Sad, the Dog
by Sandy Fussell
Illustrated by Tull Suwannakit
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Outline:

Mr and Mrs Cripps feed their dog, wash him, and even clean inside his ears. But they don’t give him a name. So the dog names himself – SAD. What will it take to make SAD, the dog, happy?

Author/Illustrator Information:

Sandy Fussell lives on the NSW South Coast with her husband and two sons. She studied mathematics at university, is intensely interested in history, and now works in IT. She is afraid of bears, volcanoes and samurai swords and has written a book about each one of them. For further information please visit her website: www.sandyfussell.com

Tull Suwannakit is originally from Thailand and now lives in Australia. He received a BFA in animation from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2004, and has worked as an animation studio sculptor and set designer in New York. He has been writing and illustrating children’s picture books since 2006 in Thailand, but What Happens Next? is his first book with an Australian publisher. Tull completed his Masters in Fine Art from RMIT in 2011 and has been exhibiting extensively in galleries in Melbourne. When he is not doing his art, Tull teaches young children at a preschool.

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.

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National Curriculum Focus:*

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*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.
Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading Sad, the Dog, 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? After reading, revisit your answer to this question. Were your predictions correct?

Exploring the Text

Is Sad, the Dog an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell?

Different lettering (also called “typeface” or “font”) is used throughout the book. When is this different lettering used? Why do you think it is used in these places?

Who are the characters in this story? Who is the main character? What do we know about the characters from the text and illustrations? Create a character profile for each of the characters.

Examine the page where Sad stops singing, drawing and reading. Pay attention to Sad’s facial expression and body language. As a class, create a mind-map of the emotions that Sad might be feeling at this point in the story. In the mind-map, include some thoughts that might be going through Sad’s head (for example: “Nobody loves me” or “I’m very lonely” etc.) Do the same activity for the page where the new family first arrive and Sad hides in the pile of leaves and for the page where Jack renames Sad as Lucky.

Endpapers are the first and last pages in a book (i.e. the ones that are stuck to the inside of the front and back covers). Compare what is happening on the front endpapers to the back endpapers. What is different about them? What do you think caused the changes?

Grammar and Punctuation

How can you tell when a character is speaking? Draw common punctuation marks on the board and discuss the use and purpose of each. Read the book again and ask students to clap whenever they see a speech/quotations mark.

Why do the characters’ names start with a capital letter? Identify examples of these in the book.

What do sentences begin and end with? Find examples of these in the book.

Illustration

Find three things that you like about the illustrations. Describe why you like each of these three things.

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

Further Activities

Write a story about the day you got your pet, or a special day you had with your pet, or an imaginative story about your dream pet. Include illustrations in your story.

Write a sequel to Sad, the Dog. What do Jack and Lucky do next? Some ideas are they could help another sad animal, Lucky could go missing or Mr and Mrs Cripps could come back and try to take Lucky away. Let your imagination go wild!

Sad is “an unwanted Christmas present from a friend.” Why is it a bad idea to give someone a pet as a surprise gift?

Dogs and other pets can take a lot of work to look after. Make a list of all the items you would need and time commitments you would have to make to look after a dog or another pet.

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:

- What Happens Next? Tull Suwannakit 9781922077561 HB Classroom ideas available
- Bogtrotter Margaret Wild Judith Rossell 9781921977558 HB Classroom ideas available
- Sam and Dave Dig a Hole Mac Barnett Jon Klassen 9781406357769 HB 9781406360981 PB Classroom ideas available
- Mum Goes to Work Libby Gleeson Leila Rudge 9781921529825 HB Classroom ideas available