

TEACHERS NOTES

TITLE: ROUND FISH SQUARE BOWL
AUTHOR: TOM SKINNER

Synopsis

This charming picture book takes a positive spin on being different. Clichés like the clumsiness of a *bull in a china shop* or being as *mad as a hatter* are turned around to be positive and desirable traits.

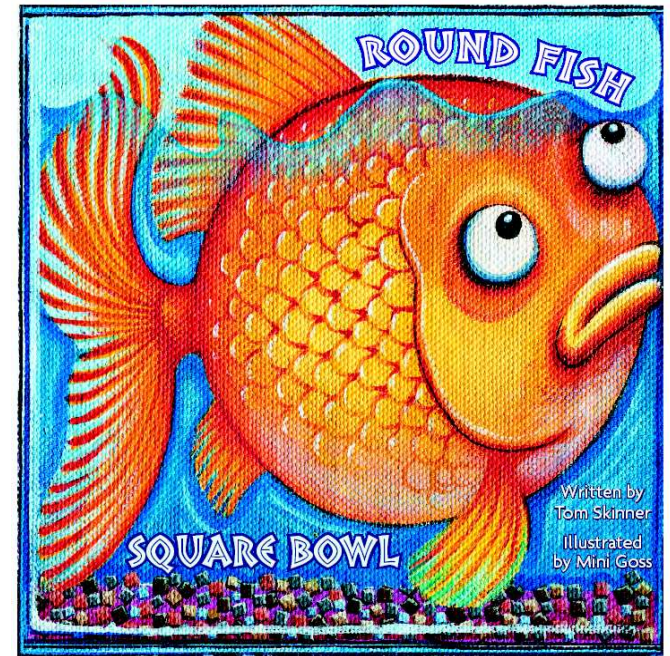
Round Fish, Square Bowl is all about celebrating our differences.

Author/Illustrator style or medium

Mini Goss has used mostly double page spreads. This has given Mini lots of room to tell stories such as the *Three Little Pigs* and the *Mad Hatter's Tea Party*.

The font changes to emphasise descriptions of the animals such as

- Scared
- Slow
- Mad
- Clumsy
- Ugly
- Poor





Mini has painted these illustrations on canvas. This gives the illustrations a textured look.

Author/Illustrator Motivation

Tom Skinner

The decision to write for children was easy, it was finding the right subject matter that took up over 2 years of Tom's life before Round Fish Square Bowl was published.

'I wanted to create a picture book that not only amused and entertained children but also helped them to find their place in the world' says Tom.

'Having experienced the difficulties of being seen as different from an early age I decided to use this experience as my motivation - to help my readers to embrace the positives of being different rather than being scarred by it', he said.

Round Fish Square Bowl is Tom's first book.

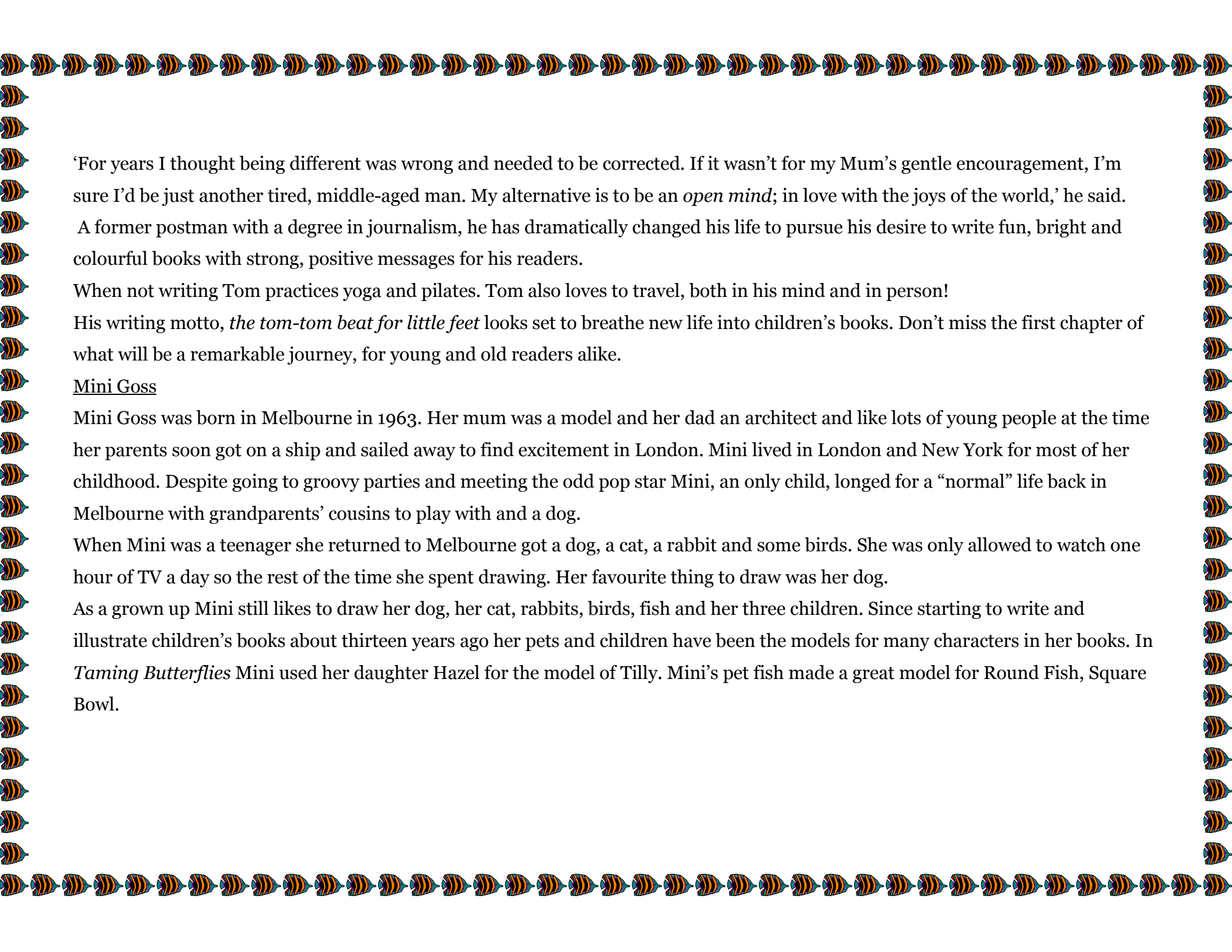
Author/Illustrator Background Information

Tom Skinner

Tom is a born and bred South Australian.

With Round Fish Square Bowl, new author Tom Skinner has produced an improbable world first – an autobiography in a children's picture book!

Tom is a self proclaimed 'square peg' with a child-like view of the world; particularly the harsh realities of being different.



‘For years I thought being different was wrong and needed to be corrected. If it wasn’t for my Mum’s gentle encouragement, I’m sure I’d be just another tired, middle-aged man. My alternative is to be an *open mind*; in love with the joys of the world,’ he said. A former postman with a degree in journalism, he has dramatically changed his life to pursue his desire to write fun, bright and colourful books with strong, positive messages for his readers.

When not writing Tom practices yoga and pilates. Tom also loves to travel, both in his mind and in person!

His writing motto, *the tom-tom beat for little feet* looks set to breathe new life into children’s books. Don’t miss the first chapter of what will be a remarkable journey, for young and old readers alike.

Mini Goss

Mini Goss was born in Melbourne in 1963. Her mum was a model and her dad an architect and like lots of young people at the time her parents soon got on a ship and sailed away to find excitement in London. Mini lived in London and New York for most of her childhood. Despite going to groovy parties and meeting the odd pop star Mini, an only child, longed for a “normal” life back in Melbourne with grandparents’ cousins to play with and a dog.

When Mini was a teenager she returned to Melbourne got a dog, a cat, a rabbit and some birds. She was only allowed to watch one hour of TV a day so the rest of the time she spent drawing. Her favourite thing to draw was her dog.

As a grown up Mini still likes to draw her dog, her cat, rabbits, birds, fish and her three children. Since starting to write and illustrate children’s books about thirteen years ago her pets and children have been the models for many characters in her books. In *Taming Butterflies* Mini used her daughter Hazel for the model of Tilly. Mini’s pet fish made a great model for Round Fish, Square Bowl.



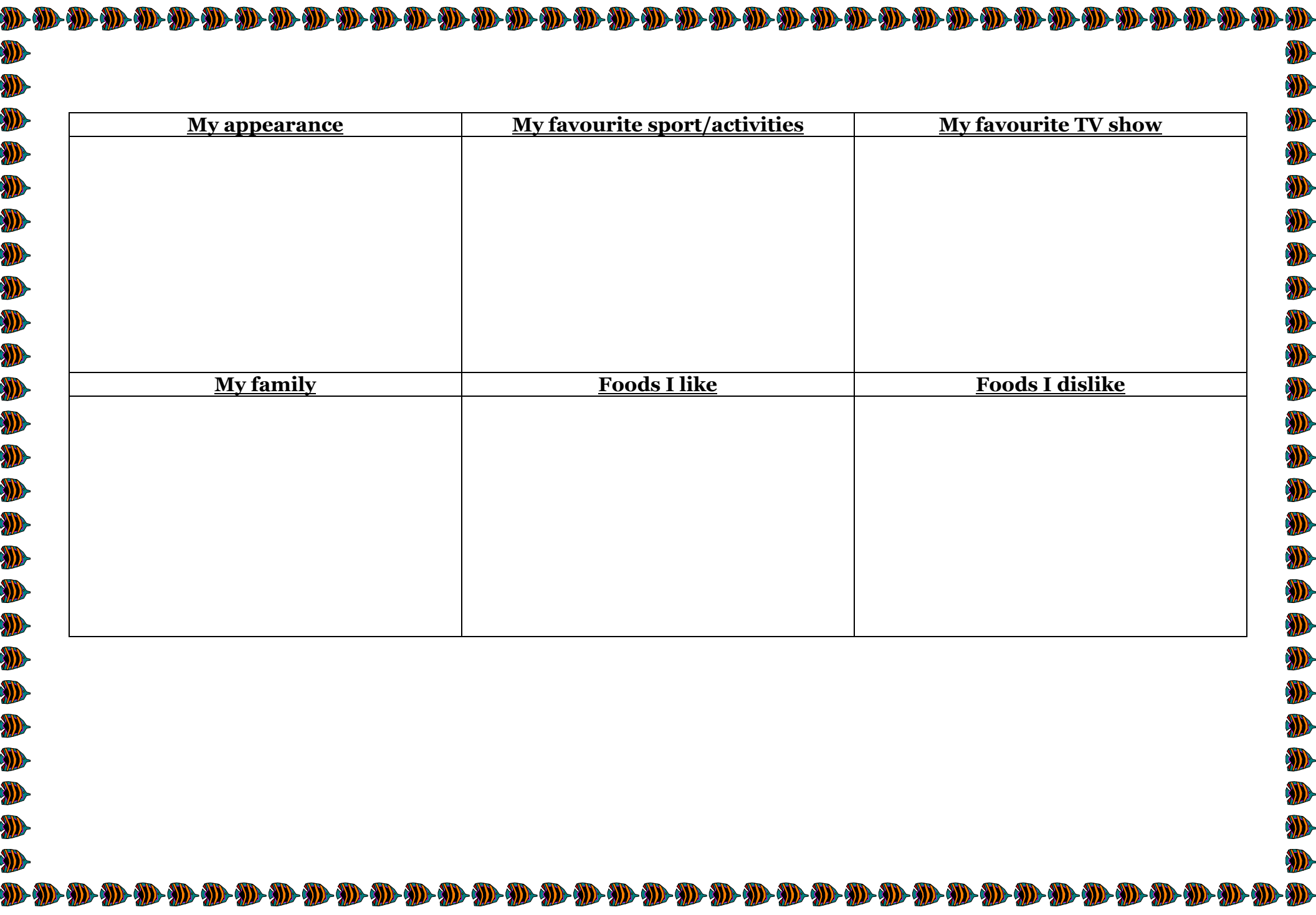
EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

The universal theme in this book, is valuing individual differences. Round Fish Square Bowl is not a story, but a delightful look at the concept of the uniqueness of each person, and how difference can have a positive effect in our lives.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before Reading this book:

1. Ask students to think about the word "different" in the context of: appearance, dress, families, likes/dislikes, music, sport, activities, food etc
2. Use a six box framework to record aspects of personal uniqueness. Students to find a partner and tell each other about any of the likes and dislikes they have recorded or thought about. They could finish by saying, "Thanks. You are special and so am I."



<u>My appearance</u>	<u>My favourite sport/activities</u>	<u>My favourite TV show</u>
<u>My family</u>	<u>Foods I like</u>	<u>Foods I dislike</u>

3. Draw 3 columns on a piece of paper/whiteboard, headed Positives/Negatives/Interesting. Think about/talk about “being different” under these headings.
4. Before reading the book, take time to discuss the cover and title with the students. What is unusual about the fish’s bowl? How does the fish appear to be feeling? Why? Can students think of times when they have felt very different to those around them? How did they feel? Record some of their “feeling” words. Draw a face which shows one of those feelings.



5. Get students to think of some colloquial sayings like, ‘as silly as a rabbit,’ or “as slow as a caterpillar.” Tell them to be aware that there will be some sayings in the book that they may not have heard before.

After reading the book...

Classroom resources to:



1. Using Blooms and Gardeners' Taxonomies for lesson planning.

<div>BLOOM'S TAXONOMY</div>	<div>Gardner's Multiple Intelligences →</div>	<div> Verbal/Linguistic</div>	<div> Logical/Mathematical</div>	<div> Visual/Spatial</div>	<div> Bodily/Kinesthetic</div>	<div> Musical/Rhythmic</div>	<div> Interpersonal</div>	<div> Intrapersonal</div>	<div> Naturalist</div>
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Remembering	Write a list of all the animals in the story, and the special names some of their parents have.	Collect pictures of all the animals in the story. How many different ways can you find to group them?	Display labelled pictures of the animals on a notice board.	Mime the movement of each animal in the story.	Say the phrases, such as “as poor as a church mouse”, and work out how to clap them in a rhythm.	Read the story of the “Hare and the Tortoise” or “The Three Pigs”, and choose a group of friends to re enact the story.	Write a diary of your activities about “Round Fish, Square Bowl”.	Find out what an aquanaut is like, and research different types of fish, their names, their food preferences and other details.
Understanding	Write your description of what being a "square peg in a round hole " means, and give some examples	Draw the different stages in the life cycle of a fish, and label them.	Draw a 3 part cartoon showing the experiences of the pigs, tortoise or ugly duckling.	Write and perform a play about the experiences of the bull in the china shop.	What sounds would each of the creatures in the book make? Invent a sound you think they <u>could</u> make, if you need to. Ask your class to guess which one you are imitating.	Work with a friend to discuss a time when you felt left out. Using a 4 box framework, record <u>what was done</u> , <u>what was said</u> , your <u>feelings</u> , and your <u>solutions</u> .	Research the effects of bullying in your class or small group. Record the results in 3 columns, headed <u>Positive</u> , <u>Negative</u> , <u>Interesting</u> about the topic.	Research the fastest recorded speed of a hare and a tortoise on land. What would each animal perform best in water?

Applying	Write your own illustrated story about a time when you were bullied, left out, or didn't fit in.	Design a mechanical device which might help the tortoise to move faster. Draw and label your design.	Design a china shop in which a bull and his friends might visit safely.	Act out the visit of the bull to the china shop.	Invent a song the square fish might sing as he swims in his round bowl. Use one musical instrument to accompany your song.	Sit with a partner or group, and work out a list of ways you might persuade a mule to move when he doesn't want to. Record in dot points, perhaps inside a mule shaped figure.	Which of the animals in the story seems a bit like you? Why do think this is so?	Draw and label the body of a tortoise and explain the purpose of his shell shape and skin.
Analysing	Using columns, record the <u>similarities</u> between the two animals, the Hare and the Tortoise. Repeat, recording the <u>Differences</u> .	Conduct a survey in your class, about feeling different. Sort out into categories, and record on a column graph.	In a small group, or as class, discuss and record the <u>Positives</u> , <u>Negatives</u> , and <u>Interesting</u> points about being different.	Design and make a winner's sash or crown to be used in class, with "I Like being Different" on it.	Design a rap sequence or song to celebrate being different.	Think about the Ugly Duckling, and discuss what it means to "become who you are meant to be." Illustrate this.	Can you compare the growth and development of a human to that of a fish or butterfly? What is different or similar?	Debate the benefits of fish living in an aquarium versus the sea, river, lakes.

Evaluating	Discuss and write about the best ways to stop bullying in school.	Look at the "Strength Cards" (from St Luke's Resources), and then write a list of your own strengths, following the pattern. "I am.....because I can/know/feel /....."	Do a drawing, painting or a collage, that celebrates people being different.	What would be some solutions to being "a square peg in a round hole"? Act some of them out, if you can.	Do you think the songs you wrote will help people to feel better about being different? Why?	If <u>you</u> lived in a different country for a year, what would do think you would notice about your own feelings and behaviour as you tried to settle in?	How would you feel if you were about to become a swan, after being an ugly duckling? Why?	Why do you and your cohabitation naturally?
Creating	Write or talk about what you imagine your life will be like in ten years time. Illustrate if you wish.	Do a pictogram of the types of fish which your classmates have at home.	Design a new coat for the church mouse.	Create a fish picture using cellophane, crayons under black paint, or stuffing a fish shape to make a hanging fish.	Create an album cover for a song collection about "Being Different", or "Square Pegs in Round Holes", or "Bullying."	Write a letter to the school principal about this book, and say how it connects to life at your school.	Why is it <u>healthy</u> to behave like the mad hatter sometimes, and have some fun?	Write a story about a mule, shows why animals have reasons to stubborn day. happy ever

2. The Thinker's Keys.

 <p>Make a list of things you would never see in a fish bowl.</p>	<p><i>The What If</i></p> <p>What if we all had the same strengths as everyone else?</p>	<p><i>The Disadvantages</i></p> <p>What are some of the disadvantages of acting like the Mad Hatter all the time?</p>	<p><i>The Combination</i></p> <p>List the attributes of a fish and a mouse, and discuss how they could both defend themselves better from cats.</p>	<p><i>The Alphabet</i></p> <p>Do an A-Z of all the animals you know.</p>
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The BAR

Use the BAR format to design a hiding place in a fish bowl for a square fish.
(Bigger, Add, Remove or Replace)

The Variations

How many ways can you think of to make someone feel valued and important?

The Picture

How does the front cover of "Round Fish, Square Bowl", connect with the main theme of the book?

The Prediction

What would be the consequences of having all of us with the same appearance?

The Different Uses

Make a list of other uses for an unused aquarium.

The Ridiculous

What would happen if we all had to move as slowly as tortoises?

The Commonality

What would a non-English speaking new student in your class, and a person in a wheel chair coming into your class, have in common?

The Question

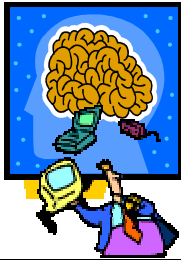
The answer is BOWL.
What are 5 questions that could have this answer?


The Brainstorming

List all of the disabilities that you know.

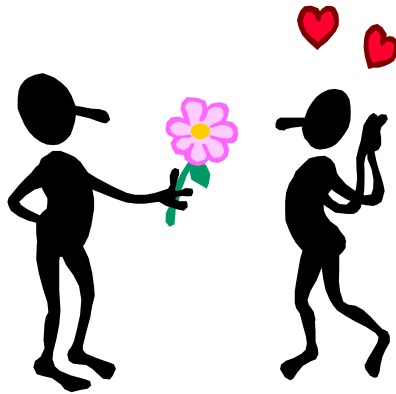
The Inventions

Invent a new way to deal with bullies in your school.



<p>The Interpretation</p> <p>"BLAH! BLAH! BLAH!"</p> <p>What barriers do we put up, to stop people getting to know "the real me?"</p> 	<p>The Brick Wall</p> <p>What barriers do we put up, to stop people getting to know "the real me?"</p>	<p>The Construction</p> <p>Design a home for a square fish.</p>	<p>The Forced Relationship</p> <p>How could the wolf have made friends with the three pigs?</p>	<p>The Alternative</p> <p>How would the story of "The Three Pigs" have been different if the Pigs had been the villains?</p>

3. Caring Thinking.



Valuational thinking:

- How would you feel if the other students home because your mum couldn't write in

laughed at you when you said you couldn't bring a note from English yet?

Affective thinking:

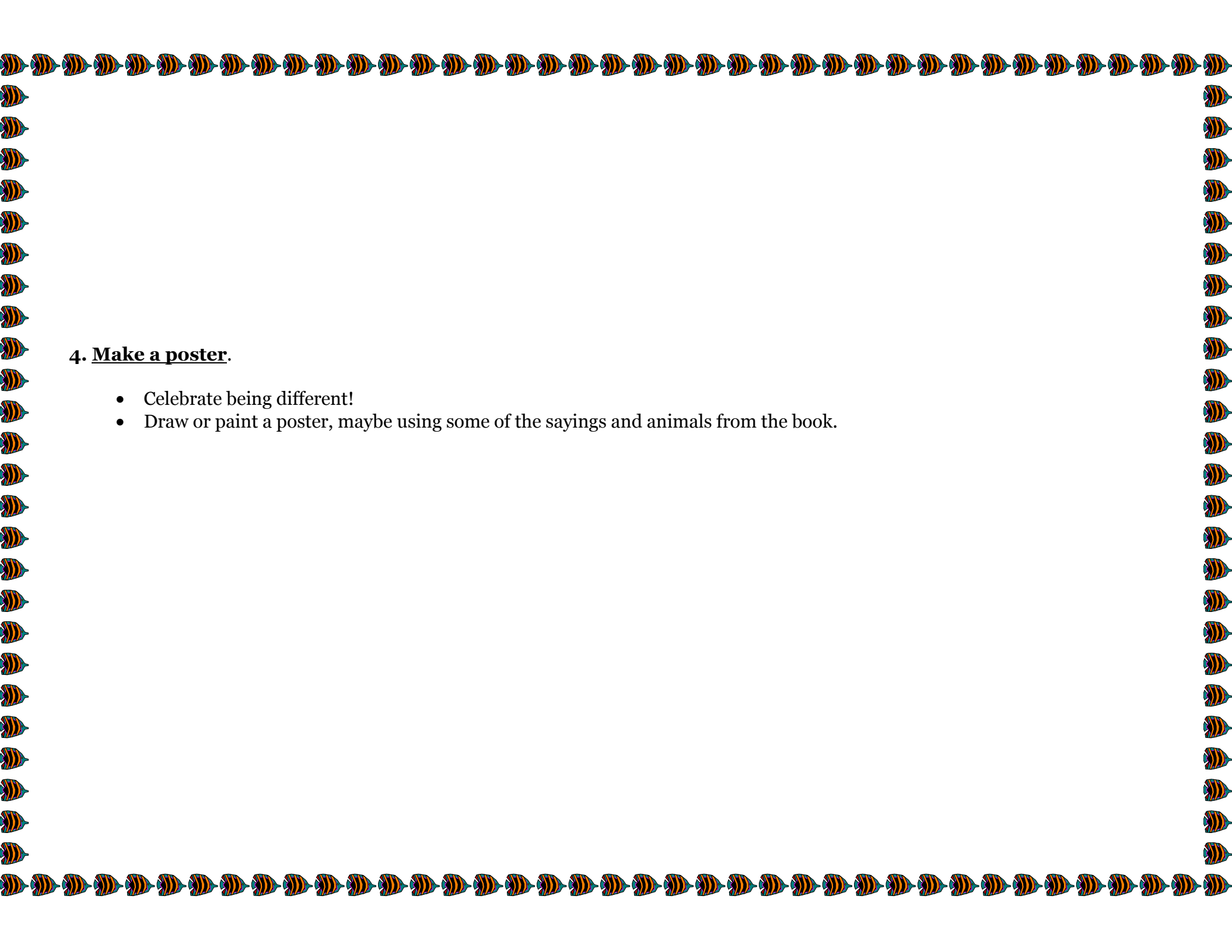
- Make up a list of things that children should definitely be allowed to do in the classroom, and a list of those they should definitely not be allowed to do.

Active thinking:

- What could you do to make a new student in your class feel connected and at home in your school?
- What would you do if you found that person being bullied by other students in the class?

Normative thinking:

- Why do you think people try so hard to be the same as everyone else?
- What do you think is the most important message in the book "Round Fish, Square Bowl"?



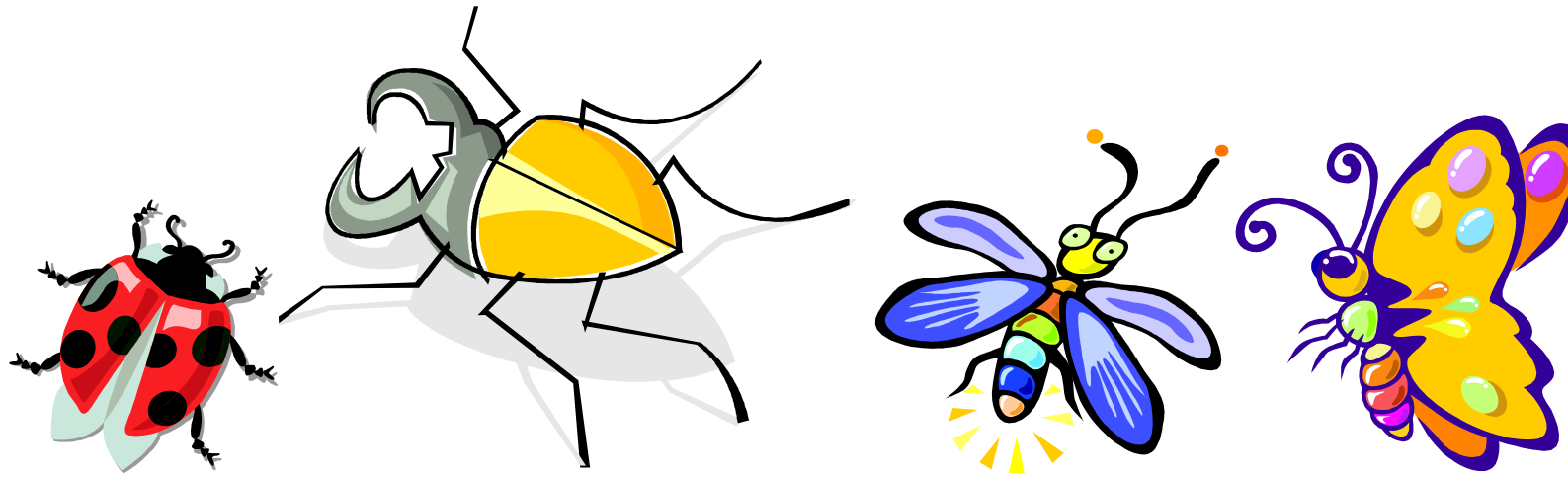
4. Make a poster.

- Celebrate being different!
- Draw or paint a poster, maybe using some of the sayings and animals from the book.



5. Nature table.

- Collect some small creatures which look different to each other, or pictures of them.
- Choose any two of them, and make a list of attributes (ie, 4 legs, wings, antenna, shell)
- Circle any attributes that are the same in your 2 creatures, and underline those that are different.
- Think about what would make life difficult for one of these creatures, and how they might overcome their difficulties.



4. Art, Craft and Design.

- Write a list of all the animals in the book.
- Draw a design for some finger puppets, using felt, fabric or paper, adding facial or body features, to re create the animals.
- Make up a conversation or play which the puppets might have. Students could join up with some other students and their puppets if they wish.

- Students could draw their own “Before” and “After” versions of the animals in the story, or draw a 3 part comic strip showing how things began and then changed.



5. Further research.

Students could further explore the ideas of resilience, courage, perseverance, flexibility, using such resources as:

- ‘Heartmasters’ books
- St Luke’s Innovative Resources, Bendigo (eg Strength Cards)
- The “You can do it” program
- Mind Matters

- ‘Seasons for Growth’ (Good Grief), a small group program for those experiencing change and loss.

