

Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Raewyn Caisley Gabriel Evans

Count The Stars

Author: Raewyn Caisley Illustrator: Gabriel Evans ISBN: 978760653552 Publication Date: August 2023 *Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

From the parallel lines of moonlight pouring through her bedroom blinds, to counting daisy petals in the garden, Maddie adores maths. If only she had a friend who marvelled at it as she does. Then Dad takes Maddie, along with her new classmate Priya, to the observatory where the unfathomable numbers of stars take their breath away.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Raewyn Caisley has enjoyed a long, and in her own words with 35 titles to her name her work has found its way into libraries and homes all over the world. She's been shortlisted multiple times, (for the Patricia Wrightson Award, the WA Premier's Award, and the Adelaide Festival Children's Literature Award), won the Speech Pathology Book of the Year and the coveted SCBWI Crystal Kite, and even had one of her titles named among the top 15 picture books published worldwide. Her literary contribution to Western Australia has recently been recognised by the WA Museum. In Primary School maths was one of Raewyn's favourite subjects. Mr Foy taught her about the solar system, starting a lifelong love of cosmology, but it was dear Mr Derby who introduced her to books. Her father had a huge influence on her too, telling her girls can do anything. Raewyn lives in Fremantle WA with her husband, Terry, and her creative, musical son, Jack.

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.

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Ages: From 4 to 8 years

Key Learning Areas: English

Genre: Picture Book



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/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?

Activity:

Write your own story using the title of the picture book.

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 attentions and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Exploring the Text

Exploring the Text

Discussion:

- Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?
- Is the book an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?

Literary techniques allow a writer to convey a deeper meaning in their text.

- What techniques can you find in this text? e.g. metaphor, imagery, alliteration, personification
- What deeper meaning can you draw from the text?

Exploring the Illustrations

Discussion:

- How do the illustrations add to the story?
- Do you think the illustrator has effectively told his story visually?

Activity:

Cover the text in the book and write your own story following the illustrations.

Discussion:

Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following illustration decisions:

- How do the illustrations add to the story?
- How do you think the people are feeling?
 What clues might there be in the pictures?
- Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
- Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
- Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?
- Are any of the words bigger on the page than the others? Why could that be?

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Exploring the Text in Depth:

1. Before reading the book ask your class about girls and maths. Do they have any preconceived ideas about whether girls should or should not be good at maths? As a class research some of the historical views of women and mathematics.

2. Ask everyone in the class to identify if they have a special interest that they are passionate about. Do they know anyone else who shares that interest? If so how does that feel to have someone interested in the same thing?

3. Ask your class to write a poem about loneliness. What does being lonely feel like? What does it look like? What is the opposite of being lonely? What is the colour of lonely?

4. Write a list of mathematical words on the board – the words in book that are mathematical terms are in bold. Ask your class to draw a picture of their classroom or playground and draw as many of these mathematical concepts in the picture and then label them. Eg. a bench in the classroom might be a rectangle.

5. Have a class discussion about astronomy and encourage the students to look up at the sky in the night. Why does astronomy have anything to do with mathematics. Have a look at the history of mathematics and why it is everywhere around us. Why would someone who loved mathematics love the stars?