



noni the pony

counts to a million

ALISON LESTER

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Recommended for 1 – 4 years old

Summary

Noni the Pony stands under one tree, and watches her two friends dance by the sea. She gives three speckled hens a ride up the hill...Come on another adventure with Noni in this delightful rhyming story.

Alison Lester's books are favourites with children and adults around the world. *Magic Beach, Imagine, My Farm* and *Noni the Pony* are Australian classics.

About the Author

Alison Lester grew up on a farm by the sea, and first rode a horse as a baby in her father's arms. Her picture books mix imaginary worlds with everyday life, encouraging children to believe in themselves and celebrate the differences that make them special. Alison is involved in many community art projects and spends part of every year travelling to remote Indigenous communities, using her books to help children and adults write and draw about their own lives.

In 2012, Alison became Australia's first Children's Book Laureate, a position she shared with Boori Monty Pryor. In 2016, she was awarded the Dromkeen Medal for her outstanding achievement in the creation of Australian children's and young adult literature, and in 2018 she became the first children's book creator to win the Melbourne Prize for Literature, for her outstanding contribution to Australian literature and cultural and intellectual life. In 2019, Alison was awarded an Australia Post Legends Award and featured on a stamp, as well as being the recipient of a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2019 Australia Day Honours List

Themes

Animals, play, friendship, adventure and counting.

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Cover prediction

- Show the cover of *Noni the Pony Counts to a Million* to your students, reading the name of the book out loud, and ask the following:
 - What is a pony?
 - What do you think this story will be about?
 - Do you think Noni is a kind and caring pony?
 - [Pointing to each animal as you ask the question] Noni's friends are a c...[cat], d...[dog], j...[joey].
 - What do you think Noni and her friends are doing in the image?
 - Do they live in a big city or in the countryside?
 - How many stars do you think are up in the sky?
 - How high can you count all by yourself?

Reading and counting

- Now read the story to your class, stopping at each spread and pointing to the animals or insects being counted.
 - Stop when you get to the ten ladybirds and ask students if they know what the next two numbers to follow ten are.
 - Now start the story again, turning the page to Helga's dozens of spots. Ask students if anyone knows the term *dozen* and what number it represents.
 - Next, slowly count and point to 12 spots on Helga and explain that Helga has dozens (lots of groups of 12) on her back.
 - For the rest of the story, point out that numbers get bigger and bigger and bigger, but that there are names we can use to group them, such as hundreds, thousands and millions.
- Read the story every day to your class until they can call out the number for each group of animals or insects themselves.
- Explain to your class that numbers can be written as a word – showing them the number words in the story – or shown as *numerals*.
 - Make a set of cards numbered from 1–10 and hold up each number as you read *Noni the Pony Counts to a Million*, stopping before you get to Helga's page.
 - Once you feel your students are confident, you can hand the cards out and ask the person holding the card with the numeral you call out to hold it up and show the class.
 - As the class grows in confidence you can mix up your numbers so they don't follow the 1–10 pattern.

Rhyme

- Explain to students that the story is told using *rhyme*, and that this is where key words (often at the end of a line) are emphasised because they share the same sound-endings. Give a few examples of *rhyme* from the story, and then see if students can come up with their own rhymes for simple words such as *dog* and *cat*.

Visual literacy

- Explain to students that the most important word on a page can sometimes be made to stand out and look different from all the other words around it. Now ask them to look very closely as you read the story and identify how the most important words differ from the others.

Reflection

- Ask your students what they liked about the story. What didn't they like about it? How might they describe the book to their best friend who hadn't read it yet?

In the Author's Own Words

'The first Noni book was published in 2010 but she'd been in my head for a long time before that. Back then I did a lot of long distance running and the rhythm of my steps helped create Noni. That, and a sweet little pinto pony called Bella who was my son Lachie's second horse. Changing her name to Noni made everything simple and her adventures have evolved from there. *Noni the Pony Counts to a Million* is a big claim and I had to convince my editors by saying she could be counting stars.'

- Alison Lester

