

Teacher Notes to accompany *Pepperpot*

Pepperpot has been written as a picture book for **Early Stage 1 – Stage 2** (Kindergarten to Year 4) students to enjoy. These Teacher Notes allow a class to explore themes from the story that relate to thinking and communicating differently. The story features a quirky cat who is confronted by unwanted change. Pepperpot's behaviours mirror some of the challenges and strengths experienced by children living on the autism spectrum.



Exploring this rhyming text and its illustrations with students in your class will allow for teaching opportunities linked to *personal development and health outcomes about communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing*.

Exploring themes from the text that relate to the autism spectrum

Change



Ask: What does Pepperpot normally do every day?

Ask: Can each day always be the same for us? Why not?
Why is it hard when things change and are different?

Routines



Discuss: The visual schedule your class uses to plan your day or week.

Ask: How do students **feel** if there is a change to their day like a new casual teacher appearing?

Discuss: Ideas for helping friends or class members when they are feeling worried or anxious about change or new things happening at school.

Safe places



Explain: Pepperpot has a place she goes to sleep and hide where she feels safe.

Ask: Do you have a place you like to go where you feel safe? How do you feel while you are in this place?

Discuss: Where can students go at school when they need to be in a quiet and calming place?

Our senses

Explain: Pepperpot was woken by Queen Bee squawking when Buster pounced on her outside in the backyard. Pepperpot doesn't like loud sounds as they frighten and upset her.

Ask: How do you feel if you suddenly hear a loud sound or someone surprises you?

Explain: Listening to sound is one of our senses. Discuss the senses they might know and different levels of sensitivity people can have.



Feelings and expressions

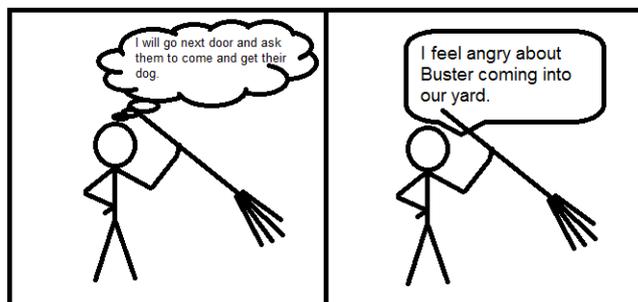


Explain: Pepperpot finds it difficult to know what others are feeling.

Ask: Students to look at picture of Grandma in the book. How do they think Grandma was **feeling**?

What might Grandma have been **thinking** here about Buster?

Illustrate students' answers using simple cartoon figure thinking bubbles.



Use a cartoon figure thinking bubble to record what students feel *Buster* might have been **thinking** when he saw Bam Boo swinging off the verandah.

Discuss: What else could Pepperpot have done to save Queen Bee that would not have upset Buster?

Understanding idioms and new words

[Young people on the autism spectrum sometimes only literally interpret words]

Explain: Sometimes people use words or phrases in speaking or stories that do not have the same meaning they normally do. Share an example of an *idiom* ['It was raining cats and dogs']... and discuss its meaning.

Discuss: Sometimes you need to listen carefully to understand the meaning of words someone says. If an 'idiom' or new word is used in a story you need to look carefully at the words or pictures around it to understand what is really being said.

Explain: In the story Buster "*let go of the chicken as now he had to fly*" Discuss what 'to fly' means in the story.

Ask: What do the words '**lure**', '**feline**' and '**shimmied**' mean? What are some other new words they did not previously know the meaning of in this story?

Concentration and focus

Explain: In the story the illustrator has used a focus circle on some illustrations so we can 'zoom in' and see details or things remembered or imagined.

Ask: Can you remember where in the story this happens?

Explain: Sometimes if we are very interested in a topic or information subject we can focus carefully to learn and remember lots of information about it.

Ask: If we have a special interest topic, can we talk about it all the time to friends and family? Why not? Discuss.

Discuss: Why is it good to have people in our class who are different to us?

