

Teaching Notes for “Snap and Spike” by Penny O’Loughlin.

“Snap and Spike” follows the delightful adventure of Snap, a crocodile searching for a friend in The Big City, and Spike, a porcupine he meets along the way. This story offers a rich narrative about the value of friendship, embracing differences, and finding joy in unexpected places. Through Snap’s journey, young readers learn about the importance of kindness, acceptance, and the true meaning of friendship.

Discussion:

Who are the main characters in the story?

Why did you choose this book? What makes you think this book will be interesting? What do you think the book is about?

Suggestions:

Explore Snap’s character. What are his emotions, desires, and interactions like?

Analyse how Snap is described and how he changes throughout the story.

Look at Snap’s interactions with other animals in the pet store. How do these interactions help define him as a character?

Responding to the Text:

Foundation: Discuss Snap’s feelings about his quest for friendship. How does he feel when he meets different animals in the pet store?

Year 1-2: Use a complex sentence to describe Snap’s feelings and why he might feel that way. For example, “Snap feels sad because he wants to find a friend but doesn’t know where to look.”

Year 3-4: Write a persuasive paragraph arguing why Snap’s journey to find a friend was important. Use examples from the text to support your argument.

Year 5-6: Write a discussion piece highlighting the main lessons in the book about friendship and acceptance. Include evidence from the text to explain how Snap’s character develops through his interactions with Spike.

Themes and Learning Objectives:

Friendship:

Theme Exploration: Snap’s journey is centred around his quest to find a true friend. Through his interactions with various animals and his eventual meeting with Spike, Snap learns about the value of companionship and acceptance.

Incorporation into Students’ Lives: Encourage students to reflect on their own friendships. How do they make and maintain friendships? Discuss the qualities that make a good friend and how they can be a good friend to others.

Acceptance:

Theme Exploration: The story highlights the importance of accepting others for who they are. Despite his initial struggles, Snap learns to appreciate Spike’s unique qualities.

Incorporation into Students’ Lives: Discuss the importance of accepting and celebrating differences. How can students show acceptance and kindness to others who might be different from them?

Joy in Unexpected Places:

Theme Exploration: Snap’s adventure teaches him that joy and friendship can be found in the most surprising places, like in the company of a porcupine.

Incorporation into Students’ Lives: Discuss how sometimes the best things in life come when we least expect them. Share examples of how students have found joy or made new friends in unexpected situations.

Improvising on Text:

Discussion:

If you were one of the animals Snap met in the pet store, what advice would you give him? How could you help him find a friend? Rewrite the advice you would give to Snap based on your own experiences.

Suggestions:

Brainstorm different characters that could interact with Snap and Spike. What could this new character teach them? How would this new character’s story link to the themes already present in “Snap and Spike”?

Improvising on Text:

Foundation: Role-play being Snap, Spike, and other animals from the story. Illustrate a new character or scene, adding a speech bubble with encouraging words for Snap.

Year 1-2: In small groups, create a poster showing the different animals Snap meets and their reactions. Discuss how these reactions help Snap learn about friendship and acceptance.

Year 3-4: Create a new challenge for Snap and Spike to overcome together. Present your new storyline in a written dialogue, performance, or comic-book with speech bubble format.

Questioning:

Before Reading: What do you think this book is about based on the cover and title? Examine the illustrations and predict what might happen in the story. How do you think Snap’s quest will end?

During Reading:

Literal Questions: What kind of animal is Snap? How does Snap feel when he meets each new animal? What role does Spike play in Snap’s journey?

Inferential Questions: Why do you think Snap struggles to make friends initially? How does his perspective change after meeting Spike? What does Snap learn from his interactions with other animals?

Be Myself Questions: How would you feel if you were in Snap’s place? How do you think Snap and Spike’s friendship might inspire you? Have you ever experienced a time when you felt like Snap? How did you handle it?

After Reading: What were your favourite and least favourite parts of the book? Have you ever experienced something similar to Snap’s journey? Share your experiences. How can understanding the themes of friendship and acceptance help us in our daily lives?

Reader’s Theatre:

Activity: Perform a scene from “Snap and Spike” or improvise new scenes based on the story. Act out dialogue between Snap and Spike, adding new adventures, problems, and solutions.

Suggestions: Assign roles and practice lines. Incorporate props or costumes related to the city and the animals. Present the performance to the class or in smaller groups.

Conclusion: “Snap and Spike” offers a delightful mix of humour and heart. Use these teaching notes to guide classroom discussions, encourage creative improvisation, and deepen students’ understanding of the themes presented. Through engaging with Snap and Spike’s story, students will gain valuable insights into making friends, embracing differences, and finding joy in unexpected places.