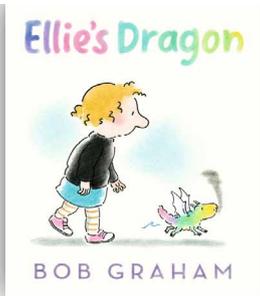




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Ellie's Dragon

Bob Graham
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

When Ellie is very little, she finds a newborn dragon fresh from the egg on a supermarket shelf, and calls him Scratch. He is quite the sweetest thing she has ever seen! From that day on, Ellie and Scratch do everything together. Ellie's mum and her teacher can't see her fiery friend, but all her friends can – and, over the years, *Ellie's Dragon* grows to be big, house-trained, and very affectionate. And Ellie is growing, too...

A moving story about the wonders of imagination and the nature of growing up from one of Australia's most revered bookmakers.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Bob Graham is a Kate Greenaway-winning bookmaker who has written and illustrated many acclaimed children's picture books including *The Poesy Ring*, *Home in the Rain*, *How to Heal a Broken Wing*, *How the Sun Got to Coco's House*, *Max*, *Jethro Byrde: Fairy Child* and *The Underhills*. His 2011 title, *A Bus Called Heaven*, is endorsed by Amnesty International UK and was the winner of the 2012 Children's Book Council of Australia Picture Book of the Year Award – a prize Bob has won an unprecedented seven times. He has been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Literary Award in Australia twice, in 2014 for *Silver Buttons* and in 2017 for *Home in the Rain*. Bob lives in Melbourne..

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Ages 4-7
- Years F-2

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:

- Friendship
- Imagination
- Growing up
- Family



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

View the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author/illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover? Write your own story using the title *Ellie's Dragon*.

Exploring the Book

Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?

Is *Ellie's Dragon* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Write a book review on *Ellie's Dragon*. Include what you liked about the book, who you think would enjoy it the most and mention any other books you think are similar.

On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, place an image of the cover of *Ellie's Dragon* and surround it with words that describe the book. Include words that describe what you liked and what you disliked about the book.

Most stories start after the title page. Where do you think this story begins? Look at the pages before the title page. Why do you think Bob Graham decided to start the story here? Compare this to other picture books that start after the title page. How does this change how you read the story?

Why do you think Ellie, her friends, and the other children shown in the book can see Scratch, and the adults cannot?

As time passes, Scratch starts to fade for Ellie. Why do you think this happens?

Exploring the Book

Analyse one of the double-page spreads from the book. Questions to ask could include:

- What do you look at first? Why? Then how does your eye travel around the page? (This is called the “reading path”.)
- What techniques and materials has Bob Graham used? (For example, pencil, watercolour, ink.)
- What perspective has he used? Is the picture shown close-up or from a distance?
- What objects are big and small? Why are they shown this way?
- What objects are in the foreground (front) of the picture? The background? Midground?
- What are the dominant colours? What mood (feeling) do these colours create?
- Where are the people (or dragon) in the picture looking?
- Why are they looking there? What effect does this have?
- How do the illustrations add to the story? How would the story be different if there were no illustrations?

How do the illustrations show time passing? You could consider how Ellie and her mum change in appearance, how Scratch grows or how Ellie's room looks different throughout the book.

Study the spreads in the supermarkets. Consider things like the aisle signs, things at the counter, on the shelves and more. Does it look similar or different to any supermarkets you've visited?

Further Activities

Find other books by Bob Graham at your library, and compare them to *Ellie's Dragon*. How are they similar or different? Can you see any hints to other Bob Graham books in *Ellie's Dragon*? (Hint – look at the book by Ellie's bed and the movie she sees with her dad).

Write a story about an adventure Scratch has with his new owner, Sam. You could also write a letter to Bob Graham giving your thoughts on the book. What did you like about it? What did it teach you? Edit your letter then send it to Walker Books Australia to pass on to Bob!