

Allergic Alpaca Teaching Notes

Synopsis

The start of the alphabet is a wonderful place to live... unless you're allergic to apples.

After an accidental tumble through the alphabet, Alpaca must find her way back home to her friends, Ape, Alligator, Albatross, Anteater and Aardvark. But the longer Alpaca is away from home, the better she feels — her spots disappear, her nose stops running and she has a clear head for the first time ever. Perhaps the start of the alphabet, with all its apples, isn't the best place for an alpaca after all.

Shining new talent Kiah Thomas teams up with the inimitable Connah Brecon to bring the alphabet to life in this laugh-out-loud story with a wonderful surprise ending.

Themes

Allergies
Belonging
Being honest
Friendship
Problem Solving

Author/Illustrator Background

Kiah Thomas lives in NSW with her family. She reads a lot of children's books. Mostly because of her children, but also because a lot of them are really great. Some of them are awful, but when she goes to the library Kiah just tries to hide those ones so her children don't pick them.

Connah Brecon

"I can't lie, I'm pretty lucky to do the things I do, work with the people I work with in an industry that strives to create the best stuff. I can't remember a time when I wasn't drawing something & couldn't imagine what life would be without something to draw on with something that makes marks".

Study Notes and Activities

Before Reading

- Discuss the cover illustrations with your students. Ask them to make predictions about the story based on the cover illustration. What do they think the story might be about?
- Read the blurb. Do your students have any questions about the story after reading the blurb?
- How have student predictions changed or been influenced by the blurb?
- Ask students if they know what an Alpaca is.
- Ask students if they or anyone they know has an allergy.

Questions while reading

- Looking at the endpapers, can students identify each animal illustrated?
- Why might Alpaca feel nervous about Ape climbing the apple tree?
- When the avalanche happens, how do student think Alpaca might be feeling?
- Where in the alphabet has Alpaca landed? (hint – there is a walrus on the page)
- As Alpaca tries to travel back to her page, she seems to be feeling better! Why might this be the case?
- Poor Alpaca, how might she be feeling about moving away from her friends?
- Apples become wapples. Ask students to think of different names for fruit by changing the first letter of that fruit.

Follow On Activities:

Students might like to write their own sequel to *Allergic Alpaca*, or a different story using one of the other characters in the story. E.g. The Ants

Students might like to re write the story from the point of view of the Whale. How might he tell the story?

Ask students to think about what it might be like to be friends with *Allergic Alpaca*. What would they do or talk about together?

Ask students to design a newspaper headline and front page telling the community about what has happened in *Allergic Alpaca*.

Ask students to keep a diary as if they were a character in the story. Write down events that happen during the story and reflect on how they affected the character and why.

Ask students to research and report on their favourite animal in the story.

Students might like to come up with a list of strategies to help a friend or classmate avoid an allergen.