



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Early childhood
(ages 2 to 5 years)

CONTENTS

1. Plot summary	1
2. About the author	2
3. Author's inspiration	2
4. Key Study Topics	2
5. Further reading	4
6. Worksheets	4

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking; Literacy

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- A picture book that encourages imagination and audience participation with its playful read-aloud text and detailed illustrations

THEMES

- Connotations, Imagery and Symbol
- Imagination
- Absurdity
- Narrative style
- Point of view
- Illustrations

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

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The Last Peach Gus Gordon

PLOT SUMMARY

From internationally award-winning picture book creator Gus Gordon comes this delightful story about friendship and sharing.

One fine summer's day two bugs discover the most beautiful peach of the season and are faced with a dilemma . . .

Who should eat it?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

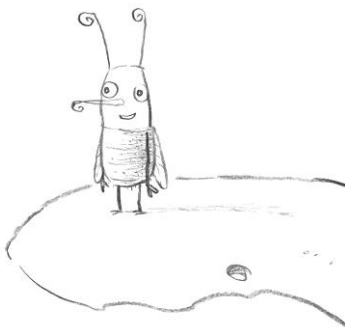
Gus Gordon is an internationally acclaimed illustrator and author. He has illustrated and written over 80 books for children. His illustrations are known for their loose and energetic line work, mixed media and humour. His writing is always anthropomorphic. He attributes this to his love of Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in The Willows*. Gus's first picture book, *Wendy*, was a Notable Book in the 2010 Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Awards. His second picture book, *Herman and Rosie*, now published in twelve countries, has been internationally acclaimed and awarded. *Somewhere Else* has been published internationally and received critical acclaim.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

In many ways, *The Last Peach* came from out of nowhere. Most of my books originate slowly, like moss growing on a tree. They stew in my head for long periods until I can find an interesting narrative route that binds together the images I have in my mind. *The Last Peach*, however, was written in a fevered fashion over two days. It was strange territory for me.

One morning while working on another book, my computer abruptly died. Annoyed but feeling somewhat liberated, I decided to make the best of the situation and left my studio to work at the kitchen table in the hope that the unexpected change of scenery might yield something new, and hopefully, vaguely interesting. Not knowing where to start and in an attempt to shock my brain into engagement, fleeting or otherwise, I began writing down random imaginary book titles (normally I never think of book titles until an actual book has been written).

The first title was *My Summer Pants* (maybe next time), then I wrote *The Last Peach... The Last Peach?* Now, that does sound intriguing. Then, for some reason, I drew this guy...



Who suddenly said, 'Oh boy, now THAT is a peach!' Then, before I knew it, another bug said, 'You can't eat that peach! It's the last one.' And...

I was off and running; chasing some kind of logical, bug-like narrative. Madly, and before I could really think about it, I had written a book entirely based around the dialogue of two bugs and their naïve musings about a peach and the ramifications of eating that peach. And on further inspection, without conscious thought in this regard, I had written a book exploring in a modest form, the very human universal themes of lust, desire, authority, greed, discipline, consequence and perspective.

But for me, it's just a story about two bugs.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Textual Concepts

This book models for young readers how active they need to be as readers, as not everything is spelled out for them. It is perfect for encouraging inferential reading, and exploring the idea of metaphoric stories. If they look closely at the illustrations, they will realise that the words only tell some of this story. The style of telling prompts them to explore their own interpretations. Told in direct prose and dialogue, the written narrative allows the illustrations to supply the tone and mood, add much context not referred to in the written text, and so prompt questions that open up interpretations.

Ideally, this rich picture book would be read aloud with a small group and then acted out so that they can look closely at how the text works as a read-aloud with audience participation.

There are moments in the story ideal for pausing the reading for predictions. This will deepen understanding and prompt young readers to think about the decisions the writer and the illustrator have made, and about what is happening.

<http://englishtextualconcepts.nsw.edu.au/content/what-is-it>

Connotation, Imagery and Symbol

- Discuss some of the symbols and imagery used in the illustrations.

Point of View

Questions

- How effective is the dual narrative?
- How does the illustrator show that there are two characters speaking without using speech tags. Is this effective?



Narrative

Questions

- What plot structure does the author use to tell the story?
- Does a book always have to have a definite ending? How does the ending affect your reading of this story?
- How do you interpret the ending?
- What happens to the characters as the story unfolds? Does the tension build and how is this shown?
- What themes are embedded in the narrative?

Writing Style

Questions

- What is the book's writing style? How effectively does this contribute to the story?
- How is humour used in the text and in the illustrations to tell the story?
- What did you think of the ending? Was it the best ending for this particular story? Why/Why not?
- How does the book's title relate to its content?

Activities

- Act this story out in class, giving roles to different students, and see how reading it aloud is different to reading it yourself.
- Write a different ending.
- Write and draw some extra scenes that might have occurred throughout.

Illustration

Questions

- How do the text and the illustrations work together to tell the story.
- Do you think the illustrations complement the book's writing style? How effectively do they contribute to the story?
- How does the setting of this story affect the characters and the events that take place?

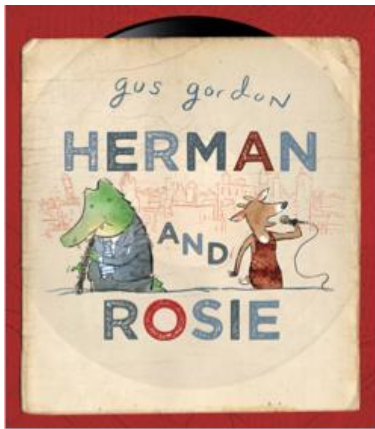
THEMES

Question

- What are the key elements of this story?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Herman and Rosie
by Gus Gordon

This is a tale about a big city. It's a tale of hotdogs and music and the summertime subway breeze. It's a tale of singing on rooftops and toffees that stick to your teeth.

But most of all, it's the tale of Herman and Rosie.

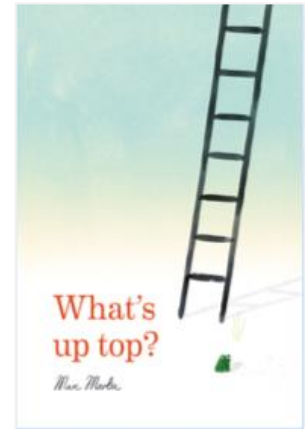
Set in New York, this gorgeous children's picture book by Gus Gordon is a story about friendship, life in the big city, and following your dreams.



Somewhere Else
by Gus Gordon

George has no interest in exploring the world. He's far too busy at home baking fine pastries. Or so he tells everyone when they invite him along on their wonderful adventures. But when his friend Pascal digs a little deeper, the real reason George won't leave home is finally revealed . . .

An irresistible story about a duck called George, the possibility of adventure, and taking risks to realise what you value most.



What's Up Top?
by Marc Martin

What's at the top of the ladder? Is it a hat? Is it a cat? Is it a snail on a whale?

Simple, playful and absurdist, this new picture book by award-winning author/illustrator Marc Martin is about imagination and creativity reminiscent of *Press Here* by Herve Tullet, *Dr Seuss* and *I Want my Hat Back* by Jon Glasson.

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
The Last Peach	Gus Gordon	9780670078912	Pre-school	\$24.99		
Somewhere Else	Gus Gordon	9780670078851	Pre-school	\$24.99		
Herman and Rosie	Gus Gordon	9780670076031	Pre-school	\$24.99		
What's Up Top?	Marc Martin	9780143783886	Pre-school	\$24.95		
TOTAL						

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