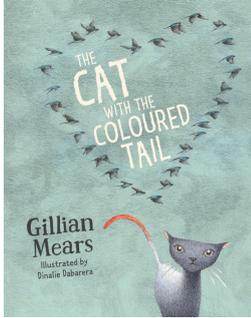




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Cat with the Coloured Tail

by Gillian Mears
Illustrated by Dinalie Dabarera
ISBN: 9781922077400
ARRP: \$19.95
NZRRP: \$24.99
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*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 enquiries please contact:
educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

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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 dinalie.com.

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.

<p>These notes are for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 8+ • Primary years 3-6 	<p>Key Learning Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Visual Arts 	<p>Example of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrated Fiction 	<p>Themes/Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness • Friendship • Helping Others • Bullying 	
<p>National Curriculum Focus:*</p>				
<p>English Year 3 ACELA1483 ACELT1594 ACELT1596 ACELT1599 ACELT1601 ACELY1675 ACELY1676 ACELY1677 ACELY1678 ACELY1682</p>	<p>Year 4 ACELA1490 ACELA1496 ACELA1498 ACELT1603 ACELT1604 ACELT1605 ACELT1607 ACELT1794 ACELY1689 ACELY1690 ACELY1694</p>	<p>Year 5 ACELA1504 ACELA1512 ACELT1610 ACELT1611 ACELT1798 ACELY1699 ACELY1796 ACELY1700 ACELY1701 ACELY1704</p>	<p>Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613 ACELT1800 ACELY1709 ACELY1711 ACELY1801 ACELY1714</p>	<p>*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.</p>



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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.

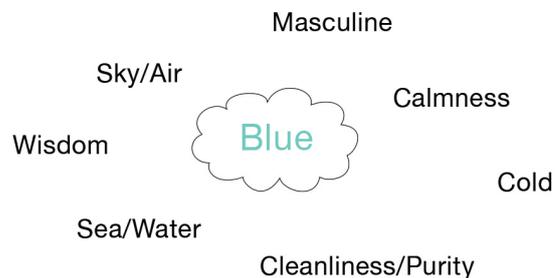
Compare the illustrations and design in chapter 5 to the other chapters in the book. What is different about this chapter (i.e. the text is surrounded by dark illustrations, whereas the text in the other chapters isn't enclosed by illustrations.) What effect does this have on the reader?

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

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.

