

It's a Story Rory

By Frances Watts

Illustrations by David Legge

Book Summary:

'Hey, Milly, why are we on this blank page?'

'It won't be blank for long. We're going to be in a STORY, Rory!'

Rory has never been in a story before and he's not even sure how one works. Luckily, he and his friend Milly have a helpful voice on the page (that's me, the narrator) to guide them on an amazing adventure as they encounter an exciting plot, spectacular settings and some very funny characters.

So, open the cover and discover how stories are made with the award-winning creators of Parsley Rabbit's Book about Books.

Key Learning Outcomes

- English ACELT1594, ACELT1596, ACELT1599, ACELT1600, ACELT1601

Themes

Critical and creative thinking
Literacy and literature

Recommended Ages: 3+

ISBN: 9780733335938 RRP 24.99

eBook:

Notes by: Concetta Gotlieb

Contents

- Summary
- About the author
- About the illustrator
- Themes
- Key curriculum areas
- About the author

About the author

Frances Watts was born in Switzerland and grew up in Australia. Her bestselling picture books include *Goodnight Mice!* (illustrated by Judy Watson), the winner of the 2012 Prime Minister's Award for Children's Fiction; 2006 CBC Honour Book *Kisses for Daddy* (ill. David Legge); and 2008 Children's Book Council of Australia award-winner *Parsley Rabbit's Book about Books* (ill. David Legge). *The Raven's Wing*, set in Ancient Rome, and *The Peony Lantern*, set in nineteenth-century Japan, are her first middle grade/YA novels. www.franceswatts.com

About the illustrator

David Legge is an award-winning and bestselling illustrator of picture books. His books include *Bamboozled*, *Tom Goes to Kindergarten* and *Baby Boomsticks*. David has collaborated with Frances Watts on four picture books, *Kisses for Daddy*, *Parsley Rabbit's Book about Books*, *Captain Crabclaw's Crew* and *The Fearsome, Frightening, Ferocious Box*, and together they've sold hundreds of thousands of copies of their books worldwide. David lives in Sydney's west.

Themes

Literature

The book explores the themes of literature from the inside out. It examines how genre, language, character and settings influence the mood of the narrative and imbue meaning.

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Critical and creative thinking

The text provides students with the opportunity to reflect on and justify their points of view and preferences in reading and creating literary texts. It also gives students an opportunity to consider the potential of storytelling to serve unique purposes.

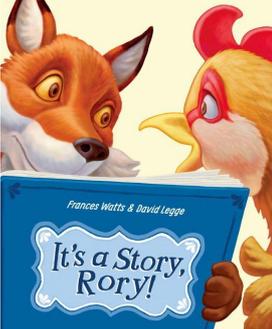
Key Curriculum Areas

- Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors' reasons (ACELT1594 - Scootle)
- Draw connections between personal experiences and the worlds of texts, and share responses with others (ACELT1596 - Scootle)
- Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599 - Scootle)
- Discuss the nature and effects of some language devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose (ACELT1600 - Scootle)
- Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students' own and other cultures using visual features, for example perspective, distance and angle (ACELT1601 - Scootle)

Reasons for Studying this Book

'It's a Story Rory' is a unique book for helping students uncover the secrets of writing well. It gives students the perfect springboard for discussing author choice in developing characters, events and settings.

Classroom Activities

Activity	Notes & Curriculum Links	ICT Integration/Worksheet
<p>Cover Story</p>	<p>Discuss the cover text and illustrations. The purpose of this discussion is to introduce the author and illustrator, uncover prior knowledge or create interest in the story.</p> <p>Guiding Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think the book is about? What can you tell from the cover? • What are the ingredients of this book? • What does the title tell you about the story? • Who are the main characters? • How do you think the illustrations were created? <p>Activity 1</p> <p>Read the story and discuss whether the students' initial perceptions were correct. Broaden the discussion to include general points of interest and evaluation.</p>	
<p>Big Question</p>	<p>Discuss the premise of the story. The author has cleverly used the story as a vehicle to teach the reader about writing interesting and engaging stories.</p> <p>Guiding Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think this strategy is effective? • Did you enjoy reading this type of story? • Could you use this strategy to teach younger students about story writing? 	

Quiz

Dive deeper into the story itself by testing the students' knowledge of the main action of the story.

Activity 1

Complete the 3 quiz questions provided. Students can then create their own questions to ask each other about the story.



Story analysis

It's a Story Rory provides a rich opportunity to analyse the construction of a story and the writers choices. The story analysis provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their prior knowledge as well as reflect on their personal preferences.



Guiding Questions

- Where was the story set?
- What was the main problem of the story?
- How did the characters find a solution to their problem?
- Was there anything about the story you didn't really understand?
- Did the author leave anything up to your imagination?
- Did you enjoy the story? Would you recommend it to others? Why/why not

Activity

Explore the elements of the story in more detail using the graphic organiser provided.

Character

The story's characters provide an opportunity for students to explore how authors use language to help us understand the characters.

Guiding questions

- How did the different characters feel at different parts of the story?
- Have you felt similar feelings? Could you relate to the characters?
- Which character is most similar to you?
- What did the characters learn about dealing with new situations?



- Did you learn anything about dealing with new situations?

Activity

Ask the students to create a social media profile for one of the characters. Students can imagine the backstory for the character. List the characters likes and using the 'wall' to allow students to consider how the character interacts with the world. By completing this analysis of the characters it is possible to see how they came to have the skills and talents that helped them solve the problems that occurred in the story.

Setting

Setting is the time and place where a scene occurs. The setting can be told with words or pictures. The setting helps the reader understand the way characters behave and the society in which the characters live. It can also give you clues about what might happen in the story.



Guiding questions

- What do the pictures tell you about the story?
- What mood do you feel from looking at the pictures?
- What action might happen in the location that is shown?
- What else can you tell from the setting?

Activity 1

Use the template provided to come up with 3 different setting ideas. In the details section write down how the setting might affect the mood, character behaviour and types of action that might happen.

Plot

The plot of the story is the sequence of events that make up the story. Each scene in the story involves visual elements as well as description and/or dialogue to help describe these events. This helps guide the action and keep the readers interest.



Guiding questions

- Do you feel the author could have added anything to the plot to help the reader follow the action of the story?
- Did the dialogue help the action develop?
- Was there a good balance of description and action in the story?
- Look at the images in the story. What perspective do they show?
- What is the impact of the different visual angles e.g. close up, extreme close up etc
- Do you think the action in the story kept the readers interest?
- Would you change anything about the action of the story?

Activity 1

Use the storyboard template to note the key action points of the story. Write down the key points of action as well as any dialogue that helped the story evolve.

Genre

Genre describes the categories into which texts are grouped for example, detective fiction, romance, science fiction, fantasy fiction. Stories can also be grouped by form and structure (for example, poetry, novels, biography, short stories). (Australian Curriculum)

LABEL THE GENRE



Guiding questions

- How is an adventure story different from other types of stories?
- What are the conventions of the adventure story genre?
- Do you as a reader enjoy reading the realistic adventure story genre? Why? Why not?

Activity 1

Label the genres on the worksheet provided. Think of two genres not listed and create an image to represent them and write the genre on the label below.

Evocative language

The story tells us about the importance of choosing the right language to show the emotions of the characters.

Guiding Questions

- Were there any words you didn't understand?
- What interesting language choices did the author make? E.g. 'trembling paw' Why would the author make this language choice?
- Which other words describe how the characters are feeling?

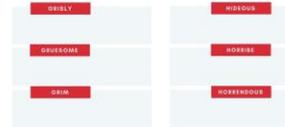
Activity 1

Use the template provided to create sentences using evocative language.

Activity 2

In the story that the characters find themselves in the deep dark forest where they encounter something frightening. Discuss the different emotions you can feel when you see something frightening. Label the images of the characters with the emotion that they appear to be feeling.

EVOCATIVE LANGUAGE



EMOTION



Quotable

Some sentences in a story help you to learn more about yourself or the world around you. In this book the story helps you to discover the art of storytelling and how to make your stories more interesting.

Activity

Create your own inspiration card using a quote from the story:

- Find your favourite line from the story
- Make an A5 landscape 'postcard' with the quote as the main design feature
- You can use fancy fonts on your computer, a graphic design program or even hand drawn lettering

Simple calligraphy tutorial



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVVxFzH Hn1Q>

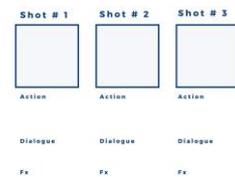
Words to film

'It's a Story Rory' provides students with all the tools to create an exciting story that captures the reader's attention. The story provides the perfect platform for creating picture books, novels and even short films.

Activity 1

Ask students to create their own realistic adventure story. Use the settings, genre and character ideas discussed in the previous activities to build on. Think about the language choices that might make the story more interesting. Use the template provided to storyboard a mix of action, dialogue and visual effects to help keep the story interesting.

Students may wish to turn their story into a picture book or short film and share it within the school community.



Prepared by

Information about the author of the notes

Concetta Gotlieb is a qualified primary teacher. Concetta is passionate about working with teachers and students to design, develop and deliver digital learning experiences to solve problems and create connections. Her teaching and learning design focusses on students as creators and producers.