

Teacher notes for *A Home for Luna*
written by Stef Gemmill
illustrated by Mel Armstrong



Outline

A Home for Luna written by Stef Gemmill and illustrated by Mel Armstrong, is a gentle story about a homeless cat washed up on a strange shore. Luna is scared and lonely but soon finds beauty and friendship in this new place.

Educators and parents will find the story's characters and themes thought provoking and filled with content that will generate discussion both in the classroom and at home.

The story will introduce the themes of homelessness, relationships and adapting to change to small children.

A Home For Luna is symbolic globally as it touches on homelessness and the displacement of refugees the world faces today.



Author/Illustrator Information:

Stef Gemmill

Stef likes to draw on her past experiences as a Montessori teacher when writing picture books that are both imaginative and challenge young minds. She also has fifteen years' experience working as a technical writer by day and a freelance music journalist by night. More recently, Stef swapped the sweaty mosh pit for toys and tantrums turning her pen to writing children's books. Her focus has been on picture books for 3-6 year olds and short stories for 7-12 year olds.

A Home For Luna is Stef Gemmill's debut picture book release date August 2019 with other picture books due for release soon.

Stef also has short stories published in anthologies by Storm Cloud Publishing available in ebook on the Smashwords website

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/827750>

For more information about Stef go to her author website.

<https://www.stefgemmill.com/>

Mel Armstrong

Mel is a full-time illustrator based in Wellington, New Zealand. Over the past 5 years, she has been known for her stunning surface pattern designs, where she has won several awards and licensing contracts seeing her work on products such as fabric, clothing, children's educational products and giftware. With a great love for books, and inspired by a son who sees the world in pictures (not words), Illustrating picture books was a natural progression for Mel to take her adorable illustrations on a journey through storytelling.

A Home For Luna is Mel's debut picture book and she is already working on her next picture book, due for publication early 2020.

Mel has also illustrated a number of baby board books for clients such as Hallmark and Lion Tree Publishing (Penguin Random House), due for publication in 2019.

For more information about Mel please visit her website.

<https://melarmstrongdesign.com/>

Teacher Information

These notes are for Primary school children and can be used from kinder level to year six for various subject areas of focus internationally.

These notes explore different areas of the English syllabus, themes of relationships, conflict, homelessness and adapting to change.

Questions cater for all age levels of learners, with curriculum links to English, Science and Sustainability.

Curriculum Links

Here are some of the links these teachers notes have with Australian Curriculum which can also apply to international curriculum.

English

Early Stage 1

Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to student's experiences.

Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.

Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text.

Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently.

Stage 1

Discuss how authors create characters using language and images.

Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created.

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that listen to, view and read by drawing on knowledge of context, text and structures and language features.

Discuss the characters and setting of texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways.

Stage 2

Draw connections between personal experiences and the world of texts, and share responses with others.

Discuss how language is used to describe the setting in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative.

Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories exciting, moving, absorbing and hold readers interest by various techniques - for example character development and plot tension.

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that listen to, view and read by drawing on knowledge of context, text and structures and language features.

Stage 3

Identify aspects of literary text that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts

Make connections between student's own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different social, cultural and historical contexts.

Show how ideas and points of view in texts conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language and that these can change according to text.

Navigate and read texts for specific purposes applying text processing strategies, for example predicting and confirming, monitoring meaning, skimming and scanning.

Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of the text.

Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers.

Science

Stage 2 and 3

Living things have basic needs like food and water.

Living things and the environment depend on each other to survive.

Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape.

Science knowledge helps people understand the effect of their actions.

Living things have life cycles.

The growth and survival of living things are effected by the physical conditions of their environment.

Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions.

Sustainability Cross – Curriculum Priority

The biosphere is a dynamic system providing conditions that sustain life on Earth.

All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.

Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.

World views that recognise the dependence of living things on healthy ecosystems, and value diversity and social justice, are essential for achieving sustainability.

World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.

The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.

Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.

Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.

Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.

Group Discussion and Activities

Before reading the book

Look and discuss the front and back cover of the book.

What do you think the story might be about? Who wrote it? Who illustrated it?

What does the 'blurb' say on the back? What do you think will happen to Luna?

Have you seen a penguin before? Where did you see the penguin? Where do penguins live where it is icy? Where it is rocky?

After reading the book

Where is the story set? How is this established in the book?

What sights, smells, sounds and tastes can you imagine from both the words and images?

Write down a list and discuss where they are highlighted in the book.

Who was their favourite character and why?

Dramatic events

What events change how we feel about Luna? And about the penguins?

Draw a plot line for this story to show the climax in this type of narrative.

Why do we need these types of events in stories when they can make us worry about the characters?

Descriptions

Language

How has the author, Stef Gemmill used different language to describe how:

1. Luna feels when she first lands on the island?
2. Luna feels when she meets Tiny?
3. When Luna meets the fisherman?

Students need to write down their thoughts to complete this activity.

Illustrations

How has the illustrator, Mel Armstrong, represented the passing of time?

How are feelings represented through the illustrations?

How are Luna and Tiny similar? How are they different?

Questioning

As students read, you can build up their skills in how to ask questions.

They can answer the below questions and present their own in pairs or groups.

Memory questions: These help you recall a fact from the story.

Where did Luna used to live?

Is Luna good at fishing?

What did Luna first eat in the story?

Questions to explain: These questions require some consideration and thought.

What did Luna and Tiny teach each other? What did they show the other penguins?

How did the other penguins help Luna?

Why do you think Luna needed to leave her home?

Question to evaluate: These require evidential links back to the story.

Once Luna had food, what else did she need?

Why do we need more than food to make us happy?

Big thinking questions: These are for discussion and there is no right or wrong answer.

Why do you think the penguins were afraid of Luna? And Luna afraid of the penguins?

Why did Luna not want to go on the fishing boat?

Have any of the children moved to a new home or school before? How did they feel about the move? How did they feel afterwards?

If a new child joined their class, how could they help the child feel welcome, like the penguins did for Luna?

Ask the children if they realise that, in helping Luna, the penguins helped themselves as well? Luna is very good at keeping the gulls from stealing their fish!

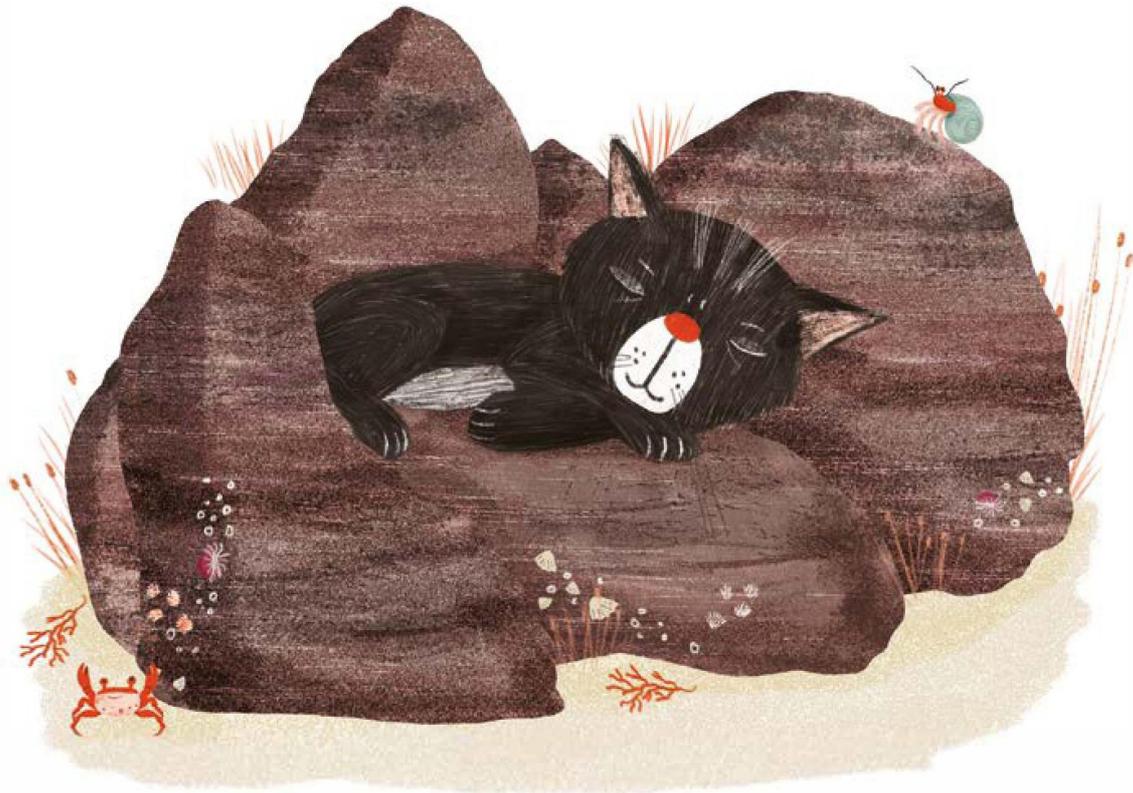
Themes to Explore

Homelessness

What is homelessness?

Why do you think homelessness happens to people?

Activity: List some ways we can help people that become homeless.



Relationships

What is a relationship?

What are the different types of relationships in the story?

Activity: List the different types of relationships in this story with examples.

List the types of relationships you have.



As you have seen in *A Home for Luna*, animals don't always have to be from the same species to be friends with each other. Did you know that unusual animal friendships occur in real life as well?

Unusual Animal Friendships - A Lion and a Dog

Milo is a tiny dachshund who took Bonedigger the lion cub under his wing when it was discovered that Bonedigger was suffering from an illness that left him disabled. Five years after their first meeting, Bonedigger weighs 500 pounds and is still best friends with the 11 pound dachshund.



You can see pictures and find out more about their unusual friendship here:
<https://celebritypets.net/bonedigger-milo-unlikely-animal-friendship/>

Adapting to Change

Both Luna and the penguins needed to adapt in their ways to live together in harmony.

Activity: Draw a timeline and plot out where the changes happened and how Luna and the penguins adapted to change.

Friendship

This story is told in past tense. It is a story about a homeless cat finding family with a huddle of penguins. Use your timeline you've drawn and plot out the development of the friendship between Luna, Yellow Eye and Tiny.

In your plot line outline the main event that triggered the friendship between Luna and Tiny.

Activity: Discuss whether they would have been friends if this event did not occur? How did it make their friendship strong?

Identify who your friends are. How do they help and support you?

Write a short piece about making a new friend. How did you meet? What fun things did you do together?

Extra Resources for the Book

Homelessness Australia

<https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/>

Refugees International:

<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/>

The Yellow-Eyed penguin information and habitat:

<https://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/>

The book trailer:

<https://youtu.be/5w7EjewFWJk>