Kitten Kaboodle
Mission One:
The Catier Emerald
Author: Eileen O’Hely
Illustrator: Heath McKenzie
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NZRRP: $16.99
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Outline:

“Your mission,” said the chief, “should you choose to accept it, is to penetrate DOG Fortress, disguised as a pedigree kitten.”

Kitten Kaboodle is no ordinary cat. He’d rather chase a Rottweiler than a ribbon and prefers kung-fu to cuddles. He is the number one secret agent at CAT – the Clandestine Activity Taskforce. When pedigree kittens start disappearing, Kitten Kaboodle is on the job. Who could guess that this mission will lead him straight to DOG – the Disaster Organisation Group – and the priceless Catier Emerald?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Eileen O’Hely was born in Melbourne and currently lives in Brisbane with her husband and young family. She has worked as an English teacher in Germany, an IT specialist for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy and as a web writer and sports reporter in England, writing as much fiction as her hectic sight-seeing schedule would allow. Her first novel won the 2006 Children’s Books Ireland Bisto Honour Award. Kitten Kaboodle Mission 1: The Catier Emerald is her first Walker title.

Heath McKenzie is a Melbourne-based artist who has worked with many publishers and production companies. Heath is generally inspired by too much television, too many movies and music (lots of music). He is specifically inspired by movie posters, 50s and 60s commercial art, Japanese signs and cartoons (anything animated, really).

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.

National Curriculum Focus:

Year 1
- ACES1444
- ACETL1683
- ACETL1684
- ACETL1685
- ACETL1686
- ACETL1687
- ACETL1688
- ACETL1689
- ACETL1690
- ACETL1691
- ACETL1692
- ACETL1693
- ACETL1694
- ACETL1695
- ACETL1696
- ACETL1697
- ACETL1698
- ACETL1699
- ACETL1700

Year 2
- ACES1445
- ACETL1683
- ACETL1684
- ACETL1685
- ACETL1686
- ACETL1687
- ACETL1688
- ACETL1689
- ACETL1690
- ACETL1691
- ACETL1692
- ACETL1693
- ACETL1694
- ACETL1695
- ACETL1696
- ACETL1697
- ACETL1698
- ACETL1699
- ACETL1700

Year 3
- ACES1446
- ACETL1683
- ACETL1684
- ACETL1685
- ACETL1686
- ACETL1687
- ACETL1688
- ACETL1689
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- ACETL1695
- ACETL1696
- ACETL1697
- ACETL1698
- ACETL1699
- ACETL1700

*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.*

Themes/ Ideas:
- Action/ adventure
- Humour
- Disguise
- Animals

Example of:
- Illustrated fiction

Key Learning Areas:
- English

These notes are for:
- Primary years 1-3
- Ages 7+

*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 enquires please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

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Eileen O’Hely on *Kitten Kaboodle*

My story ideas always start with a character. *Kitten Kaboodle Mission One: The Catier Emerald* was inspired by the name of a shop called “Kit ‘n Caboodle”. I immediately thought it’d make a great name for a super-cool cat. And what could be a cooler job for him than being a secret agent? Kitten Kaboodle is brave, acrobatic and always up for a challenge. He’s also arrogant and easily distracted by his favourite things: fishy smells and the colour green.

I love playing with words, especially creating puns and acronyms, and they actually drive the plot of the book. It was fun thinking up names that abbreviate to CAT and DOG, and my thesaurus and dictionary got a real workout using as many doggy and catty words as possible. Even the name of the town where it all happens, Felcanham, is a combination of “feline” and “canine”.

Heath McKenzie on *Kitten Kaboodle*

For ten years now I’ve been professionally illustrating all manner of subject matter for picture books, chapter books, comics, stationary, advertising campaigns and more. My artwork is entirely digital from start to finish but all drawn freehand and traditionally as possible so as to keep things as “real” as possible. While I have no experience in kung fu or secret spy activity (as far as you need to know) I have rather more experience with dogs and cats so felt at least partially prepared for my role in bringing *Kitten Kaboodle* to life.

**Discussion Questions and Activities**

Before reading *Kitten Kaboodle*, look at the cover 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 and 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

The title and subtitle both contain humorous puns. What is a pun? What are the puns being made in the title and subtitle? What clues do these give the reader as to the mood of the story?
What is a genre? What genre is this book? Is this story factual or imaginary? What is the purpose of this book?

Read the first chapter aloud to the class. Ask students to form groups and write down all the information they discovered about the main character and the setting of the story.

Why do certain words (such as names of people and places) in the book start with a capital letter?

How can you tell when a character is speaking?

How would the book be different if there were no illustrations? How would it be different if there were no words? Do you think the story would stay the same?

Make a list of the henchdogs’ names and have a class discussion on why you think the author chose these particular names for the villains.

An acronym is an abbreviation formed by taking the first letter of words to create a new word. For example, CAT stands for Clandestine Activity Taskforce. What other acronyms can you find in this novel? Make a list of common acronyms and their meanings (for example: PC = personal computer; LOL = laugh out loud). Why do you think acronyms are used?

Kitten Kaboodle’s chief uses the military style when referring to a time. Military style uses 24-hour time spoken as a hundred (for example, 1:00pm = thirteen-hundred hours). What time is the emergency G-14 briefing being held? (See page 29.) Convert the following to 12-hour time:

- Zero six hundred hours
- Eleven hundred hours
- Fifteen hundred hours
- Twenty-two hundred hours

The reader sees most events from Kitten Kaboodle’s perspective. Rewrite a scene from another character’s perspective, for example rewrite Chapter 1 from Rasputin’s perspective or Chapter 8 from Delilah’s perspective.

Newspaper articles should include information on who, what, when, why and where, to give the reader the full story. Look at the newspaper article on pages 40-41 and identify the who, what, when, why and where of the story.

On pages 51-55 Delilah shows Kitten Kaboodle the collar he must wear for the mission and she explains all of the new gadgets that are included. Design your own version of the collar with a range of different gadgets that would help Kitten Kaboodle when he is out on a mission. Draw a diagram of the collar and write a short paragraph about each gadget. Present your collar to the class.

Look at the illustrations of Judy, Kitten Kaboodle and Rasputin on pages 19 and 20. What can you tell about what these characters are feeling based on their facial expressions and body language?

Look at the illustrations on page 87-88. What does the positioning of the characters in these illustrations tell you about what is happening in the story?

Think about your pet (or a friend’s pet, or an imaginary pet) and write a story about what they do when you aren’t around. Do they have a secret job? Go on adventures? Draw illustrations for your story.

Write a book review on Kitten Kaboodle. Write about what you liked about the book, your favourite parts and who you think would enjoy the book. Also, refer to other books you have read that are similar.

Research the author and illustrator of Kitten Kaboodle in your school library or on the internet. What other books have they written/illustrated? Find their books in your school library to read.