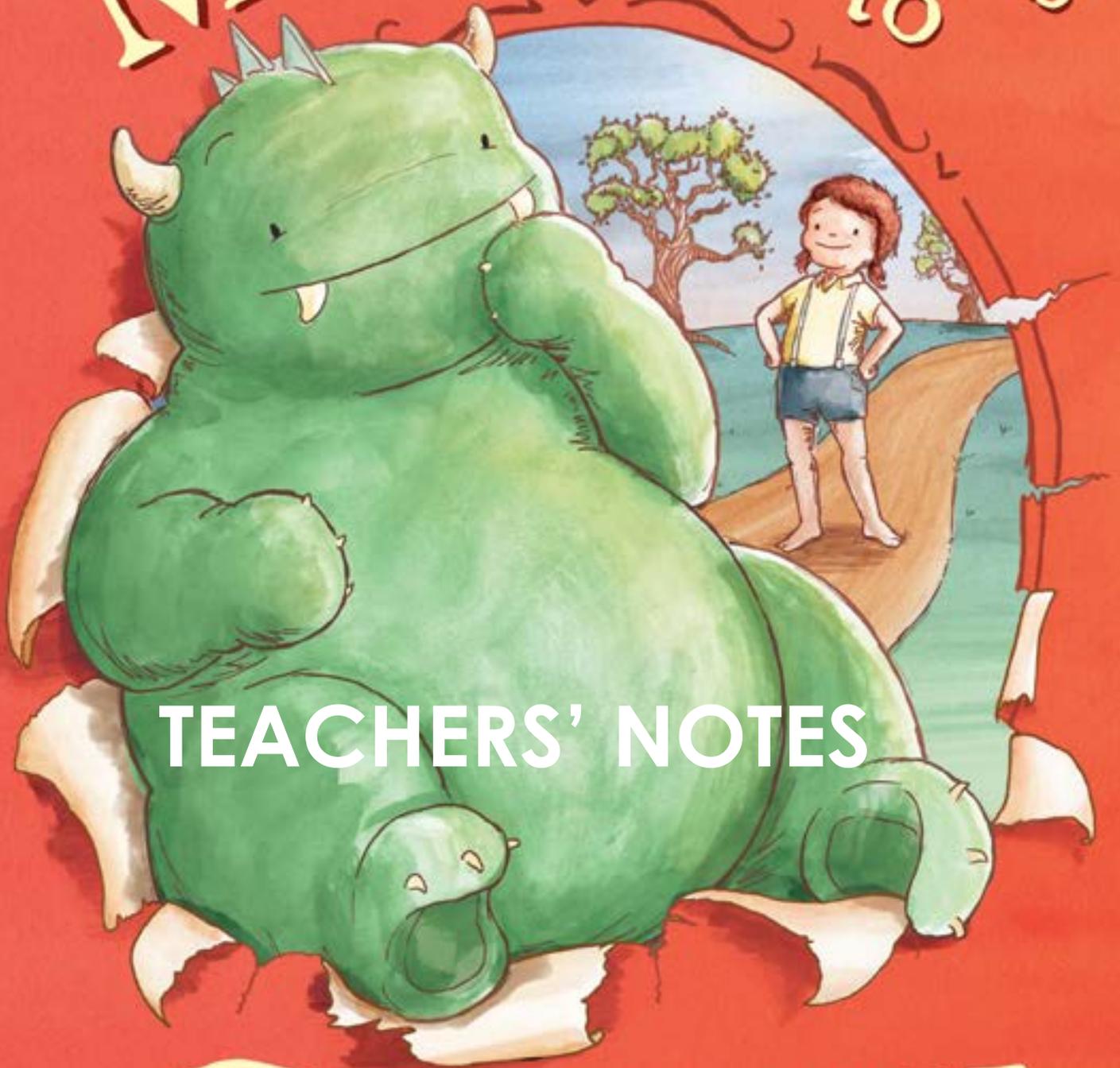


Mr Mo Starts
to



TEACHERS' NOTES

GROW

LAURA STITZEL

MR MO STARTS TO GROW

BY LAURA STITZEL

Teachers' Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	4
Themes & Curriculum Topics	5
Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE)	5
English Language and Literacy	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literary Devices & Word Play• Humour• Structure• Setting• Characters• Sequels	
Visual Literacy	7
Creative Activities	8
Conclusion	9
About the Author/Illustrator	9

About the Illustrator

10

Bibliography

10

About the Author of the Notes

11

Worksheets

12



INTRODUCTION

'Mr Mo was a little monster. He was soft and squishy and not a bit scary. Jane loved him to bits.

'Mr Mo and Jane were always together. They made up songs. They did magic tricks. Sometimes they made a little bit of mischief.

'But then something strange happened. Mr Mo started to grow.'

Jane has trouble finding him, to play the games they used to play together. Is it only Mr Mo who is growing bigger? Or is Jane also growing up and losing touch with the things she used to love? Happily, Jane and Mr Mo do reconnect, and realise, like all of us, that life will always be full of the joy of the imagination, if we open our eyes and our other senses to it.

This is a charming story about imagination, friendship and growing up, written and illustrated by Laura Stitzel, whose extensive career in illustration and animation has informed her work on this, her first picture book.

No matter how old you are, how big you are, or how much you want to find that old friend again, life will always offer surprises and we should embrace each and every one of them.



THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes relevant to curriculum topics (Studies of Society & Environment, English Language and Literacy, and Visual Literacy) might be identified in this picture book:

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT (SOSE)

- **IMAGINATION**

ACTIVITY: This story is deliberately ambiguous; there is a sense that this may perhaps be all in Jane's mind; or that Jane is growing up, rather than her little monster. Ask your students if they think Mr Mo is real?

ACTIVITY: Magic tricks are mentioned in this text and the images of a top hat, bunnies and a magician's wand indicate that Jane and Mr Mo 'play' at being magicians. Have fun with students performing simple magic tricks. [See **Bibliography**.]

DISCUSSION POINT: There is even a possibility that Mr Mo is an imaginary friend. Discuss imaginary friends with your students.

- **LOVE & FRIENDSHIP**

DISCUSSION POINT: Mr Mo is Jane's best friend. What makes someone become your friend? Ask students why they like their friends.

DISCUSSION POINT: Why does Jane like Mr Mo?

- **GROWING UP**

DISCUSSION POINT: This story suggests that perhaps because Jane is growing up, her relationship with Mr Mo is changing, too. Discuss with students how, as we grow older, our feelings and attitudes mature and change.

DISCUSSION POINT: Examine the images and observe the changes in both Jane and Mr Mo.

- **FEARS**

DISCUSSION POINT: Mr Mo is afraid of the storm. Jane wakes up in the dark, and sees 'monstery claws' under her bed. Discuss fears (for example, of storms, and of the night), with your students. Encourage them to share their fears.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- **LITERARY DEVICES & WORD PLAY**

ACTIVITY: Find examples of the use of literary devices or word play in this book, eg. alliteration: 'He was soft and squishy and not a bit scary.'

ACTIVITY: Make up a rhyming poem about Mr Mo beginning: 'Mr Mo starts to grow...'

- **HUMOUR**

DISCUSSION POINT: There are some very humorous and witty details in this book. What did you find amusing?

- **STRUCTURE**

DISCUSSION POINT: The structure of this story consists of establishment of situation (friendship of Jane and Mr Mo), problem (Mr Mo starts to grow, and hides), a turning point (storm), and a resolution (the two friends rediscover their need for each other). What alternative turning point might have occurred in this story?

DISCUSSION POINT: What does the resolution suggest?

- **SETTING**

DISCUSSION POINT: This story is set largely in Jane's home although sometimes she and Mr Mo go on walks and climb a tree. What elements of setting did you notice? For example, the house Jane lives in looks like a haunted house during the storm; and the forest nearby is very much like a spooky fairy tale forest.

- **CHARACTERS**

ACTIVITY: Describe Jane's character. (Assess not only the words, but also the images.)

ACTIVITY: Describe Mr Mo's character. (Assess not only the words, but also the images.)

- **SEQUELS**

ACTIVITY: Would you like to read a sequel to this book? What might happen in it? Write a synopsis of the plot.

VISUAL LITERACY

- **COVERS**

ACTIVITY: Look closely at this cover, which cleverly uses two circles (back and front) as frames for Mr Mo (front) and the blurb with an image of his tail (back). Then design a different cover for this book.

ACTIVITY: The storyboard of this book consists of 32 pages beginning with a title page, and an imprint page. Design a storyboard for the story you wrote above under **Sequels**.

- **CRITICAL LITERACY**

ACTIVITY: Examine the pictures carefully. Look at details that might relate to the ideas being explored in this text. For example, on the wardrobe door in Jane's bedroom there's a picture of a dragon which has some similarities to Mr Mo. Jane likes reading and her bedroom also has a poster of a witch above her bed, indicating that she likes fantasy. When Jane is searching for Mr Mo, the reader can see glimpses of him, which Jane can't see.

ACTIVITY: What other funny or intriguing things did you notice in the images? [See also **Worksheets 3. & 4.**] Discussion Point: Look at the endpapers of this book which depict the little monster, Mr Mo, drawing a grid on the left hand page, and then a much larger hand (obviously of Mr Mo, once he's grown) continuing the drawing on the right. What do these endpapers suggest?

- **DRAWING**

ACTIVITY: Draw a picture of Mr Mo. [See also Worksheet 1.]

ACTIVITY: Choose any of the creatures or objects depicted in the book and make your own drawing of it, eg. top hat, bunny, armchair, tree.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. **Write a script for Mr Mo and Jane's adventures in this book** and then act out the scene for your classmates.
2. **Design a poster** to advertise this book. [See **Bibliography** for resources.]
3. The **title** of any book is important. What other title might this one have had?
4. Create a **book trailer** for this book. [See **Bibliography** for resources.]
5. **Create your own endpaper pattern** for this book.
6. **Write a song** about Mr Mo.
7. **Create a comic strip** of three images based on one of the incidents described in this book, using speech bubbles.
8. **Make a Monster Paper Plate Mask.** [See 'Paper Plate Monster' Free Kids Craft <freekidscrafts.com/paper-plate-monster/>]
9. **Observe all the things on one double page spread of this book.** Then close the book and write a list of everything you've seen on that spread. Compare your list with that created by other members of your class.
10. **Create a display** of all the books you've read, and the writing and drawing you have done for this unit.

CONCLUSION

Mr Mo Starts to Grow is a charming story. It's about the fun we have with a friend; the fears we have as a child; and how true friends always find each other when the need arises.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Laura Stitzel

Laura Stitzel is an independent artist based in Melbourne, Australia. She has been working as an illustrator, designer and animator in Australia and Canada since 2008.

Laura's work has appeared in many children's television shows, such as Emmy Awardwinning *Peg + Cat*, *Arthur* and *Monster Chef*. On *Arthur*, the world's longest running children's series, Laura was hired to develop a new method of background painting during its transition to digital production. Laura taught her methods to the studio staff in Toronto, where they continue to be used on the production today.

Laura has also illustrated and animated for a wide range of media including educational interactive projects, video games, commercials and television series.

In her own illustrations, Laura's work shines a light on animals and their place in our world. Creating artworks with a uniquely vintage style, Laura's illustrations feature detailed pen and ink ornamentation and hand-lettering.

Laura completed postgraduate study in Animation and Interactive Media at RMIT in Melbourne and studied classical drawing and painting at the New York Academy of Art.

See her website here: <lauradraws.com/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Picture Books & Junior Fiction about Monsters

Bland, Nick *Monster Chef* Scholastic, 2014.

Bollenbach, Christina *How to Catch a Monster* Scholastic, 2013.

Daddo, Andrew *Monster Ill.* by Bruce Whatley, ABC Books, 2010.

Edwards, Hazel *There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake Ill.* by Deborah Niland, Penguin, 2012, 2005, 1982.

Howe, James *There's a Monster Under my Bed Ill.* by David Rose, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1990.

[See also lists below under Websites.]

Non-Fiction

Chinn, Mike, *Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel: Everything You Need to Know to Create Great Graphic Works*, London, New Burlington Books, 2004, 2006.

Gleeson, Libby *Making Picture Books* Scholastic, 2003.

Stowell, Louie *Write and Draw Your Own Comics Ill.* by Jess Bradley, Neill Cameron, Freya Harrison, Laura Howell, Adam Larkum and Igor Sinkovec, Usborne, 2014.

Websites

'Book Trailers' Insideadog

<insideadog.com.au/teachers/book-trailers>

'Book Trailers' Mrs Mac's Library

<mrsmacslibrary.com/book-trailers.html>

DeFelice, Karen 'Twenty-Five Ways to Design an Awesome Poster and Create a Buzz for Your Next Event' Design School March 13, 2015

<designschool.canva.com/blog/25-ways-to-design-an-awesome-poster-and-create-a-buzz-for-your-next-event/>

'Magic Tricks' Kidzone

<kidzone.ws/magic/>

'Paper Plate Monster' Free Kids Craft

<<freekidscrafts.com/paper-plate-monster/>>

'Picture Books, Rhymes and Songs Featuring Monsters' Children's Book Bin <childrensbookbin.com/2013/05/17/monsters/>

'23 Picture Books about Monsters' No Time for Flashcards <notimeforflashcards.com/2015/10/picture-books-about-monsters.html>

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. In 2011, she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award, in 2012, of the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Outstanding Services to Children's Literature, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award.



WORKSHEET 1 DRAW MR MO!

Use this simple circular shape as the head of Mr Mo.

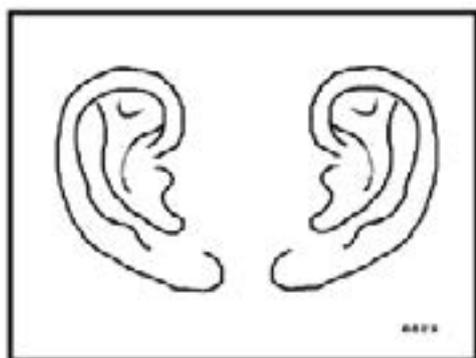
Add two horns; fins on top of his head and down his back; a fang tooth in his mouth; and draw his eyebrows to look as they do in the book.

Then add an oval shape for his body, a tail and his feet and arms. Colour him in and you have created Mr Mo's portrait.



WORKSHEET 2 PAPER BAG MONSTER PUPPET

Make a paper bag monster hand puppet. Select a paper bag or make one out of brown paper. Then cut out the horns, eyes, mouth and ears below and glue them to the bag. Cut out some other shapes from coloured paper and 'dress' your monster. Colour in or decorate the bag in any way you like. Put your hand inside and you have a puppet monster!



WORKSHEET 3 MR MO'S OBSERVATION QUIZ

1. How many bunnies are in the row below?



2. How many bunnies are in the row below, and how many top hats?



3. How many monsters are in the row below? 4. Which monster appears twice?



5. Which of the monsters above lacks something all the others have?

6. Multiply the number of suns below by two, and how many would you have?



7. Divide the number of trees below by five, and how many do you have?



8. How many armchairs are in the row below?



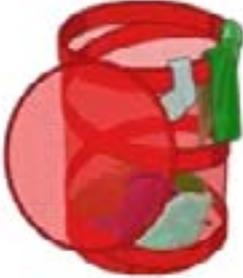
9. How many books are in the stack below? 10. How many books are in the stack below?



ANSWERS: 1. Twelve. 2. Seven bunnies and six top hats. 3. Eight. 4. appears twice. 5. The second (purple) monster has no legs. 6. Sixteen. 7. Two. 8. Thirteen. 9. Seven. 10. Seventeen.

WORKSHEET 4 MATCH THE WORD

Write the relevant word(s) below each of these images of objects or creatures.

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	6.
		
7.	8.	9.

Answers: 1. Monster. 2. Bunny (Rabbit). 3. Top Hat. 4. Fireplace. 5. Window Box. 6. Clothes Hamper (or Basket). 7. Sunrise. 8. Hanging Light (Lamp). 9. Dragon.