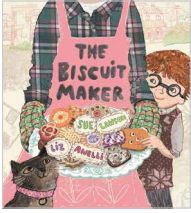




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Biscuit Maker

By Sue Lawson
Illustrated by Liz Anelli
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

In Mavin Road, there's no time for hellos or chats until a lonely and mysterious biscuit maker's magic brings everyone together.

Benedict Stanley lives alone with his cat in Mavin Road where families hustle, joggers puff and workers scurry to the train, and no one has time for anyone else. So Benedict begins making biscuits to mark moments in all their lives, leaving them secretly at their doors. People start talking. Who is this mysterious biscuit maker? When Benedict falls ill, young Rory, the only person to know his secret, gathers the residents of Mavin Road and brings them to his door. A beautiful heart-warming book that celebrates community and human connection.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Sue Lawson writes fiction and non fiction books for children and young adults. Her books have won and been shortlisted for numerous awards, including the Family Therapists Award, the Prime Minister's Literary Award and the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. Her latest young adult novel *Freedom Ride* was shortlisted for the Children's Book Council Book of the Year Awards, the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards and longlisted for the Davitt Awards.

Illustrator **Liz Anelli** previously lived and worked in England but now resides in Newcastle, NSW. She has a passion for drawing and keeps rows of sketchbooks in her studio. In 2017, her book *Desert Lake: The Story of Kati Thandaka-Lake Eyre* (written by Pamela Freeman) was a CBCA Notable Book and was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Award, NSW Premier's History Awards, the Environment Award for Children's Literature and the Educational Publishing Awards. She will also publish *Dry to Dry* with Walker in 2020 (written by Pamela Freeman) and *The Biscuit Maker* (written by Sue Lawson). Her other picture books with Walker Books include *Ten Pound Pom* (written by Carole Wilkinson) - shortlisted for CBCA Picture Book of the Year and winner of the Educational Publishing Awards in 2018 - and *Maddie's First Day* (written by Penny Matthews).

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-1
- Ages 4-7

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture book

Themes/Ideas:

- Belonging
- Empathy
- Community
- Friendship



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *The Biscuit Maker*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *The Biscuit Maker*.

Exploring the Story

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *The Biscuit Maker* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Write a book review on *The Biscuit Maker*. Include what you liked about the book, who you think would enjoy it the most and mention any other books you think are similar.

On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, place an image of the cover of *The Biscuit Maker* and surround it with words that describe the book. Include words that describe what you liked and what you disliked about the book.

Why do you think Benedict Stanley didn't tell anyone he was the Biscuit Maker? Do you agree or disagree with his choice?

A stereotype is a set idea about something or someone that a lot of people think, but may not be correct. From the dialogue we see, most people in Mavin Road assumed the mysterious Biscuit Maker would be a woman. Why do you think that is? What stereotypes might be at play?

In what ways do Benedict Stanley and Rory show empathy in *The Biscuit Maker*? Why is it important to be kind to others, even to people you may not know very well?

At the start of the book no-one in Mavin Road even says hello to each-other and by the end, they're all working together. How has Benedict Stanley's biscuits changed the neighbourhood and why? Do you think the neighbours on Mavin Road will go back to the way they were before? Why or why not?

Find a book written by Sue Lawson or illustrated by Liz Anelli in your library. How is it similar or different to *The Biscuit Maker*?

Do you know the people who live in your street? Think of something kind you could do for a neighbour, such as baking, writing a letter or drawing a picture. Ask an adult's help to deliver your gift.

Find other books in your library about empathy or kindness and make a display.

Exploring the Illustrations

How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following:

- How do you think Rory and/or Benedict Stanley are feeling? What clues might there be in the pictures?
- Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
- Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
- Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?
- How do things close up look different to things in the picture that are far away?
- Do any of the words look different to other words on the page? Why could that be?

How does Liz Anelli show the changes to Mavin Road and its neighbours through her illustrations? Compare an early spread to one towards the end. What's different, and why?

Creative Responses to the Text

Benedict Stanley makes biscuits for many occasions in the street that we don't hear about in the story (for example a kitten rescue, the grand final, triplets arriving home). Choose one of these events and write a short story about it – don't forget to include the biscuits being delivered at the end.

Create a play based on *The Biscuit Maker*. Assign actors to play Benedict Stanley, Rory, Audrey Mae and the neighbours of Mavin Road. Other students can manage props (you'll need lots of prop biscuits) and effects (such as street noise). Perform your play at a school assembly.