



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary school students
Ages 5+

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Creative Arts; Humanities and Social Science
- **General capabilities:** Ethical understanding; literacy; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Encourages imagination and ingenuity.
- To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
- To use and experiment with different symbols, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To use the text as a springboard for general discussion and exploration of major themes.

THEMES

- Creativity/imagination
- Grief
- Empathy
- Stereotypes
- Visual literacy
- Community
- Nature

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia and Michael Speechley

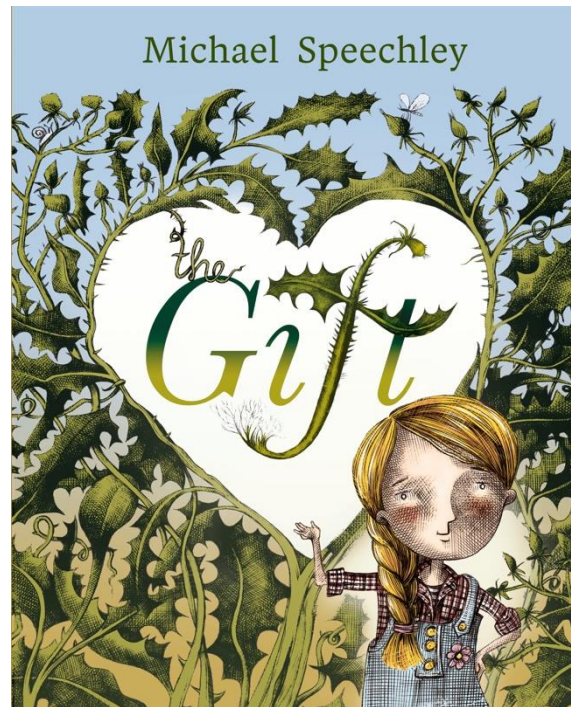
PUBLICATION DETAILS

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The Gift

Michael Speechley

PLOT SUMMARY

Championing simple acts of kindness, this exquisite picture book explores the importance of friendship and the joy of giving.

The house across the road looks abandoned, but Rosie knows someone lives there. She decides to give her mystery neighbour a gift – something different, something unusual, something surprising. Something her mum would have been proud of.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Speechley has been a graphic designer and high school art teacher in WA.

His first picture book, *The All New Must Have Orange 430*, explores themes of consumerism and the environment. It was shortlisted for Book of the Year, CBCA awards, 2019. His second book, *The Gift*, deals with kindness and the joy of giving.

English

Questions

1. Read *The Gift* together as a class. What do you think the author is saying with this story?
2. Rosie thinks an old woman lives in the run-down house across the street. Was her assumption correct? Why would Rosie think this?
3. Rosie empathises with her neighbour. What does 'empathy' mean? How does this differ to 'sympathy'?
4. Rosie would like to give her neighbour a gift to cheer her up. Why do presents make us feel special? Do the feelings differ if you're giving the present?
5. Rosie wants to give her neighbour 'something different, something unusual, something surprising'. Have you every received a gift that is unusual? Is it important to be creative when giving presents?
6. Do you think it's sometimes more special to make a gift rather than buying something?
7. When it's revealed that Rosie has left her neighbour a weed, what's your reaction to this? Why would she give someone a weed?
8. Why do you think Mrs Green hasn't been outside for a long time? Do you sometimes feel like you don't want to see other people or would rather be on your own?
9. At the end of the story it's revealed that Rosie has been doing more than just giving Mrs Green the weeds that she has removed from her garden. What else has she been doing?

Activities

1. Rosie lists the things she used to do with her mum. Choose a family member or friend and write a list of things that you enjoy doing with that person. After each activity also write how it makes you feel or why you enjoy it.
2. Discuss as a class the idea of 'random acts of kindness' and the belief that people can connect

through kindness. Use the resources available at www.randomactsofkindness.org

3. Put yourself in Mrs Green's shoes and write a letter to a friend telling them about Rosie and the garden she has created. Include how it makes you feel and what you hope to do next with the garden.

Art and Visual Literacy

Speechley has used symbolism throughout this story in several ways.

Questions

1. How many instances of hearts or heart-shaped objects can you find in the book?
2. Looking at the illustrations, how many times do you see the birds throughout the book? Why do you think Speechley included them in so many pictures? What do birds represent?
3. Before the final reveal of the magnificent garden, there are lots of hints of flowers in the illustrations, for example vases lined up on the shelf, flower-patterned clothes and furniture. Why do you think Speechley has done this?

Activity

1. Look at the images on pages 2-3. Discuss with the class how Speechley has depicted the house amongst the towering buildings.

Nature and Community

Questions

1. Someone who loves to garden is often described as 'having a green thumb'. What do you think this means?
2. Flowers and plants are very prominent in this story. Why do you think Speechley has used this theme throughout?
3. Do you visit the park or the beach on the weekend or the school holidays? How do you feel when you're experiencing nature rather than sitting indoors?

Activities

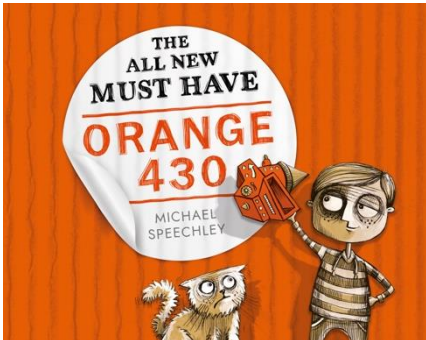
1. Create your own bird box to put in your garden. First research what types of birds may visit your local area and then search online for instructions. As there may be cutting and hammering involved in the construction, make sure you ask an adult to help.



2. Write a list of things that you could do for your local community. This could include baking some cupcakes for a neighbour or holding a lemonade stand with the proceeds going to the local sports team or setting up a street library outside your house. Decide on one idea to be your community project. Make sure to check with your parent or guardian before starting.
3. Take photos or draw pictures of at least three different trees, plants and flowers at your house. Don't forget that plants can be indoors in pots, outside in pots or outside in the ground. As a class create a collage of these plants and discuss what it feels like to be surrounded by nature.
4. Create your own card to give to someone who is special to you, like a friend, family member, classmate or teacher. Decorate the front and write a message inside about why you appreciate them.
5. Write a short story about what type of environment you live in. Do you live in a house, an apartment or on a large property? Describe the natural elements around your home, and make sure to include what animals and plants you might see on a daily basis.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



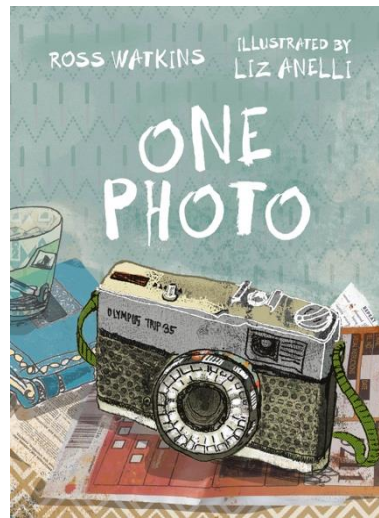
The All New Must Have Orange 430
by Michael Speechley

Harvey owned a heap of stuff, but could always use more. The ORANGE 430 was the latest and the greatest. Harvey wasn't sure what it did, but he had to have it!

A cheeky picture book for anyone who's bought a thingy or whatsit . . . and doesn't quite know why. In his debut picture book, Michael Speechley explores our obsession with stuff in a fun and edifying way.

Shortlisted for Picture Book of the Year, CBCA Book of the Year Awards, 2019

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



One Photo
by Ross Watkins and Liz Anelli

Why this story? An exploration of grief and special gifts with personal value.

A poignant story about love, loss and legacy. One son, one family, one photo. From Ross Watkins, the author of *The Boy Who Grew Into a Tree*, and talented illustrator, Liz Anelli

Dad came home one day with one of those old cameras, the kind that use film. But Dad didn't take photos of the regular things people photograph . . .

Told in stunning prose, with creative heart-warming illustrations, this book is a celebration of what we hold closest to our hearts.

Shortlisted for Picture Book of the Year, CBCA Book of the Year Awards, 2017

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



Fly
by Jess McGeachin

Why this story? Read it as another example of creativity and the feeling of loneliness.

Lucy had always been good at fixing things, and Dad needed a bit of help. It was just the two of them after all.

So when Lucy finds a bird with a broken wing, she's sure she can fix him too. But not everything that's broken can be fixed.

Fly is a beautiful story of determination no matter the odds, and love in the face of loss.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
<i>The Gift</i>	Michael Speechley	9780143788980	1-6	\$24.99		
<i>The All New Must Have Orange 430</i>	Michael Speechley	9780143788973	1-6	\$24.99		
<i>One Photo</i>	Ross Watkins & Liz Anelli	978014378302	4-9	\$14.99		
<i>Fly</i>	Jess McGeachin	9781760892562	1-6	\$24.99		
TOTAL						

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