



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Introducing D'Lila LaRue

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

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Outline:

D'Lila LaRue lives in the smallest house with the neatest fence and the rosiest garden in the street with her trusty sidekick, Nanny-Anny (who is probably very old but it doesn't matter). This trilogy of stories features D'Lila and Nanny-Anny sharing many fun-filled adventures, whether it's by building an award-winning rose garden, becoming an artist, or attending a favourite play. Even if things don't go exactly to plan . . .

Author/Illustrator Information:

Nette Hilton has worked in many jobs from governess to teacher, tax clerk to receptionist/telephonist and all sorts in between. Her life as a writer began when her daughter, Emma, began to really hate going to school and she set out to write a book to help her through it. Since then, Nette has become an award-winning author with more than twenty years of experience. She grew up in Victoria but has lived in Sydney since the age of eleven. Her *Princess Peony* books are set to become classics of their genre.

A. Yi is an illustrator and animation artist based in Sydney. She likes doodling and wishes all books were illustrated. She has illustrated various children's books including the bestselling *Alice Miranda*, the *Clementine Rose* series, and the *House of Heroes* series for Walker Books Australia.

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 1-4
- Ages 5-9

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Fiction

Themes/Ideas:

- Adventures
- Problem solving
- Mishaps



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Introducing D'Lila LaRue*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author/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? Write your own story using the title *Introducing D'Lila LaRue*.

Based on the cover and back blurb only, what clues are there about who D'Lila might be as a character? As a class, make a mind map about what you think D'Lila will be like.

Exploring the Text

What are the themes in this book? Do different stories have different themes? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of each of the three stories in *Introducing D'Lila LaRue*. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Revisit your mind map about D'Lila. Which of your guesses were correct or incorrect? What new information can you add?

Did you enjoy one of the stories more than the others? What made that story your favourite and why?

D'Lila tries to do the right thing, but sometimes gets it a little mixed up. Find three examples in the story where you think D'Lila did the 'wrong' thing. Do you think D'Lila would agree with you?

"Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," said Nanny. "We haven't got any chickens," said D'Lila." (p10). 'Don't count your chickens before they've hatched' is an idiom, which is a phrase that means something else than what it sounds: Mrs Next Door explains the 'don't count your chickens before they've hatched' means that someone else might win first prize. Other examples are 'that's the last straw' (meaning someone's patience has run out) or 'you missed the boat' (meaning you've missed out on something). As a class, have a brainstorm about idioms. Can you think of any more?

How does D'Lila show resourcefulness in the stories (this means finding clever solutions to problems)?

Nanny Anny and D'Lila are very close. How would you define your own 'family'? Does it go beyond just your close blood relations?

Exploring the Illustrations

There aren't illustrations on every single page of *Introducing D'Lila LaRue*. Who do you think decides where to put an illustration and why? Are there any pages you think need an illustration that don't have them already?

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the book be different if every page had an illustration, or if there were no illustrations at all?

Further activities

What other adventures do you think D'Lila and Nanny Anny could have together? Write and illustrate another story that could be part of *Introducing D'Lila LaRue*.

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

Choose a scene from one of the stories and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might another character like Nanny Anny see and experience events differently to D'Lila?

All the D'Lila stories start with a little introduction: for example, "*D'Lila LaRue lived in the smallest house with the neatest fence and the rosiest garden in the street She lived with her mummy and daddy who were VERY IMPORTANT PEOPLE and that meant they were VERY BUSY and NOT TO BE DISTURBED, especially when they were going away*" (page 7). If someone was reading a collection of adventures from your life, how would you want to be introduced? Write your own introduction, and then one for one of your classmates, and share them aloud!

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