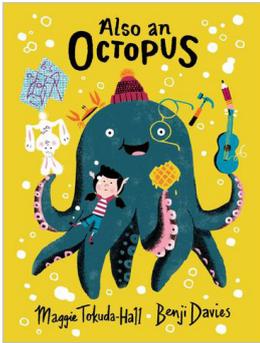




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Also an Octopus

by Maggie Tokuda-Hall
illustrated by Benji Davies
ISBN: 9781406368390
ARRP: \$24.99
NZRRP: \$27.99
November 2016

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

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Outline:

Every story starts with nothing, so ... why not an octopus who wants to fly in a spaceship? A delightfully meta picture book that will set imaginations soaring.

From Benji Davies, the illustrator of *The Storm Whale* and *Grandad's Island*, comes a metafictional story about ... how to build a story! First, a story needs a character. So why not a ukulele-playing octopus? And since this is a story, the octopus has to want something maybe it dreams of travelling to faraway galaxies in a purple spaceship. But every character needs an obstacle to overcome, and when the octopus sets out to build its own spaceship out of glue, umbrellas, glitter and waffles ... well, he doesn't have much luck. Could there be another character that could help? Debut author Maggie Tokuda-Hall sets up a funny, smart and warm-hearted story all about storytelling, then hands the baton to imaginative readers, who will be more than prepared to take it away.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Maggie Tokuda-Hall has an MFA in writing from the University of San Francisco and a tendency to spill things. As a longtime children's bookseller she has read her fair share of stories, and she is always hungry for more. Her favourite animal is an octopus, or else an elephant. She lives in San Francisco. Find her online at www.prettyokmaggie.com and on Twitter as @emteehall.

Benji Davies is an animation director and award-winning illustrator, whose picture books include the Bizzy Bear series, *The Storm Whale* and *Grandad's Island*, which was shortlisted for the Association of Illustrators' prestigious World Illustration Awards. He lives in London with his wife, Nina. Find him online at www.benjidadavies.com, and on Twitter and Instagram as @Benji_Davies.

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 5+

Key Learning Areas:

- English (Creative Writing)

Example of:

- Picture book

Themes/Ideas:

- Creativity
- Stories
- Imagination

National Curriculum Focus:*

English

Foundation
ACELA1429
ACELA1430
ACELT1575
ACELT1578
ACELT1785

ACELY1645
ACELY1646
ACELY1648
ACELY1650
ACELY1651

Year 1

ACELA1447
ACELA1451
ACELT1581
ACELT1582
ACELT1584

ACELT1832
ACELY1656
ACELY1658
ACELY1661

Year 2

ACELT1587
ACELT1589
ACELT1590
ACELT1591
ACELT1593
ACELY1668

*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.



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author and illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the book might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write an imaginative story using the title *Also an Octopus*.

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 the octopus' rocket. Read the book again, showing the illustrations to the class. How do the illustrations change the story?

Exploring the Book

Is *Also an Octopus* 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?

What purpose does this book serve, in other words, why do you think the author wrote this book?

This book has two titles, *Also an Octopus*, or *A Little Bit of Nothing*. Why do you think the author gave the book two titles? What do they each mean? Create another title for the book.

After reading the book to the class, have students use what they have learned to write their own imaginative story. Write the following questions on the board and discuss each one. Students can work alone or in pairs to brainstorm ideas for their story.

- Who is the character?
- What is something interesting about that character?
- What does your character want?
- How can your character get what they want?
- What could go wrong?
- How can your character fix the problem?
- How does the story end?

A variation on the previous activity is to perform the activity as a class, inviting one student to answer each question resulting in a collaborative story.

Group students in pairs and give each student a picture book from your school library. Ask students to identify the elements of the previous activity in these books. Does every book contain all of this information? Students then swap their books and repeat the activity. Ask each pair to compare their answers. Did they have the same answers? If students had different answers, discuss why they think they had this result.

Create a story starter kit for creative writing activities which consists of three boxes, each containing story elements on slips of paper. These boxes are labelled "Who is the character?", "What does the character want?" and "What goes wrong?". The teacher can pre-prepare items for each of these boxes (some examples below) or students can create the ideas to fill the boxes.

Examples:

Who is the character?

- A singing alien
- A book-loving boy
- A girl who can fly
- A talking dog
- A very tall pirate

What does the character want?

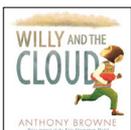
- To be a movie star
- To learn magic
- To win a soccer game
- To be very brave
- To build a submarine

What goes wrong?

- You get lost in the bush
- You have a fight with a friend
- You can't find your lucky hat
- You get grounded

Some of the text in this book is presented in speech bubbles. What effect does this have on the reader?

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Anthony Browne
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Classroom ideas available



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Timothy Knapman
Michael Rosen
HB 9781406367355
Classroom ideas available



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Oliver Jeffers
Sam Winston
HB 9781406358315
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Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin
Lisa Kennedy
HB 9781922244871
Teacher notes available