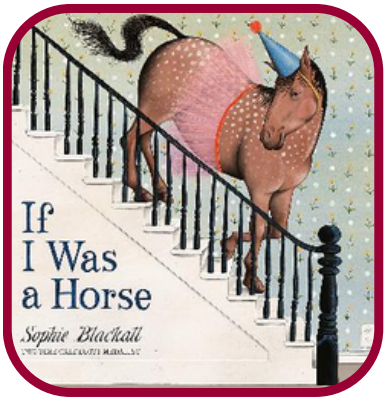
PICTURE BOOK



IF I WAS A HORSE

By Sophie Blackall
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books / Hachette
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BLURB

If I was a horse, I would gallop all day.
I could go anywhere I want . . .

If you were a horse, what would you do? Could you fit in your clothes? Would you give your little sister a ride? Would your brother even notice?

Gallop along with two-time Caldecott Medallist Sophie Blackall through this riotous day in the life of a child who imagines their life as a horse. Sophie's delightful text and resonant illustrations that feature a giant horse in familiar settings offer a visual feast, a grand dose of joy and a celebration of the real power of imagination to help us navigate the world.

NOTES

Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

Imagination; Horses; Families and Family Life.

Discussion Questions and Activities:

- Every child imagines themselves either as someone else, or in a completely different situation, at some stage. Some imaginings are fanciful (becoming a fairy or a princess), some are based on reality (becoming a horse!). Discuss the imagination, and the things your students have imagined for themselves.
- Imagining is a way of escaping the restrictive nature of daily routines. A child who resists taking a bath, wearing the clothes their mother has selected, and eating what their father has prepared, disappears into a world where the perceived freedom of a horse becomes symbolic of escape. Invite students to discuss some of the family routines which they find restrictive and how they 'escape' from them.
- Horses are often well-loved by children and this book is a celebration of that passion. The horse in this book is a majestic creature, a horse which can run and leap, dive into a pool, and climb stairs as well! Invite students to discuss their feelings about horses, or perhaps another animal which holds a similar attraction to them.
- Discuss the many interesting words which relate to horses, such as their colouring (piebald, roan, skewbald, palomino), their gender or age (mare, filly, stallion, pony), their type (racehorse, draughthorse, Appaloosa, thoroughbred, Clydesdale, brumby, Andalusian etc.).
- What sort of family is the one depicted in this book? For example, dad is seen making lunches for the children (pp 10–11) so there is a sharing of household tasks evinced in that frame. The brother appears to be keen on computers but also likes knitting. What else did you notice about this family?
- Create a diorama of the horse inside the home which is depicted in this story. Create another scene in which the horse appears.
- The endpapers provide a drawing lesson in themselves. They depict a grid of three rows on which the horse is traced first as an outline, then shaded, and then coloured in the third row. Encourage students to examine this closely and then to experiment with drawing their own horses. Once drawn, decorate the horse by dressing it in a tutu or another costume. Add collaged materials and glitter to complete the image.