



Teachers Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

Ella Kazoo will not go to sleep! And every night she comes up with excuses as to why she shouldn't go to bed when she's supposed to. The trouble is that when Ella's awake, so is everyone else in the household, and things are becoming very trying for her parents, even if her new baby brother seems to be able to sleep through anything.

It seems that she will never get to sleep until Ella meets a group of pirates led by Captain Shut-eye, and finds out that even though pirates are known to be wild and unruly, they recognize the value of sleep and take themselves off to bed at the same time every night. Ella Kazoo learns a useful lesson, and returns home to a warm bed which now seems much more attractive. She finally goes to sleep, and everyone breathes a huge sigh of relief.

Sleep time is a common problem for parents, when children are either over-excited or fearful. Lee Fox's delightful rhyming text about this lively and charming heroine, accompanied by witty illustrations by cartoonist Cathy Wilcox, engages with the issue in an entertaining and participative way. It's a text to be read aloud and enjoyed by parents who will recognize the familiar situation and may also use the text to discuss the problem with their children. Teachers will also find it a rewarding and engaging text to share with their students.

TOPICS AND THEMES

This is a work with many applications in classroom activities for children in pre-school, lower and middle primary school levels, for several **topics and themes** are covered in it which might provoke class discussion:

- **Sleep**

Activity: Discuss the topic of going to sleep or 'bed time' with your students. Ask them whether they read books at night? Are they frightened of anything? Do they have trouble going to sleep? Ask students to make a list of the things which keep them awake?

Activity: Discuss the need for sleep. What happens if we don't get enough sleep? 'A good sleep will make you both healthy and smarter'. Discuss.

Question: In this story the pirates have a variety of techniques for going to sleep e.g. drinking mugs of hot milk, wearing a nightcap, reading stories, singing lullabies. What helps your students to go to sleep?

Activity: If you discover that some of your class members have trouble sleeping it may be an issue you'll want to explore further by visiting some of the websites listed in the **Bibliography**, and even discussing further with parents.

Activity: Invite students to make up a lullaby, like the one which the pirates are singing on board ship as they rock in their hammocks.

Activity: Have a 'jarmies' day at school. Invite your class to wear their favourite pyjamas to school, and then announce a 'best dressed sleeper' award.

Activity: Read other books about children having trouble sleeping such as Libby Gleeson and Armin Greder's *Sleep Time* (1993) or Lauren Child's *I am Not Sleepy and I Will Not Go to Bed* (2008) or any of the books listed in the **Bibliography** below.

- **Families and Child Behaviour**

Discussion Point: Lee Fox's previous books *Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush her Hair* (2006) and *Jasper Mc Flea Will Not Eat His Tea* (2008) are also about how stubborn children can be and how they often try their parents' patience to the limit. They are each books which allow parents to share and enjoy with their children some of the things which they disagree about on a daily basis; discuss with your class the things they disagree with their parents about, such as eating certain foods, or keeping their rooms tidy.

Discussion Point: Ella has a baby brother, and perhaps her night naughtiness may be about jealousy. Discuss with students why they think Ella won't go to sleep.

- **Pirates**

Activity: Dress up as pirates.

Activity: Find websites with pirate activities, such as: Pirate Printables
<http://www.printactivities.com/Theme-Printables/Pirate-Printables.html>

Activity: This text contains some piratical or nautical language. Ask your students what these mean: 1. A crow's nest. 2. Mateys. 3. Ahoy there, me hearty! 4. Blaggards. Then have fun coming up with other piratical expressions and words and phrases. [See also **BM 3**]

Activity: Read other stories in which pirates appear. Pamela Allen's *I Wish I Had a Pirate Suit* (1991) is about sibling rivalry. *The Great Piratical Rumbustification* (1981) by Margaret Mahy is another funny story about pirates. [See **Bibliography** below.]

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- **Rhyming** is one of the key features of this text.

Activity: Discuss rhyming and its effect as a narrative device, with your students. Discuss 'perfect' rhymes and 'imperfect' rhymes with your students, as well, using examples in the text. [See also **BM1**]

- **Repetition** of a sentence can encourage reader participation in a story. e.g., 'but Ella Kazoo will not catch some zeds.'

Activity: Create another repeated line which might have been used in this story instead.

- **This story creates a narrative 'problem' in the title, and then resolves that problem.**

Activity: Invite your students to begin another Ella Kazoo story about something she might not do. For example: '*Ella Kazoo Will Not Clean her Room ...*' Then have them write their own simple rhyming story based on this idea. Encourage students to think about situations they've experienced at home, where they've not done something their parents or carers have asked them to do, or about something a sibling has not done.

Activity: There are several colloquial expressions used in the book. e.g., 'lets the noise rip'; 'ready to flip'; 'have a kip'; 'catch some zeds'. Ask students to write their meanings in their own words.

VISUAL LITERACY

- **Drawings are executed in black pencil, watercolour and acrylic paint, and collage, on watercolour paper.**

Activity: Examine other illustrations by Cathy Wilcox; study the images of Ella and then try and draw yourself in a similar style.

- **Illustrations often contain hidden details which are not mentioned in the text.** For example, Ella's pyjamas have the pirate's skull and crossbones pattern on them which might suggest to a reader that she likes to play pirates. What other details did you notice?

Activity: Ask students some simple questions to test their comprehension of this text e.g., 1. What book is she waving when she's demanding to have a book read to her?

2. What is the name of her teddy bear?

3. What is the ship's name?

Answers: 1. Harriet's Tea Party. 2. Lucy. 3. Dread. Then have them make a list of all the things which Ella has in her dress-up box. e.g., crown, mask, etc.

CONCLUSION

This is a riotously entertaining text about bed time, which celebrates the child's sense of independence, but also lightheartedly explores the manner in which parents are often exasperated by child behaviour. It has an underlying message about the need for sleep and rest in a child's day. It is a book which is made to be read aloud, and which teachers can use for discussion, in language lessons, and also for art activities, where students will enjoy finding hidden details in the illustrations.

Ella Kazoo is a lovable heroine who will entertain and delight all ages. Now, perhaps, she will go to sleep, but who knows what Ella will decide 'not' to do in future!

BLACKLINE MASTER 1 RHYMES

These rhymes appear in this book. Think of another word to rhyme with them:

seek	creak	
peep	sleep	
bed	read/instead/ted/ahead	
kip	rip/flip/trip/ship	
rest	chest/vest/nest/best	
map	snap/flap/nap	
action	distraction	
charter	smarter	

Were there any other rhymes in the book? Fill in the last line above, if you find any.

BLACKLINE MASTER 2 PERCY THE PARROT

DRAW ELLA KAZOO'S FRIEND PERCY THE PARROT INSIDE THIS CAGE.



BLACKLINE MASTER 3 PIRATE ALPHABET

CREATE AN ALPHABETICAL CLASS LIST OF WORDS WHICH YOU MIGHT ASSOCIATE WITH PIRATES. GIVE EACH STUDENT THIS LIST AND HAVE THEM FILL IN AS MANY WORDS AS THEY CAN THINK OF.

A				N			
B				O			
C				P			
D				Q			
E				R			
F				S			
G				T	e.g. treasure		
H	e.g. hook			U			
I				V			
J				W			
K				X			
L				Y			
M				Z			

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McNaughton, Colin *Jolly Roger and the Pirates of Captain Abdul* Walker, 2004

Sobel, June *Shiver Me Letters: A Pirate ABC* Ill by Henry Cole Sandpiper, 2009

Waddell, Martin and Barbara Firth *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* Walker 1994, 1988

Watts, Frances *Captain Crabclaw's Crew* Ill by David Legge ABC Books, 2009

Websites

Pirate Printables <http://www.printactivities.com/Theme-Printables/Pirate-Printables.html>

Sleep for Kids: Teaching Kids the Importance of Sleep
<http://www.sleepforkids.org/html/games.html>

Sleep Services Australia <http://www.sleepservices.com.au/>

<http://www.teachkidshow.com/teach-your-child-proper-sleep-habits>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR and ILLUSTRATOR

LEE FOX is the author of the hilarious picture book *Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair*, illustrated by Cathy Wilcox (Lothian, 2006), and *Jasper McFlea Will Not Eat His Tea* illustrated by Mitch Vane (Hachette, 2008). *Ella Kazoo Will Not Go To Sleep* is the second in a series of three books about Ella, of which the first was shortlisted in the Early Childhood category of the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. Prior to becoming a writer, Lee was a production assistant for a commercial radio station, a Mormon, a cook in a childcare centre and the store manager on a remote Aboriginal community – and she has five children. Her writing career began in 2000, with several articles for *The Age*. Lee's novel for ages 12+, *Other People's Country*, was published in 2008. As well as writing, running a small business and looking after her young daughter, Lee shares her writing journey and experiences with students of all ages. <http://www.storytellersguide.com.au/ella-kazoo-about-lee.htm>

CATHY WILCOX is a multi-award winning Australian cartoonist and children's book illustrator, best known for her work as a cartoonist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* newspapers. She has also twice won the Australian Children's Book Council's Picture Book of the Year award and in 2007 won the Walkley award for cartooning. Some of her best loved favourites are her *Enzo the Wonderfish* (1993), Nette Hilton's *A Proper Little Lady* (1990), and *Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair* (2006).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates *justified text* writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. She teaches writing for children and young adults at Griffith University (Gold Coast) where she gained her PhD for a thesis on the development of the Australian children's publishing industry. Her publications include *Paper Empires a History of the Book in Australia 1946-2005* (co-edited with Craig Munro) (UQP, 2006), and one of her recent articles was 'Spreading the Seeds: Indigenous Publishing in Australia for Young People' *Magpies* Vol 24, Issue No 2, May 2009, pp. 8-12. She also writes teachers and reading group notes for a variety of publishers