been at a real pet shop, and one list of pets shown in the book which are a bit more... unusual.

Do you have any pets at home? What makes an animal a 'good' or a 'bad' pet? If you could have any animal as a pet, what would you choose and why? Write a list of five reasons where your favourite animal would be a good pet, and five reasons why it might be a bad pet. Share your list with a classmate.

There are many animals that live in the pet shop. As a class, come up with three more pets Mika could buy, and why Mika would need to buy them. For example, maybe the elephant gets a sore throat from singing, so Mika buys a monkey to pick lemons to help soothe his throat...

How do you think Mika's dad feels about all the pets? How would the story be different if it was from Mika's dad's perspective?

How do you think the illustrator, Constanze Spengler, has created the art for the book? What tools do you think she might have used and why?

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

Take turns describing/retelling the story as if you were explaining it to someone who hasn't read it yet. What do you think are the most important parts of the story? Why do you think that?

Further Activities

In the book the pet shop is sold out of seahorses. Research more about seahorses on the internet. Make a list of websites which are useful for learning about seahorses. Make sure you consider whether the information each site provides is reliable, who wrote or manages it and how up-to-date it is. After learning more about seahorses, do you think a seahorse would make a good pet? Why or why not?

Katja Gehrmann and Constanze Spengler are from Germany. Research German culture on the internet. Make a presentation to share with the class. You might include examples of German food, traditional clothes, their national flag and animal, and places in Germany you would like to go on a holiday. Can you find any other books about Germany or by German authors in your library? How are they similar or different to *Seahorses Are Sold Out*?

Draw your own pet shop scene. Add in as many different animals as you can!

Everybody in the class make your own animal mask. Hold a performance of the book to another class, with everybody using their mask to play a different animal.