



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Old Fellow

Christopher Cheng
Liz Anelli
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia
Locked Bag 22
Newtown, N.S.W., 2042
Ph +61 2 9517 9577
Fax +61 2 9517 9997

These notes were created by Christopher Cheng, illustrations © 2022 Liz Anelli. For enquiries please contact: educationwba@walkerbooks.com.au

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Outline:

An old man and an old dog look after each other on their daily trip to the local park. Along the way they meet friends new and old who brighten their day in different ways. A beautiful, heartwarming book that celebrates community and connection.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Within the old (and new) walls of an inner-city Sydney terrace dwells Christopher Cheng. He is the author of many children's books including his previous Nature storybook title *Python* (illustrated by Mark Jackson) which was shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year awards. Passionate about animals, particularly those native to Australia, it's fitting that he established the Zoomobile and taught at Taronga Zoo in Sydney for many years, celebrating his background in education. He has always loved to write (he mostly always carries his notebook and pens) but he never thought he would be a full-time children's author.

You can find Chris at <https://www.chrischeng.com/>

Illustrator Liz Anelli previously lived and worked in England but now resides in Newcastle, NSW. She has a huge passion for drawing and keeps rows of sketchbooks in her studio. In 2017, her book *Desert Lake: The Story of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre* (written by Pamela Freeman) was a CBCA Notable Book and was short-listed for the NSW Premier's Literary Award, NSW Premier's History Awards, the Environment Award for Children's Literature and the Educational Publishing Awards. Her other picture books with Walker Books include *Ten Pound Pom* (written by Carole Wilkinson) - shortlisted for CBCA Picture Book of The Year and winner of the Educational Publishing Awards in 2018 - *Maddie's First Day* (written by Penny Matthews) as well as *Dry to Dry* (written by Pamela Freeman) and *The Biscuit Maker* (written by Sue Lawson), both of which were CBCA Notables.

Visit Liz at <https://lizanelli-illustration.com/>

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 3-7

Key Learning Areas:
• English

Example of:
• Picture Book

Themes/Ideas:
• Community
• Animals
• Nature
• Friendship



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Before Reading

Before reading *Old Fellow*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author and illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end?

Discuss parks and the role they play in the community. What are some different types of parks? Who do you think manages or controls parks? What they are used for and why they are important?

How might parks be different in the city compared to the suburbs or the country? Identify some possible similarities and differences.

What features do you think make a 'good' park and why? Are there ways you think your local park could be improved?

Exploring the End Papers

Identify and list all the items on this page, labelling them according to whether you think they relate to an old man or an old dog.

Based on the items, estimate the age of the old man / old dog. What helped you decide on your estimation?

What type of dwelling do you think these Old Fellows live in? Provide reason(s).

From this illustration

- what can you tell about the old man?
- what can you tell about the old dog?

What illustration techniques has the illustrator, Liz Anelli, used?

Many books have blank or patterned end papers. Why do you think Liz has illustrated these end papers? How do they enhance the book? What additional story do these illustrations tell you?

2-3

Look at the dominant colours that the illustrator has used. What could they signify?

Identify and list all the items on this page

What are the two Old Fellows doing?

What do you notice about the old dog? About the old man?

Exploring the Title Page

Discuss the room(s) that is suggested by this illustration. What are they used for?

What type of person could live here? What gives you that idea?

Identify and list all the items on this page.

Identify the names of the author and the illustrator and visit your library to find other books that they have created.

Read the dedications.

- Who do all the names belong to? Why do you think they have been included?
- Who do you think are the Old Fellows of Camperdown Memorial Park?

What is the red symbol next to the author's name?

- Why do you think this has been included?
- What could this suggest about the author?



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion and Activities Page by Page

2-3

Identify and list all the items on this page.

What are the two Old Fellows doing?

What do you notice about the old dog? About the old man?

Compare your breakfast to that of the Old Fellows.

Create a list of words to describe the eating process.

4-5

What are the Old Fellows doing?

What do the two Old Fellows do to prepare?

Describe the old man's clothes.

What room is suggested by the illustrations?

Why is it important to clip on the lead?

Identify and list all the items on this page

6-7

What are the contents of the parcels carried by the Old Fellows?

Add further to your description of the dwelling.

What does the phrase "*these old bones...*" refer to?

What part of the city are the Old Fellows walking in?

Describe all that you can see in the illustration.

What does the phrase "*My legs must be getting shorter...*" suggest about the Old Fellows?

What does the phrase "*catch my breath*" mean?

Why sit on the fence?

What part of the fence would the Old Fellow sit on?

8-9

How do people interact in this park from this illustration?

In creating this art the illustrator and author met in a park and took many photos. Compare this photo (see end*) with the sketch of the park. Now compare these to the finished illustration. What do you notice? Discuss how sketching is important for the illustrator and what it does.

What season of the year do you think this story is set in?

Describe the park, and make a list of all the things happening in the park.

Describe the city seen in the distance.

10-11

Discuss how the Old Fellows are both using a water fountain.

- What is another name for a water fountain?
- How does it work?

What do you do when you are thirsty in the park?

What are the birds doing?

Discuss the other person in the illustration.

- What are they doing?
- Create a list of words to describe the person.

What breed of dog is this?

Discuss activities that can be enjoyed in the park.

What is meant by the phrase "*I'm glad we were never like that*"? Why would the Old Fellow say that?

12-13

The Old Fellow says "*searching for you*".

- How has the illustrator shown this in the illustrations?
- Who is talking to the lost dog?
- How do you think the dog became lost?

Why would the chickens' owner let them into the park? What would the chickens be eating?

What do you think the Old Fellow did in his younger days and how?

What else can you see happening in this illustration?

14-15

List all the activities in this illustration. Describe how they are done.

Why does the Old Fellow need "*a rest on the bench*"?

Compare the hat and parcel in the first vignette with the second.

- Why have they moved?

What people are in the second illustration?

- Describe what the people are doing



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16-17

Are they new or established trees? How do you know?

Why is the old man pushing his old dog?

How are the two sets of Old Fellows the same?
Different?

Why should the Old Fellows stop to say hello?

Do you think the Old Fellow minds?

Describe the place where the Old Fellows are seated.

- What are they doing?

Describe Peta:

- List all the things she is carrying.
- What do you think she does? Why?

What suggests to the Old Fellow that Peta would like to play chess?

What do you notice about the old dog's parcel?

What are the dogs doing?

Where are they sitting?

Where are Peta and the old man sitting?

Where is the newspaper in this sequence of illustrations?

What do you notice about the parcels?

18-19

Why should the Old Fellows walk slower?

The birds are twittering.

- List other words to describe bird sounds.

How do the Old Fellows know that the barking dog wants to play?

What suggests that the garden has just been planted?

Describe the animals in this illustration.

What has changed for the old dog in this illustration?

20-21

Describe the action in this illustration.

Who is in the illustrations?

Describe this part of the park.

What are the Old Fellows doing?

What does '*take your breath away*' mean? Create a list of things that take your breath away. Compare it to the list of your classmates.

Create a map of the park, either drawn or using building blocks, based on this story.

22-23

Discuss what can be seen in this illustration.

Vignettes:

- Where are the two Old Fellows?
- What is the old man holding?
- In the third vignette what is the old man doing?

24-25

List the differences you can see between this illustration and the title page.

The illustrator has created this illustration from a different perspective. What do you notice?

Why do you think the Old Fellows are sitting on the floor?

What do you think might have happened before this illustration and what suggests that?

Endpaper:

What time of day does this illustration suggest? How do you know?

Identify and list all the items on this page.

What are the Old Fellows doing?

What room(s) is suggested by this illustration?

After Reading

The Park:

Do you think this is a good park? Why or why not?

What were the people doing in the park? What do you do in your favourite park?

Create the perfect park

- Draw a map
- List the features
- List all the structures
- List all the plants
- List all the animals

Create a list of all the action words that you can see in this book.



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Dogs:

Examine the dog breeds in the story.

- Research different dog breeds.
- List all the different dogs that appear in *Old Fellow*.
- Discuss what were they doing.
- Discuss how dogs interact with humans.

What dogs make good companions?

What dogs make good pets?

- All dogs are descended from wolves. Investigate this statement.
- Investigate pets and the domestication of dogs.
- Create a table for the different breeds showing how they are the same or different.

Create a table of the dog breeds and/or pets in your class.

The House:

Describe the Old Fellows' house.

Compare your dwelling to that of *Old Fellow*.

Compile a chart of the similarities and differences.

General:

After reading the story and examining the pictures discuss the narrative voice - who is the narrator of this story?

Events

- List the events of the Old Fellows' day in chronological order.
- List the events of your day in chronological order.
- Compare the two lists.
- What do you do the same / different as the characters in *Old Fellow*?
- Record these events on a time line.

Create a list of all the animals that are in *Old Fellow* - don't forget the insects!

Create a list of words and phrases that describe the relationship between the two Old Fellows.

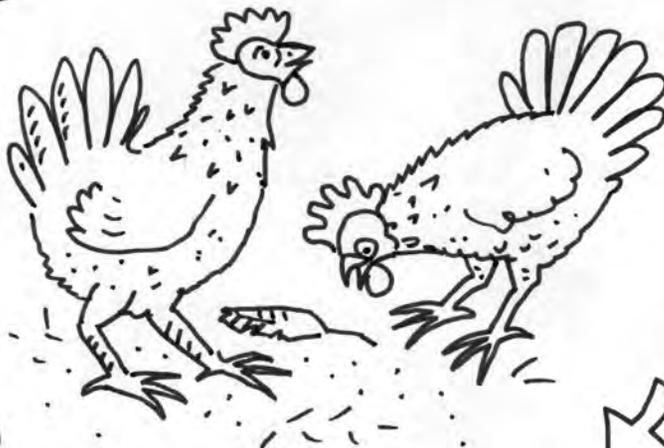
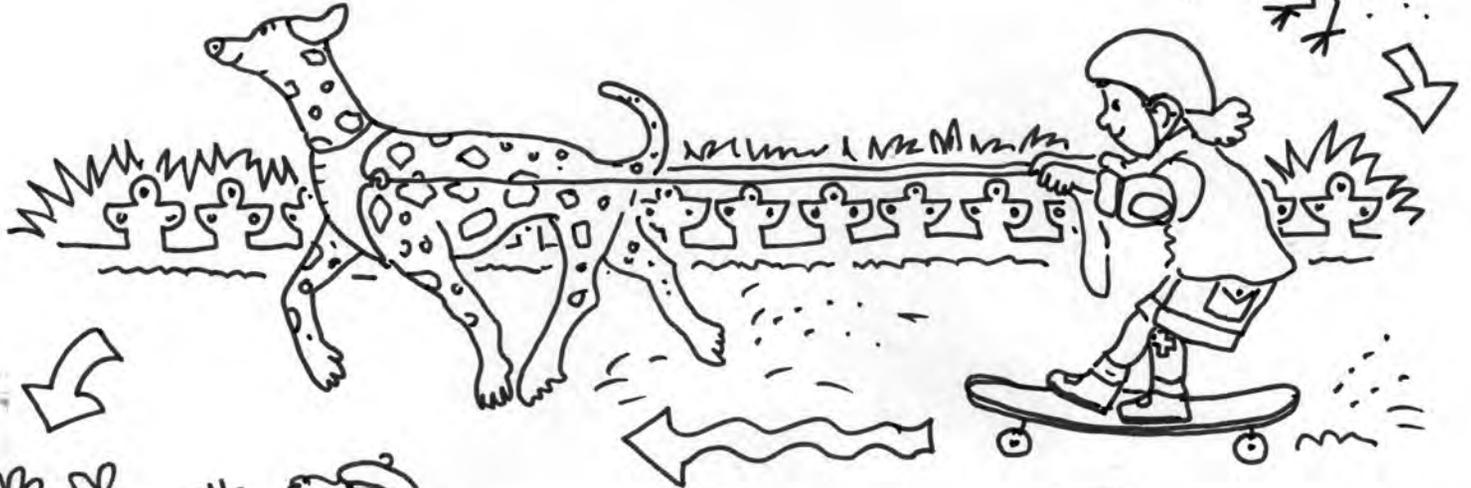
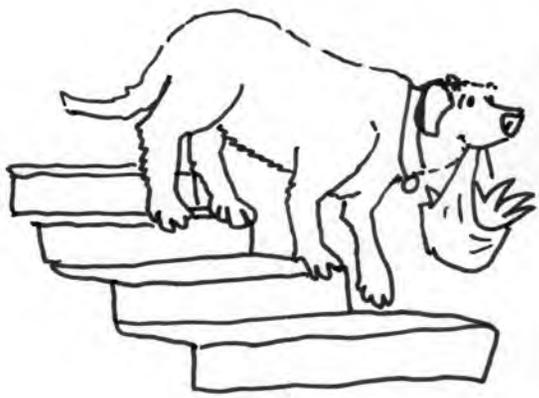
Have students discuss the Old Fellows (male or female) in their lives and what they do.

What reasons might there be that there are no children interacting with the Old Fellows?

Have students interview an Old Fellow they know maybe a grandparent, or from an old people's home, and find out what they do in a typical day. Students could then write and illustrate their own *Old Fellow* story based on the interview.

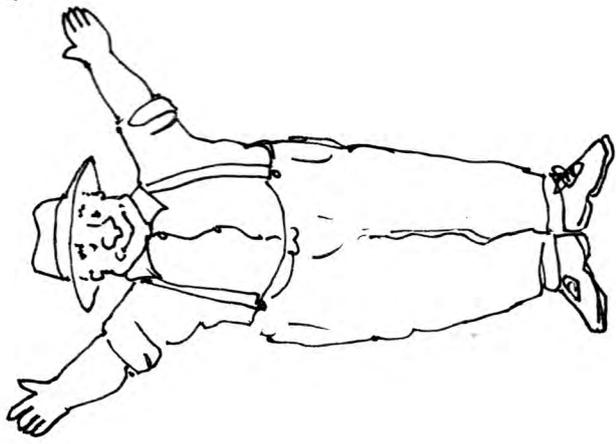
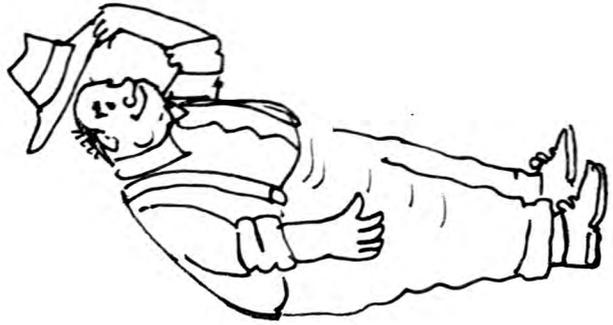
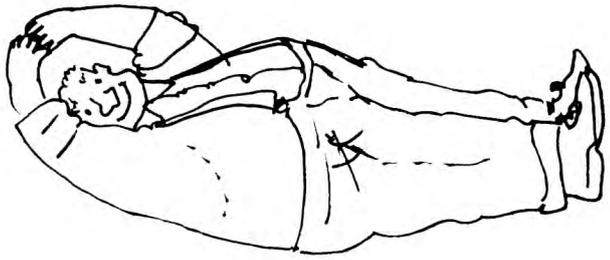
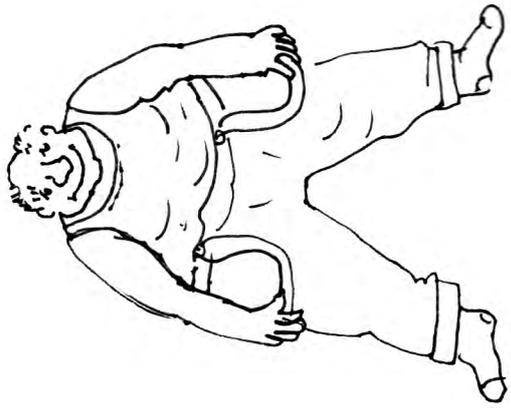
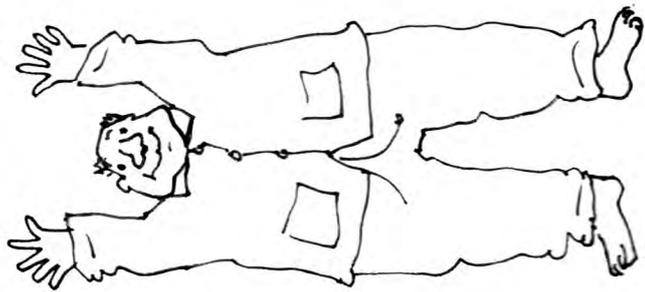
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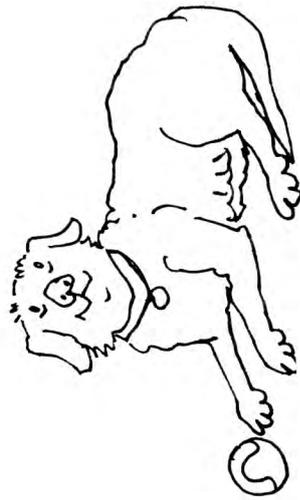


OLD FELLOW



* HAPPY

BOOK DAY



BY CHRISTOPHER CHENG & LIZ ANELLI *