

Teachers' Notes

I NEED a Parrot by Chris McKimmie



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ABOUT THE STORY

Have you ever not just wanted something, but wanted it so much that you NEED it? The main character in *I NEED a Parrot* wants this pet so much that he attempts to persuade the unseen figure that he should get one.

I NEED a Parrot has been recognised as a notable picture book by the Children's Book Council of Australia, and has fantastic potential for readers working at Foundation to Year 2 levels. It can be used both as a mentor text and across the curriculum.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris McKimmie is a writer, artist, designer, musician, lecturer, grandad to seven grandkids and one dog, Teddy, a black Labrador who shares his morning tea biscuits.

Chris has had many solo and group exhibitions of his art, and his books have been included in Children's Book Council of Australia shortlists, long lists, honours lists and notable books lists.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

One day, Dr Stacey O'Shea showed me a project her son was working on. He wanted a parrot. Desperately.

At that point in time I had been working on, and had finished, various versions of a book called *The King of Taringa*. It was about one of our grandsons. They have four cats, and Joshua had said to me one day in our kitchen, 'Grandad, I just want to be a big boy.'

I made about three versions of the story and eventually used some of the images in *I NEED a Parrot* (eg. the cat Bob and the bear) and Josh is the main character even though he is not identified.

Most of the images are obviously comic: whale in a bath (my grandson was embarrassed about this on the cover because his classmates would see him nude) and point to the need to take care of animals if you have them.

My original ending was I NEED a Horse, but pony as suggested by my son is much better as it has a bit of compromise in it. A pony being smaller than a horse and of course there is the alliteration in parrot/pony.

Yesterday at my son's place, for a birthday, one of the grandkids said she wanted a monkey and she kept pushing for it.

She usually gets everything she wants but I think this might be out of the question.

ACTIVITIES

Questions to Ask

Before Reading:

- Have you ever wanted something so much that you thought you NEEDED it?
- What's the difference between wanting something and needing it?
- If you needed a parrot, how might you try to persuade your family?
- What problems might there be in owning a parrot?
- What do you think is going to happen?

During Reading:

- What problems might there be in owning a turkey, shark, or a whale?
- How is the character feeling? How do you know?
- Describe how the pictures add to the story.
- Do you have a text-to-self connection (a personal story) with any part of this book?
- Who is the character trying to persuade? Is he doing a good job?
- How is the character trying to persuade you that he should get a parrot? Is it effective?
- Can you try to change the character's mind about getting a parrot?

After Reading:

- What changed the character's mind about needing a parrot? Would that change your mind?
- When did the character start to change his mind? What was he thinking? How do you know?
- Do you think he should be able to get a parrot? Why or why not?
- How did all of the animals feel in the story? How do you know?
- How could the character have been more effective in his argument?
- In what ways might he change the way he tries to persuade if he were asking different people?
- What is your favourite thing about this book and why?

Guided Reading Discussions and Activities

- Brainstorm what students have really wanted, and how they tried to persuade someone that they should get it.
- Create an anchor chart of ways which we can persuade others (persuasive devices).
- Some of the words are written in capital letters. Use these clues and hints from the pictures to practise your fluency while reading aloud.

Shared Writing

Chris McKimmie used many writing traits throughout the book. Create a story as a class and build on a trait each day.

Ideas

- Choose something that you NEED
- Think of three reasons why you MUST have it!
- Name a reason you might not be able to have it

Voice

- Tell a friend your ideas about why you should or should not have what you NEED.
- Using the same words, write down what you said.
- This will mean that your writing has VOICE!

Word Choice

- Read through 'I NEED a Parrot'. Which words made you understand that the boy NEEDS a parrot?
- Check your writing and see if you can include any of these strong words

Conventions

- In 'I NEED a Parrot', Chris McKimmie uses capital letters for some words. Which words and why?
- Do you need to write any of your words in capital letters? Which words and why?

Presentation

- Look at the pictures in 'I NEED a Parrot'. How do they add to the story?
- Think about how your character is feeling on each page.
- Publish your book and add pictures in a way which shows how your character is feeling.
- Share your book and all of the ways you improved on your writing!

Maths

- Survey the class about if they need a parrot, turkey, shark, whale, bear, or pony. For Foundation students, ask yes/no questions, for Year 1 and 2 students they should select a favourite.
- Create a graph of students' favourite animals from the book. Which animals are the most popular? Which are the least popular?

Science

- Think about what a parrot or a pony might need to stay alive, and brainstorm what other things might have the same needs or different needs. Why do the animals have these needs?
- Parrots can live for up to 50 years. Draw pictures of the boy and his parrot together every ten years to show how they both might change (ages 5, 15, 25, 35, 45, 55).

Design and Technology

- The boy in the book didn't want a pretend parrot. Maybe this is because the pretend parrot in the book was not right for him. Challenge students to design and then make a pretend parrot from items available in the classroom, explaining why the boy will like their pretend parrot.

Curriculum Links

There are many links to be made to the Australian Curriculum (AC), especially the English Learning Area. The table below demonstrates some of the possible connections between the above learning activities and the curriculum from Years 4-8, allowing for both extension and literacy support groups using the same text. Differentiation is achieved by level of detail and evidence which is required by the students, allowing all students to work within their zone of proximal development.

Learning Activity	Foundation AC Links	Year 1 AC Links	Year 2 AC Links
Questions to Ask	ACELA1429 ACELA1437 ACELT1575 ACELT1783 ACELY1646 ACELY1650	ACELA1446 ACELA1453 ACELY1656 ACELY1660	ACELA1461 ACELA1470 ACELT1589 ACELT1590 ACELY1666 ACELY1670
Guided Reading	ACELA1429 ACSSU002 ACELT1783 ACELY1646 ACELY1650	ACELA1446 ACSSU017 ACELA1453 ACELY1656 ACELY1660	ACELA1461 ACSSU030 ACELA1470 ACELY1666 ACELY1670
Shared Writing	ACELY1646 ACELY1650 ACELY1651 ACELY1652	ACELT1581 ACELY1661 ACELY1662 ACELT1832 ACELY1660	ACELA1470 ACELT1833 ACELY1666 ACELY1670 ACELY1671 ACELY1672
Maths	ACMSP011	ACMSP262 ACMSP263	ACMSP048 ACMSP050
Science	ACSSU002	ACSSU017	ACSSU030
Design and Technology	ACTDEP005 ACTDEP006 ACTDEP007 ACTDEP008 ACELT1831	ACTDEP005 ACTDEP006 ACTDEP007 ACTDEP008 ACELY1660	ACTDEP005 ACTDEP006 ACTDEP007 ACTDEP008 ACELY1670

Full descriptions of Australian Curriculum Links

Year Level	AC Link	Curriculum Area	Description
Foundation	ACELA1429	English	Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes
Foundation	ACELA1437	English	Understand the use of vocabulary in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school
Foundation	ACELT1575	English	Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences
Foundation	ACELT1783	English	Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts
Foundation	ACELT1831	English	Innovate on familiar texts through play
Foundation	ACELY1646	English	Listen to and respond orally to texts and to the communication of others in informal and structured classroom situations
Foundation	ACELY1650	English	Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently
Foundation	ACELY1651	English	Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge
Foundation	ACELY1652	English	Participate in shared editing of students' own texts for meaning, spelling, capital letters and full stops
Foundation	ACMSP011	Maths	Answer yes/no questions to collect information and make simple inferences
Foundation	ACSSU002	Science - Biology	Living things have basic needs, including food and water
Year 1	ACELA1446	English	Understand that there are different ways of asking for information, making offers and giving commands
Year 1	ACELA1453	English	Compare different kinds of images in narrative and informative texts and discuss how they contribute to meaning

Year 1	ACELT1581	English	Discuss how authors create characters using language and images
Year 1	ACELT1832	English	Innovate on familiar texts by using similar characters, repetitive patterns or vocabulary
Year 1	ACELY1656	English	Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions
Year 1	ACELY1660	English	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features
Year 1	ACELY1661	English	Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams
Year 1	ACELY1662	English	Re-read student's own texts and discuss possible changes to improve meaning, spelling and punctuation
Year 1	ACMSP262	Maths	Choose simple questions and gather responses and make simple inferences
Year 1	ACMSP263	Maths	Represent data with objects and drawings where one object or drawing represents one data value. Describe the displays
Year 1	ACSSU017	Science - Biology	Living things have a variety of external features
Year 2	ACELA1470	English	Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience and purpose
Year 2	ACELT1589	English	Compare opinions about characters, events and settings in and between texts
Year 2	ACELT1590	English	Identify aspects of different types of literary texts that entertain, and give reasons for personal preferences
Year 2	ACELT1833	English	Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot
Year 2	ACELY1666	English	Listen for specific purposes and information, including instructions, and extend students' own and others' ideas in discussions
Year 2	ACELY1670	English	Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multimodal text structures
Year 2	ACELY1671	English	Create short imaginative, informative and persuasive texts using growing knowledge of text structures and language features for familiar and some less familiar audiences, selecting print and multimodal elements appropriate to the audience and purpose
Year 2	ACELY1672	English	Re-read and edit text for spelling, sentence-boundary punctuation and text structure
Year 2	ACMSP048	Maths	Identify a question of interest based on one categorical variable. Gather data relevant to the question
Year 2	ACMSP050	Maths	Create displays of data using lists, table and picture graphs and interpret them
Year 2	ACSSU030	Science - Biology	Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves
F-2	ACTDEP006	Design and Technology	Generate, develop and record design ideas through describing, drawing and modelling
F-2	ACTDEP007	Design and Technology	Use materials, components, tools, equipment and techniques to safely make designed solutions
F-2	ACTDEP008	Design and Technology	Use personal preferences to evaluate the success of design ideas, processes and solutions including their care for environment
F-2	ACTDEP005	Design and Technology	Explore needs or opportunities for designing, and the technologies needed to realise designed solutions