

# TEACHERS NOTES

## Calm Down, COOPER!



Written by  
Lily Murray

Illustrated by  
Anna Chernyshova

Suitable for  
Age 3-7: Pre-school to Grade 1

Themes

- Unconditional love
- Trusting others
- Respect for others

## Contents of this pack

- *Calm Down, Cooper!* details
- Key themes
- Discussion points
- Activities

## Description

Top dog Cooper is left in charge when his owner goes out for the day. Then Pandy the pesky parrot arrives and throws a WILD PARTY! 'Calm down, Cooper!' says Pandy. But how can he? What happens if his owner finds out? Will he still be the perfect pup? This riotous rhyming story about a puppy in a panic will have dog-lovers laughing out loud.



## About the Author

Lily Murray grew up in the wilds of snowy nowhere, spending much of her time talking to animals and making up stories. She has continued to do this in her adult life, and now writes both fiction and non-fiction books for children. Her previous works include the bestselling *No Worries* and the Disney Classics Series for Studio Press, as well as *Hello, Hot Dog!*, *Once Upon a Magic Book* and *The People Awards* (Frances Lincoln Children's Books), and *Dinosaurium* (Big Picture Press).

## About the Illustrator

Anna Chernyshova graduated from Cambridge School of Art's prestigious MA in Children's Book Illustration in 2015. She currently lives in Cambridge with her family and their dog. Anna's little daughter constantly inspires her illustrations and storytelling, including her very first picture book, *Where is my Yes Word?* which went on to be highly commended in the 2014 Macmillan Children's Book Prize. Her recent children's books include *Catch That Egg* and *Santa Selfie* (Macmillan), *Anna and the Tooth Fairy* (Two Lions) and *The Sneaky Sweet Stealer* (Scholastic).

Find this book at our website:

<https://affirmpress.com.au/books/>



# THEMES

## Unconditional love

In *Calm Down, Cooper!*, Cooper spends much of the time worrying what his owner, Martha, might think when she comes home to find a riotous party in their house. When Martha returns, we expect Cooper to be reprimanded. But instead, Martha reassures Cooper that she's still his biggest fan. Young readers will see that one day of disruption does not change Martha's love for Cooper, thereby showing that love can be given even when mistakes are made.



## Trusting others

Trust is an important theme in *Calm Down, Cooper!*

and there are several references to Cooper's trustworthiness in this story. Cooper's reliability is reflected in overt ways, such as Martha's statements that she trusts and can rely on Cooper, and in subtler ways, such as the descriptions of Cooper helping with housework every day. When Pandy's party envelops the house in chaos, Cooper becomes stressed that he will have broken Martha's trust. This is a good reminder for children that trust comes with responsibility. On the final page, Martha reassures Cooper that she knows he did his best. This shows that Martha still trusts (and loves) Cooper because she knows that he tried to help the situation.

## Respect for others

This story teaches young readers an important lesson about respect. Pandy the parrot immediately disrespects Cooper when he invites his friends around for a party without asking Cooper's permission. Pandy and his friends then rudely ignore Cooper's pleas to stop their party and help him to tidy the mess. Although Pandy wanted to have a fun time and included Cooper in his festivities, he did not have permission to throw a party in Cooper's home. Cooper's panicked reaction to the party reminds us that Pandy should have stopped his celebrations. This teaches children the importance of good manners when you're staying in other people's homes! But most importantly it teaches them to respect other people's wishes, even when they are different to their own.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

- Before you read the book, look at its front cover. What do you think this story is going to be about? Here are some clues: Cooper the dog and some friends are holding a broomstick while a parrot flies above them wearing a mischievous look on his face!
- Now flip the book over and look at the back cover. The blurb says there'll be a WILD PARTY! Did you guess this would happen?
- The parrot responsible for the chaos in this story is called Pandy, short for Pandemonium. Can you guess what pandemonium means? Once your teacher has explained the meaning, discuss other words that could be used to name this parrot. For example, how about Rory, short for Uproar?
- How many different animals can you spot in this book? Which animal would you most like to party with?
- One of the animals is carrying a musical instrument called a tuba. Can you find this animal? He is later joined by a rhino who is also playing a brass instrument. Can you guess what instrument the rhino is playing?
- Does anyone in the classroom play or want to play a musical instrument?
- There is lots of food at Pandy's party! What party food can you spot?
- At the beginning of the story we learn that Cooper is a perfect pet. What does he do that makes him such a good dog?
- Do you think that Pandy the parrot should have held the party at Cooper's house without asking Cooper first? Why/Why not?
- How do you think Cooper feels during Pandy's party? Can you find some moments in the book that support this?
- Although this story is all about Cooper, there are two other animals that help Cooper. They don't speak, but they pop up in most of the illustrations. Can you find them? See if you can spot all of the moments when they're helping Cooper.
- Did you guess what would happen at the end of this story?
- Did you think Cooper would get in trouble from Martha? Why do you think Martha was so kind and understanding at the end of this story?

# ACTIVITIES

## Activity One: Act out the WILD PARTY!

Form a small group – you're going to do some acting!

Together, pick the page of *Calm Down, Cooper!* that you all like the best. Next, decide who is playing each character. Then, act out the scene! You might wish to try on some costumes and maybe you'll have some party food to make it feel like a real WILD PARTY!



---

## Activity Two: Party games!

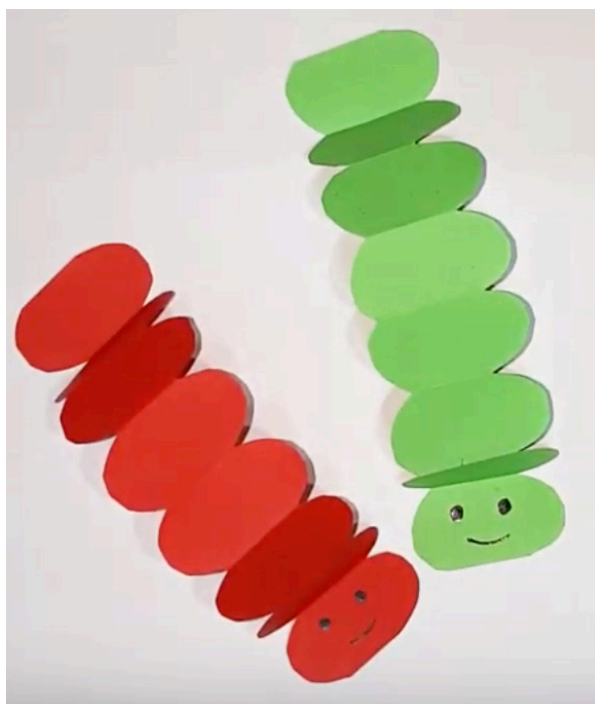
You're going to make and race some paper caterpillars!

### Equipment

Coloured paper, paper straws, scissors, pen

### Instructions

- Cut paper into strips about 4 cm wide and about 15 cm long.
- Fold the paper in half and then in half again and so on, until you have even folds along the strip. Top tip: ask your teacher how to do an accordion fold, or watch [this video!](#)
- Once you have the folds, hold them together and cut off all four corners to form rounded shapes. Top tip: it should look like this picture!
- Then choose one end to be the face and use the pen to draw eyes, a nose and a mouth.
- Set up a start and finish line on the table.
- Each competitor is given a straw and will blow on the straws to make their caterpillars move across the table.



Watch a paper caterpillar tutorial from The Rainbow Pinwheel here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KESBKH3YLH4>.

Sources: Instructions from <https://chasingthosmoments.com/caterpillar-themed-game-for-kids/>. Image from the YouTube video referenced above.

## Activity Three: Pet talk!

Every pet is special to their owner, just like Cooper is to Martha! In the space below, draw your pet and write down why you love her or him! If you have multiple pets, choose one. If you don't have a pet, pretend that you do. You can make up a name for your 'dream pet' and write down all the things you'd love about them!

### Me and My Pet!



My pet's name is \_\_\_\_\_

The top three things I love about my pet are ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My pet looks like this ...

## Activity Four: Staying calm!

Cooper finds himself getting very stressed and worried, and for good reason. But worries are something that we can control. One way we can do this is through our breathing. Have you ever noticed that you breathe very fast when you're feeling worried or angry or scared? Next time you find yourself worrying about something, try this ...

Close your eyes

Purse your lips

Breathe in through your nose for four seconds ...1, 2, 3, 4

Now hold that breath for three seconds ...1, 2, 3

And breathe out through your mouth for seven seconds ...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Try this a few times and see if you feel differently afterwards.

And next time you're feeling worried or angry or stressed, remember to take some deep breaths!

