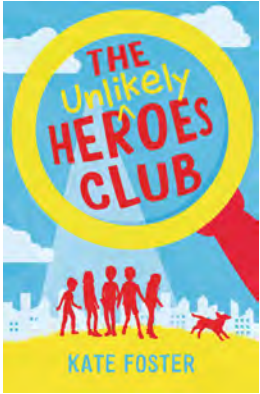




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Unlikely Heroes Club

Author: Kate Foster
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Eleven-year-old Oli is spending his school holidays at Heroes Club, where kids can build friendships and learn about their emotions, but Oli just wants to be home ... where it's familiar, not-so-boring and he can play his favourite game.

But when Oli and the other kids at the club see a stray dog who keeps disappearing into a soon-to-be-demolished building across the street, Oli and his four fellow heroes hatch a daring rescue plan to save the dog before it's too late.

It's going to take bravery, some seriously smart teamwork ... and a few broken rules.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Kate Foster is a children's author writing about friends, family, and dogs. Originally from a small town in the south east of England, she now lives on the stunning Gold Coast in Australia with her family and second-hand dogs. She is passionate about encouraging and teaching a wider understanding of autism and mental illness via positive approach and representation.

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.

Ages: From 8 to 12 years

Key Learning Areas: English

Genre: Fiction



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Discussion Questions and Activities

Before Reading

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

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Exploring the Text

Orientation

The orientation sets the scene, mood and introduces the characters.

In the opening scene of the novel

- Which character/s are we introduced to?
- What mood is the author setting?

Activity: Write what you think could happen in the story based on how the writer has set the story up.

Complications

It is the author's job to create trouble for their characters. They need to make it difficult for the characters to achieve their goals.

Class discussion:

- What trouble (complications) does the author create to make it difficult for the main character to achieve their goal/s?
- Can you identify the climax of the story, the moment of highest tension?

Characterisation

Characterisation is how the characters in a novel are described physically, their point of view, their personalities, their private thoughts and their actions.

Activity: Draw a picture of a character from the book and then describe their personality in five words.

Compare your ideas of that character with other people in your class. Did you imagine the same person?

Resolution

How does the story conclude (resolution)?

- Compare the ending of the story with how you imagined it ending at the end of the first chapter. (first activity)
- Were you surprised by where the story went?

Setting and World-building

Consider the world the author has created in this novel.

- Can you describe it?
- How is it different to the world you live in?
- Which elements of the world seem realistic, and which seems fantastical?



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Creative Responses to the Text

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of another character. Focus particularly on the character's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might another character see and experience events differently to the character in the novel?

Imagine that a movie was being made of the novel. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.



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Exploring the Text **in Depth**:

1. Have a brainwashing session with the class before you read the book on all the ways that students in the class can be different. Discuss the difficulties that come with being different and the positives.
2. The author Kate Foster believes “Children deserve to see themselves mirrored in media, as well as learn about lives and worlds different to them. Books allow this to happen. Children deserve to see authors and illustrators who look like them, and also different to them, writing their stories.” Kate is autistic and on page 5 Oli tells us he is autistic as well. Discuss with your class why they think it is important to be able to recognise characters who are like them in books and why they think it is also important to read about people who are different from them in books?
3. Oli has to spend his summer holidays going to a ‘socialisation’ class to practice social skills. Do a class poster with all the social skills that Oli learns during the course.
4. What is trope in fiction? Look for mystery tropes in the Unlikely Heroes club. Why do writers use tropes?