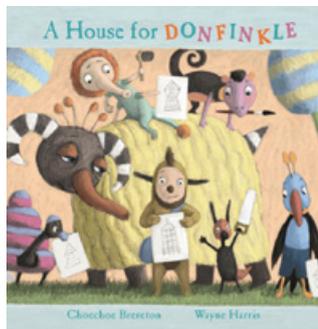




# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## A House for Donfinkle

Author: Choechoe Brereton  
Illustrator: Wayne Harris  
ISBN: 9781921720536  
ARRP: \$24.95  
NZRRP: \$27.99  
May 2014

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Up high in the grasslands where Wooble Beasts roam, Donfinkle Vonkrinkle is building his home.

When up pop four creatures to babble and squawk, A troublesome taunt full of bothersome talk ...

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Choechoe Brereton loves writing. She also loves rainy days, hot chocolate, whales, friendly monsters and magical shops. She doesn't know where she would be if she couldn't imagine. *A House For Donfinkle* is her first book.

Wayne Harris is an award-winning illustrator and designer. He won the APA Best Designed Picture Book of the Year Award for *A Bit of Company* by Margaret Wild and for *Gordon's Got a Snookie* by Lisa Shanahan. He was short-listed in the 1995 NSW Premier's Award for writing and illustrating *Judy and the Volcano*, the same year *Going Home* was named an American Library Association Notable Children's Book. He works as a designer for Walker Books Australia and also teaches design and illustration. He has most recently illustrated *Edge of the World*, written by Ian Trevaskis, published by Walker Books.



## 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 F-2
- Ages 3+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Art

### Example of:

- Picture book

### Themes/ Ideas:

- Trusting yourself
- Friendship
- Buildings/ Architecture
- Rhyme/ Rhythm

### National Curriculum Focus:\*

English content descriptions include:

Foundation	Year 1	Year 2
ACELA1429	ACELA1444	ACELA1462
ACELA1432	ACELA1787	ACELA1463
ACELA1786	ACELA1449	ACELA1465
ACELA1437	ACELA1452	ACELA1469
ACELA1440	ACELT1581	ACELT1587
ACELT1575	ACELT1582	ACELT1589
ACELT1783	ACELT1584	ACELT1590
ACELT1578	ACELT1586	ACELT1591
ACELT1580	ACELY1657	ACELY1666
ACELY1647	ACELY1658	ACELY1667
ACELY1648	ACELY1661	ACELY1668
ACELY1651		ACELY1671

\*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

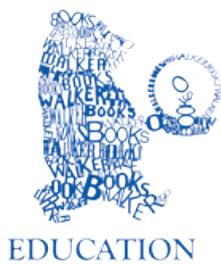
- View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
  - » The title
  - » The author
  - » The illustrator
  - » The publisher
  - » The blurb.
- What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *A House for Donfinkle*.
- Read the book aloud to the class without showing the illustrations. Ask students to draw or make an image in their mind of the different versions of Donfinkle's house. Read the book again, showing the illustrations to the class. How do the illustrations change the story?

### Exploring the Text

- Is *A House for Donfinkle* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell? Who do you think the book was created for?
- 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?
- What is your favourite part of the book? What do you like about that part?
- Choose a page and discuss how the words and images convey what emotions the characters are feeling. Look at their body language, facial expressions and the language.
- What do we know about Donfinkle based on the text and illustrations in the book? Create a word cloud using words to describe Donfinkle at [www.abcya.com/word\\_clouds](http://www.abcya.com/word_clouds).
- Why do you think Donfinkle listened to the creatures in the first place and changed his house? Why do you think he changed everything back in the end? Can you think of a time when you changed your mind based on what someone else said? How did

this make you feel? Have a class discussion on when it is okay to be influenced by others and when you should do what you think is right.

- The Gooble warns Donfinkle about the dangerous Fozzles. Draw a picture of and write a short story about a Fozzle. Where does it live? What does it eat?
- Why do you think the creatures were being so critical to Donfinkle about his house? What do you think Donfinkle learnt by the end of the story? What do you think the creatures learnt by the end of the story?
- As a class, write a list of strategies people can use when being teased.
- Choose one of the four creatures (i.e. Mooble, Flooble, Gooble or Blooble) and think about what their home would look like based on what they suggest to Donfinkle in the book. Draw a picture of their houses and label interesting parts. Present your design to the class and explain why each feature is important and how it suits the creature that will live in it.
- Compare Donfinkle's house as he built it originally and as it looks when all the creatures have modified it. Describe the difference between the houses and discuss what you think of the original and the modified version. Do you think it was a good idea that Donfinkle listened to the creatures in the first place?
- Why are some words written in a larger font? What effect does this have on how you read the book?
- As a class, write a sequel to the book about Donfinkle making or building something else with interference from the other characters. Each student can write and illustrate a page about one of the characters telling Donfinkle that he should change his creation. Share your draft page with another class member and have a discussion about what could be improved (punctuation, spelling and meaning). When all the pages are complete, bind them together to make a book that can live on the bookshelf in your classroom.



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas

## Grammar and Punctuation

- Why do the characters' names start with a capital letter? Why are names written like that? What does a sentence begin and end with? Find examples of this in the book.
- Draw punctuation marks (such as full stops, commas, quotation marks, exclamation marks and question marks) on the board and identify where they are in the book. Ask why books use these punctuation marks. How would the book change if the author didn't use punctuation?

## Illustration

- Analyse one of the double-page spreads from the book. Questions to ask could include:
  - » What do you look at first? Why? Then how does your eye travel around the page? (This is called the "reading path".)
  - » What perspective is used? Is the picture shown close-up or from a distance?
  - » What objects are big and small? Why are they shown this way?
  - » What objects are in the foreground (front) of the picture? The background? Midground?
  - » What are the dominant colours? What mood (feeling) do these colours create?
  - » Where are the characters in the picture looking? Why are they looking there? What effect does this have?

- What other books has Wayne Harris illustrated? Have you read any of his other books? Can you find any in your school library? Which is your favourite Wayne Harris book? Present it to the class explaining why you like it.

## Visual Arts

- Design your own imaginative dream home and build it out of ice-cream sticks, paper-mâché and other craft material.
- Form groups of 3 or 4 students, take a sheet of paper and fold it into thirds or quarters lengthways (depending on the number of students). Fold the paper so you can only see one section at a time. Students take turns at drawing a section of a house (without the other students looking) and then pass it to the next student. When everyone is finished, unfold the paper to see what the house looks like. Discuss why it is important to have a plan for a group project, rather than everyone doing their own thing.
- Create your own weird and wonderful world full of unique creatures and plants. Give each of the creatures a name and write a story about them.

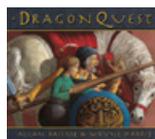
## Also illustrated by Wayne Harris



**Walker Classics:**  
**A Bit of Company**  
Margaret Wild  
PB 9781921529054  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



**Walker Classics:**  
**Going Home**  
Margaret Wild  
PB 9781921529047  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



**Walker Classics:**  
**Dragonquest**  
Allan Baillie  
PB 9781921977848  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99



**Edge of the World**  
Ian Trevaskis  
HB 9781921150210  
AU\$29.95/NZ\$31.99  
PB 9781922077110  
AU\$16.95/NZ\$18.99

Classroom ideas available

## Other great picture books from Walker Books



**The Croc and the Platypus**  
Jackie Hosking &  
Marjorie Crosby-Fairall  
HB 9781922077608  
AU\$24.95/NZ\$27.99



**The Lost Girl**  
Ambelin Kwaymullina &  
Leanne Tobin (illus)  
HB 9781921529634  
AU\$24.95/NZ\$27.99

Classroom ideas available



**What Happens Next?**  
Tull Suwannakit  
HB 9781922077561  
AU\$27.95/NZ\$29.99

Classroom ideas available



**So Many Wonderfuls**  
Tina Matthews  
HB 9781922077516  
AU\$24.95/NZ\$27.99

Classroom ideas available