

KATHERINE BATTERSBY

CRANKY CHICKEN



TEACHERS RESOURCES

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KATHERINE BATTERSBY

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INTRODUCTION

BOOK 1

'What could make this chicken so cranky?' (p 5)

What happens when a very cranky chicken meets a very cheerful worm? Perfect for newly independent readers, this is the first extremely funny story in a charming illustrated series about mismatched friends who bring joy, companionship and a new perspective to each other's lives.

Everything about Cranky Chicken is cranky. Cranky eyes, cranky eyebrows, super-sharp cranky beak, even cranky scratchy feet. And everything makes Chicken cranky. The sun is too bright, the dirt is too dirty. What Cranky Chicken is not is lonely. Nope, nope, definitely not. But then along comes a very cheerful worm named Speedy, who just wants to be friends. Cranky Chicken and Speedy's story will warm your heart and make you laugh.

Illustrated in Katherine Battersby's whimsical drawing style, this book has been compared to Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie*, Aaron Blabey's *The Bad Guys* and the *Narwhal and Jelly* series by Ben Clanton.

But it is actually unique, thoroughly original and in a class of its own. Cranky Chicken and Speedy the worm are one-offs!

BOOK 2

'No, you're EXTRA frowny today, Ms. Cranky.' (p 2)

Cranky Chicken and Speedy the worm are back in another laugh-out-loud, heartwarming and brightly illustrated graphic novel for newly independent readers, as Speedy tries to plan a party for a hungry Chicken. Cranky Chicken is super hungry (hungry + angry = hangry!) and the crank-o-meter is on high.

What can Speedy the worm do to help? How about ... a yummy snack? A day at the beach? An unsurprising party? It's party time for Cranky and Speedy, two Best Feathered Friends!

This is the second book in Katherine Battersby's charming illustrated series about mismatched friends who bring joy, companionship and a new perspective to each other's lives. It is perfect for newly independent readers and for fans of *Elephant and Piggie* and *The Bad Guys*.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

FRIENDSHIP

BOOK 1

Key Quote: 'So what are our BFF rules?' (p 57)

Discussion Point: Invite students to make a list of how friends should behave towards each other.

Discussion Point: What qualities make a good friend?

Discussion Point: Speedy and Cranky make a list of things BFFs have to do such as 'Wear matching hats' and 'Do funky dances' (pp 52–53). What do you and your BFF like to do together?

BOOK 2

Key Quote: 'Speedy, you are one of a kind. I am one of your kind.' (p 67)

Discussion Point: Cranky and Speedy discover that they shouldn't be friends at all: because chickens eat worms! What makes them such good friends?

Discussion Point: Discuss other unlikely friendships in stories you've read, historical situations or ecological relationships you've read about. For example, is it possible to be friends with a creature when you're meant to be their predator?

Discussion Point: What actions in this book show what a good friend Speedy is?

LONELINESS

BOOK 1

Key Quote: 'I've always been on my own.' (p 21)

Discussion Point: Discuss the concept of loneliness and how this might make a person seem grumpy or cranky. For example, often elderly people seem cranky when they are simply

feeling frustrated by their isolation or ill health.

Discussion Point: What makes you feel lonely?

BOOK 2

Key Quote: 'Stuffy Bunny and I sat around pondering black holes and feeling small in a big world.' (p 53)

Discussion Point: Cranky has never been to a party! She spends a lot of time alone, because she is often cranky. Is it okay to be alone sometimes?

Discussion Point: Can being alone encourage us to think more deeply?

EMOTIONS, FEELINGS AND TASTES

BOOK 1

Key Quote: 'What's that thing when you're not cranky?' (p 30)

Discussion Point: Children often have temper tantrums when they are not happy with some aspect of their lives. What makes you cranky?

Discussion Point: Speedy seems to be an eternal optimist. How easy/difficult is it to be cheerful all the time?

BOOK 2

Key Quote: 'You're a hungry, hangry chicken. Let's get you some food! But what do chickens even eat?' (p 5)

Discussion Point: Speedy tries to entice Cranky with various foods but in each case she has an objection to the food. Some of her objections are typically ridiculous, for example, regarding jelly: 'I don't trust it. Food shouldn't move like that.' (p 14) But we all have our own tastes in food which can vary widely from person to person, and from chicken to chicken! Make up your own ridiculous reactions to food you hate.

Discussion Point: Cranky has lots of other things which make her cranky (p 34) and things which don't make her cranky (p 35). What things do you dislike or like? Speedy throws an 'unsurprising party' for Cranky because Cranky hates surprises. What sort of party would you prefer? [See **Book 2. Worksheet 6.**]

Discussion Point: Cranky doesn't think she likes the beach, but with Speedy there she has a lot of fun. What do you like or dislike about the beach?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

The text of these books might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

BOOK 1

Discussion Point: This book is structured as three mini stories about Cranky Chicken and her unlikely friend Speedy the worm, entitled: 'Super Cranky Chicken', 'Best Feathered Friends', and 'The Amazing Flying Wing Worm'. Between the first two stories is a section headed 'Find Out More About Chicken' and between the second and third stories is a section headed 'More Chicken Facts'. Discuss how the story works and what the 'facts' contribute to it.

Discussion Point: This book is full of wacky humour, for example:

'Cranky Pants' (p 33)

'Things That Make Chicken Cranky' (p 34)

'Things That DON'T Make Chicken Cranky' (p 35)

'I Made Us MATCHING SHIRTS!' (p 42)

Speedy explains that BFFs means 'Best Feathered Friends' (p 43)

'HOW to be CRANKY' (p 60)

'More CHICKEN FACTS' (pp 68 +)

'Why Flying Makes Cranky Chicken Grumpy' (p 84)

'Worm's Most FEARSOME Fears' (p 90)

Discuss humour, and the techniques used to achieve it, in this book.

Activity: Have fun telling chicken jokes!

Discussion Point: What other books star a chicken character? For example, Leigh Hobbs' 'Mr Chicken' is a 'real character' in several of his books. *Rosie's Walk* (1968) by Pat Hutchins and *Hattie and the Fox* (1986) by Mem Fox and Patricia Mullins feature chickens. The well-known folk tale Henny Penny (aka Chicken Licken) has been illustrated by several artists including Paul Galdone and Jan Ormerod. 'The Little Red Hen' is another classic folk tale character, satirised in *The Stinky Cheese Man* (1992) by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. Read and compare to this text.

Activity: The author has completed a sequel to this book. Make up your own story about this loveable duo.

Activity: Create a Chicken Alphabet. [See **Book 1. Worksheet 2.**]

Activity: Invite students to write synonyms for words used in this book, such as: cranky, polite, lonely, surprise, secret.

Discussion Point: What other book categories could you add to The Book Worm Library (p 70)? The titles of the books depicted all involve wordplay. Come up with such titles to illustrate the book categories you select, eg. Memoir – *Diary of a Desperately Lonely Worm*.

Activity: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author/Illustrator's Notes.**]

BOOK 2

Discussion Point: This book is structured as three mini stories about Cranky and her unlikely friend Speedy the worm, entitled 'Hungry, Hangry Chicken', 'The Unsurprising Party' and 'Best Beach Buds'. Between the first two stories is a section headed; 'Chicken and Worm Stuff', and between the second and third stories is a section headed 'Stuff and Nonsense'. Discuss how the story works and what the 'facts' contribute to it.

Discussion Point: This book is full of wacky humour, for example:

'There ain't no party like a wormy party 'cause a wormy party don't stop!' (p 50)

The five rock friends. (pp 65–6)

'... that's when it happened. The greatest disaster in the history of Frisbees! (p 89)

'My poor Frisbee, stuck up there like that. Was she scared? Was she lonely? I don't think Frisbees have feelings.' (p 90)

'There ain't no party like a wormy party 'cause a wormy party don't stop!' (p 50)

Discuss humour, and the techniques used to achieve it, in this book.

Activity: Have fun telling chicken jokes!

Discussion Point: What other books star a chicken character? For example, *Chicken in Space* by Adam Lehrhaupt and Shahar Kober (2016), *Chicken Big* by Keith Graves (2010), *Big Red Hen and the Little Lost Egg* by Margaret Wild and Terry Denton (2011, 2008); *Bear and Chook* by Lisa Shanahan and Emma Quay (2017, 2002).

Activity: This is a sequel to the first book. Make up your own story about this lovable duo for a third title in the series.

Activity: Create a Worm Alphabet. [See **Book 2. Worksheet 2.**]

Activity: Invite students to write synonyms for words used in this book, such as: suspicious, extraordinary, humble, definitely.

Discussion Point: What other funny film titles could you add to the list of Speedy's and Chicken's Favourite Movies (p 69). The titles of the films depicted all involve wordplay. Come up with such titles to illustrate the film categories you select, eg. Fairy Tale: *Speederella*; Thriller: *The Chicken Who Knew Too Much*.

Activity: Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author/Illustrator's Notes.**]

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

BOOK 1

Discussion Point: The author has described this book as a **graphic novel** (Interview with Elizabeth Bird, 2021) because of its inventive use of format. Discuss the conventions of a comic or graphic novel (eg speech balloons) that are employed in these books. How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

Activity: Illustrate the story you wrote above in a graphic novel style.
[See also **Book 1. Worksheet 4.** below.]

Activity: The **medium or style** employed is drawing, and on the imprint page the author explains that: 'The illustrations in this series were rendered digitally using custom chalk, pastel, and watercolour brushes.' On her website Katherine Battersby has a section called 'Kat Bat Draws' and you can follow her there as she draws and speaks about her craft: <https://katherinebattersby.com/kat-bat-draws> Try to draw some of the images she has created there.

Discussion Point: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. The cover of Book 1 depicts Cranky Chicken dripping with water after a downpour, looking very woebegone, with Speedy the worm sitting on her wing with their usual happy expression. What does that cover suggest about these two characters?

Activity: The **endpapers** are adorable images of Cranky and Speedy. Create your own endpapers using a grid like this.

Discussion Point: The **title page** depicts Cranky Chicken holding a sign 'Queen of Crank', with Speedy sitting on her back. What else is she holding and what does it denote?

Answer: It is a sceptre, which is a staff or wand often held by a queen or king as a symbol of their royalty in ceremonial circumstances.

Activity: Creating characters entails using **facial expressions and 'body language'** to convey their emotions. Examine Cranky Chicken and Speedy and discuss how these aspects of the drawings work to convey the characters' feelings.

Discussion Point: The **colours** used in these books are pastel in tone, and lend a charmingly 'retro' aesthetic to the work. Discuss colour palettes and how they reflect the mood and tone of a work.

Discussion Point: What other tiny details did you discover in any of these pages?

BOOK 2

Discussion Point: The conventions of a graphic novel can be discussed with regards to how they are inventively employed in this book. What aspects of the design enhanced the meaning of the words, in your opinion?

Activity: Illustrate the story you wrote above in a graphic novel style.
[See also **Book 2. Worksheet 4.** below.]

Activity: The **medium or style** employed is drawing rendered digitally. (See notes above re **Book 1.**)

Discussion Point: The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. The cover of Book 2 depicts Cranky Chicken doing the 'Chicken Dance' with Speedy. What does this suggest about the content of the book, and the changes in Cranky's character in this second book in the series?

Activity: The **endpapers** are pastel-coloured patterns (akin to wallpaper) featuring charming multiple images of Cranky and Speedy on two different pages. Invite students to create their own endpaper images of these two lovable characters.

Discussion Point: The **title page** depicts Cranky Chicken holding a sign 'Crankenstein' with Speedy sitting on her back. What tiny detail makes this image even funnier? Answer: Cranky has 'bolts' in her neck, like those worn by characters such as Herman Munster in the 1960s CBS sitcom *The Munsters* (a parody of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*).

Activity: Creating characters entails using **facial expressions and 'body language'** to convey their emotions. Examine p 99 and assess what the facial expressions suggest to the reader?

Discussion Point: The **colours** used in these books are pastel in tone, and lend a charmingly 'retro' aesthetic to the work. Create an image using this colour palette.

Discussion Point: What other tiny details did you discover in any of these pages? For example, the beach scene (p 97) is hilariously full of details to discover.

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by these texts:

BOOK 1

1. In the book, Speedy names all the things that best friends should do together. **Students could make their own written or visual list of things they like to do with their friends.**

2. **Have a chicken-themed day reading books that feature chickens and conducting chicken-related crafts.** (In the US they actually celebrate a *National Dance Like a Chicken Day* on 14 May <<https://nationaltoday.com/national-dance-like-chicken-day-2/>>

3. **Do the Chicken Dance!** Read about its history here: 'Chicken Dance' *Wikipedia* <<https://>

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken_Dance>

4. **Create a chicken mask.** [See **Book 1. Worksheet 5.**]
5. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
6. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

BOOK 2

1. **Make a list of all the items that we might take to the beach.** Start with the things Speedy has packed for the day. What else might you need at the beach?
2. **Have a worm-themed day reading books that feature worms and conducting worm-related crafts.**
3. **Speedy describes the ‘underground worm line’ dance (p 47).** Form a line and dance like the popular conga line. [See ‘Conga line’ *Wikipedia* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conga_line>]
4. **Create a worm bookmark.** [See **Book 2. Worksheet 5.**]
5. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.
6. **Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

SCIENCE

BOOK 1

Activity: Study the lifecycle of a chicken. Research different species of chickens. [See **Bibliography.**]

Activity: Research interesting facts about chickens. [See also **Creative Arts.**]

Activity: Study the lifecycle of a worm. Research different species of worms. [See **Bibliography.**]

BOOK 2

Activity: Which sea creatures did you observe in this visual text? Study those depicted in this book (eg shark, octopus, etc).

Discussion Point: What other ecological features of the beach were visible in this text?

Activity: ‘Black holes’ are referred to (p 53). What are they?

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research the topics above online.

Activity: Research the author/illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

MATHEMATICS

BOOK 1

Activity: Have fun counting things in this text, eg leaves (p 8); books (p 70).

Activity: See **Book 1. Worksheet 3** below for mathematics activities.

BOOK 2

Activity: Have fun counting things in this text, eg doughnuts (p 16), worms (p 51).

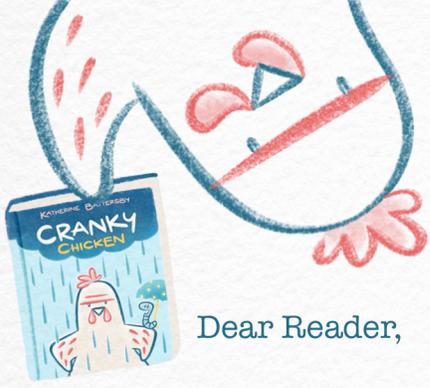
Activity: See **Book 2. Worksheet 3.** below for mathematics activities.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Katherine Battersby. Compare this to her other books.
-
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
-
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes that you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This is a seriously enticing series for young readers. Katherine Battersby has created two memorable characters in these unlikely friends and the result is a witty, beguiling graphic novel series which will become an instant favourite in any household or classroom.



Who is this Katherine Battersby, anyway?

I think she MADE us.

Dear Reader,

I thought I'd share with you a few little secrets about where Cranky Chicken came from. Which means I have to start with a confession: I don't like chickens.



Well, to be completely honest, I'm scared of chickens. They have beady little eyes and sharp beaks. Then, one day I was doing a school visit and I met this tiny girl who was completely obsessed with chickens.

I should have a fan club.



She insisted that chickens aren't scary - they're hilarious. So I started drawing chickens, to see if I could see in them what she did. Cranky Chicken is what emerged.

The story and unlikely friendship is inspired by my childhood best friend and all the mischief we got up to. She was an extroverted only child who would always turn up on my doorstep just like Worm - full of ideas and ready to play.

Did you say play?



Whereas I was an introvert in a big blended family. I never had any time to myself, so I could be a bit of a Cranky Chicken.



It's all starting to make sense.

Come on Chicken, let's show them who WE are!



We like cupcakes with sprinkles



And reading



Sometimes we wear cranky pants



But always we are BFFs

Happy reading.

♥ Katherine Battersby

Bye!

Goodbyes make me cranky.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Katherine Battersby is a critically acclaimed Australian children's author and illustrator of eight picture books, including *Squish Rabbit*, a CBC Children's Choice Book. Her picture books have also been shortlisted for numerous awards, including the Crichton Award and the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. Katherine currently lives in Ottawa, Canada. For more information visit her website: <www.KatherineBattersby.com>

See also:

Bird, Elizabeth 'The Petulant Poultry Alert: The Cranky Chicken Cover Reveal and Interview with Katherine Battersby' A Fuse #8 Production April 21, 2021

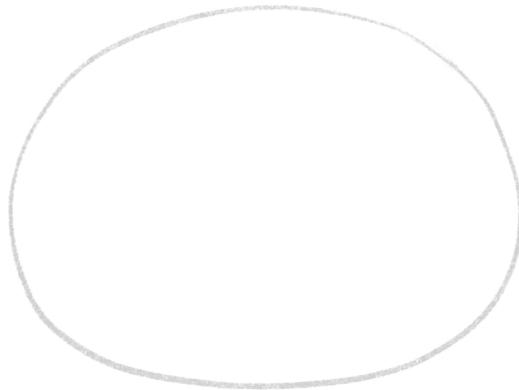
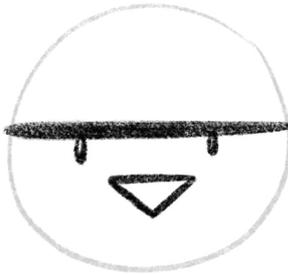
<<https://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2021/04/21/petulant-poultry-alert-the-cranky-chicken-cover-reveal-and-interview-with-katherine-battersby/>>



WORKSHEETS

BOOK 1. WORKSHEET 1. FINISH THIS IMAGE OF CRANKY CHICKEN

Cranky Chicken is an image students could draw. Katherine Battersby has drawn a couple of lines below to get you started. Finish and then colour this image.



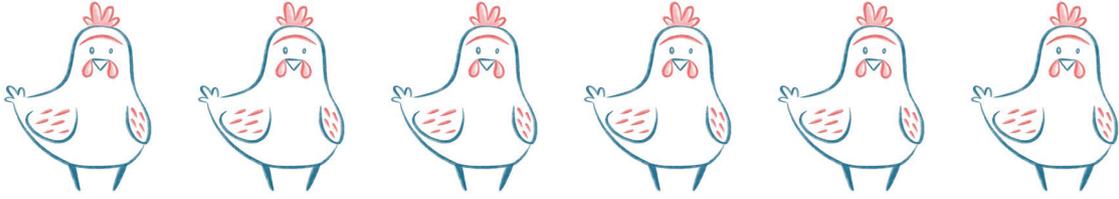
BOOK 1. WORKSHEET 2. CHICKEN ALPHABET

Create a chicken alphabet by adding words which relate to chickens. (Examples are included below.) Then draw a picture of the word in the third column.

A		
B		
C		
D		
E	EGG	
F		
G		
H	HEN	
I		
J		
K		
L		

M		
N		
O		
P	POULTRY	
Q		
R		
S		
T		
U		
V		
W		
X		
Y		
Z		

BOOK 1. WORKSHEET 3. MATHS



1. How many chickens are depicted above?



2. How many happy faces can you see above?

3. How many sad faces can you see above?

4. Add the sad faces to the happy faces and what figure do you get?



5. How many cupcakes can you see above?

6. Divide the cupcakes by three and what do you get?



7. How many pairs of socks can you see above?

8. How many socks can you see above?



9. How many spiders can you see above?

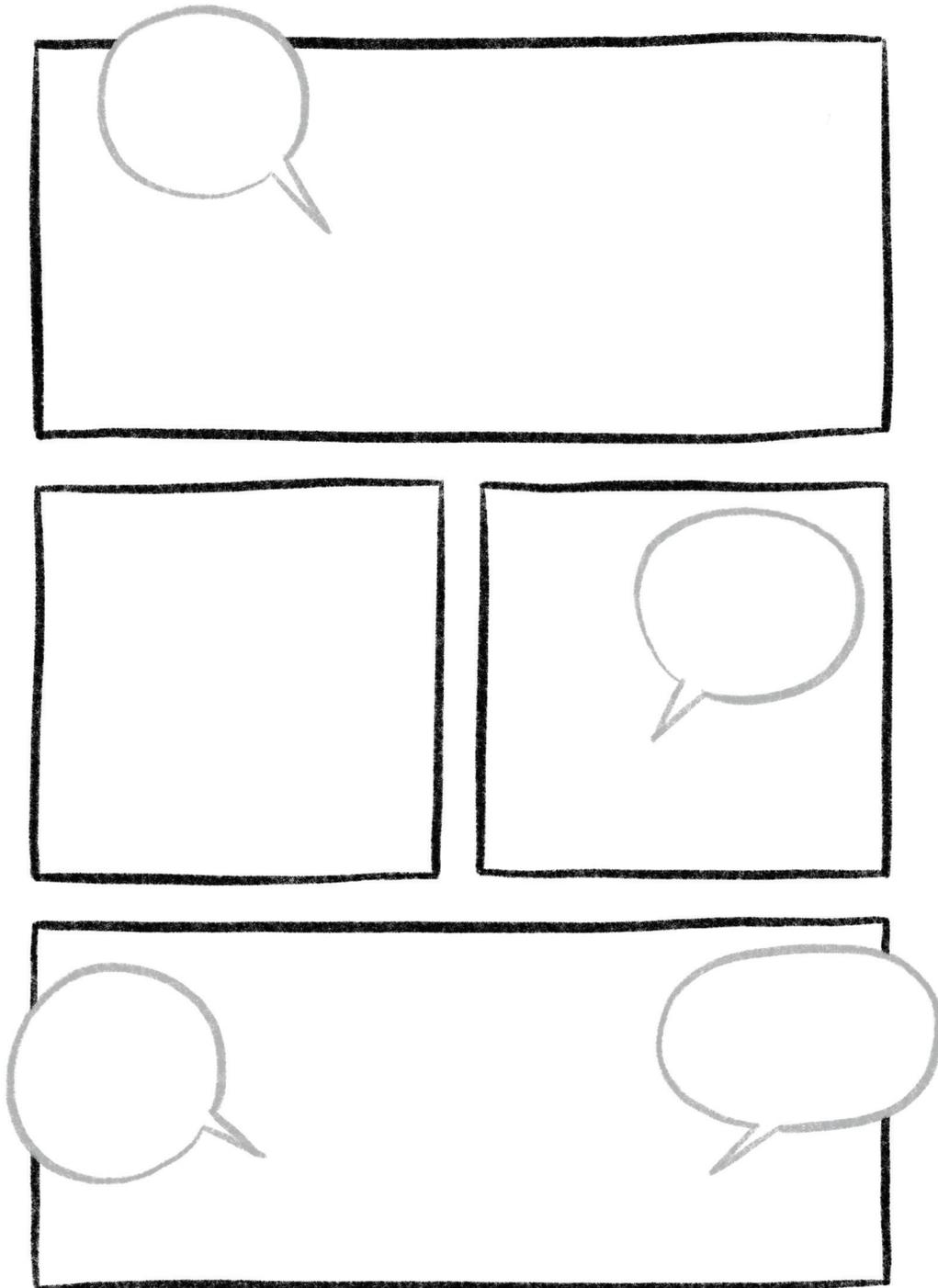
10. Multiply them by seven and how many spiders would you have?

ANSWERS: 1. Six. 2. Five. 3. Five. 4. Ten. 5. Twelve. 6. Four. 7. Eight. 8. Sixteen. 9. Nine.

10. Sixty-three.

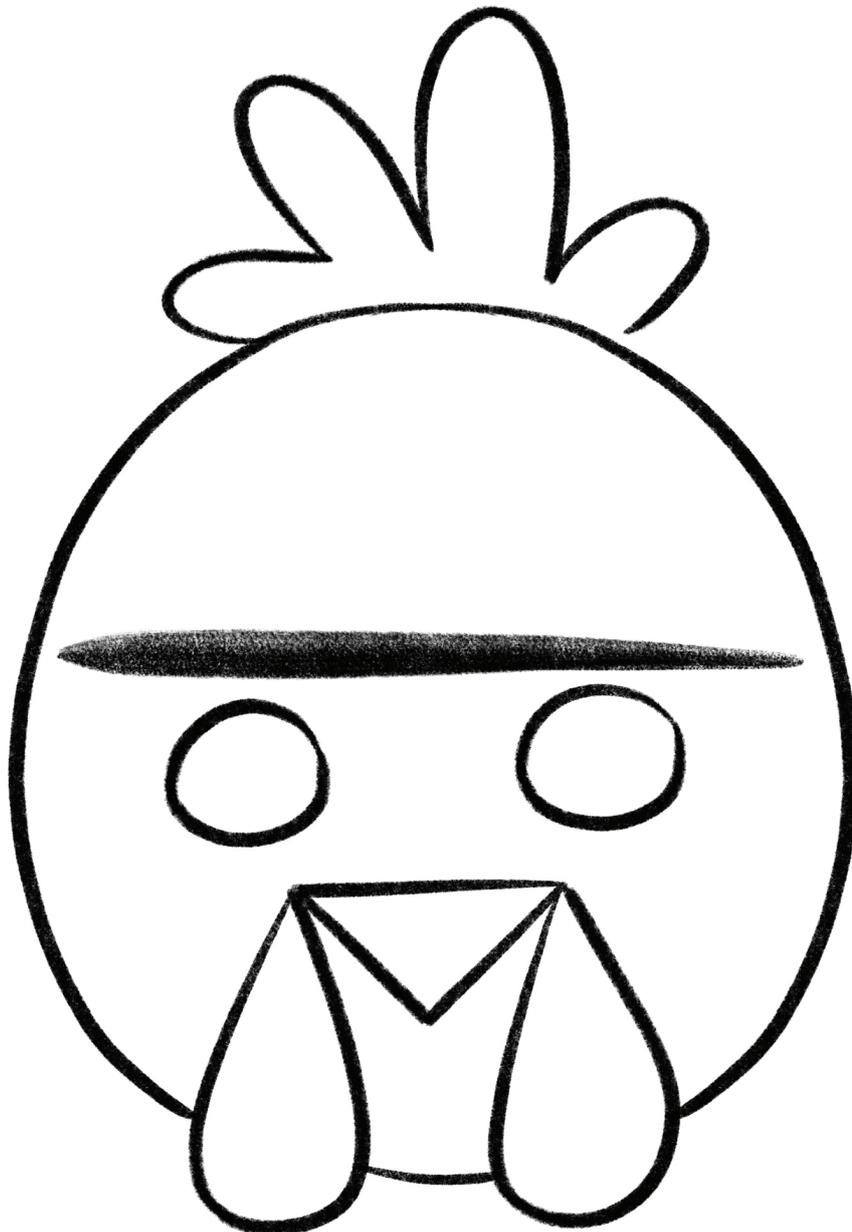
BOOK 1. WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



BOOK 1. WORKSHEET 5. CHICKEN MASK

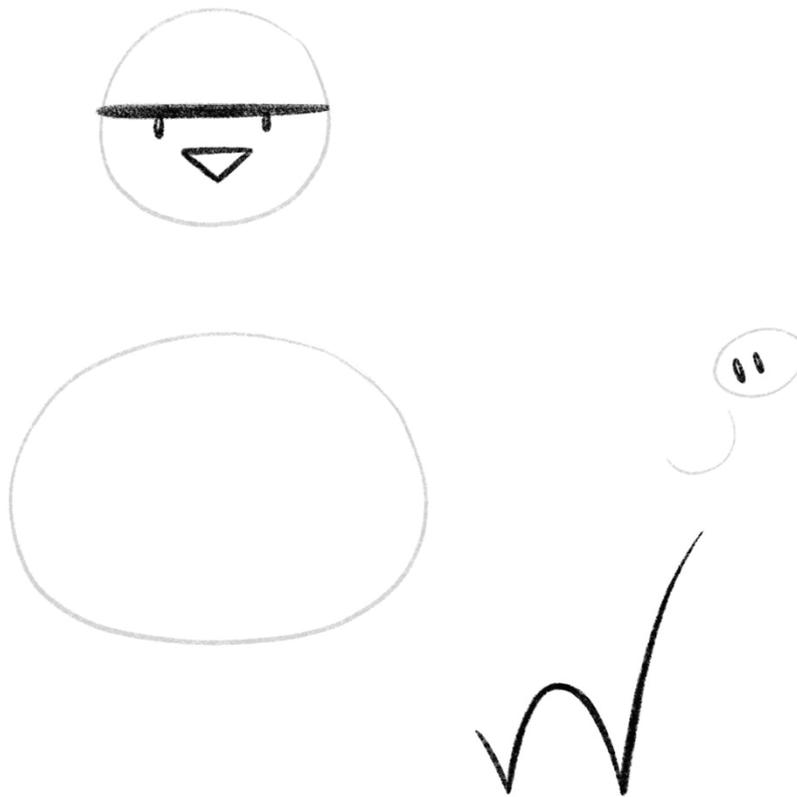
Enlarge the mask below on A3 craft paper and cut it out. Colour it in and then add elastic to the sides to put over your head.



BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 1. FINISH THIS IMAGE OF SPEEDY

& CRANKY

Speedy the worm and Cranky the Chicken are images students could draw. Katherine Battersby has drawn a couple of lines below to get you started. Finish and then colour this image and create a scene behind them.



BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 2. WORM ALPHABET

Create a worm alphabet by adding words which relate to worms. (Examples are included below.) Then draw a picture of the word in the third column.

A		
B		
C	Compost	
D		
E		
F		
G	Glowworm	
H	Earthworm	
I		
J		
K		
L	Larvae	

M		
N		
O		
P		
Q		
R		
S		
T		
U		
V		
W		
X		
Y		
Z		

BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 3. MATHS



1. How many doughnuts are depicted above?



2. Multiply the rock friends above by three, and how many would you have?



3. How many balloons are in these five bunches?



4. Take one gift from the row above and how many would you have?



5. How many floppy beach hats are depicted above?

6. Add seven floppy beach hats to the row above and how many would you have?



7. Divide the Speedy Worms above by 3 and how many would you have?



8. Multiply the sharks above by ten and how many would you have?



9. Take one beach bag from the row above, and how many would you have?

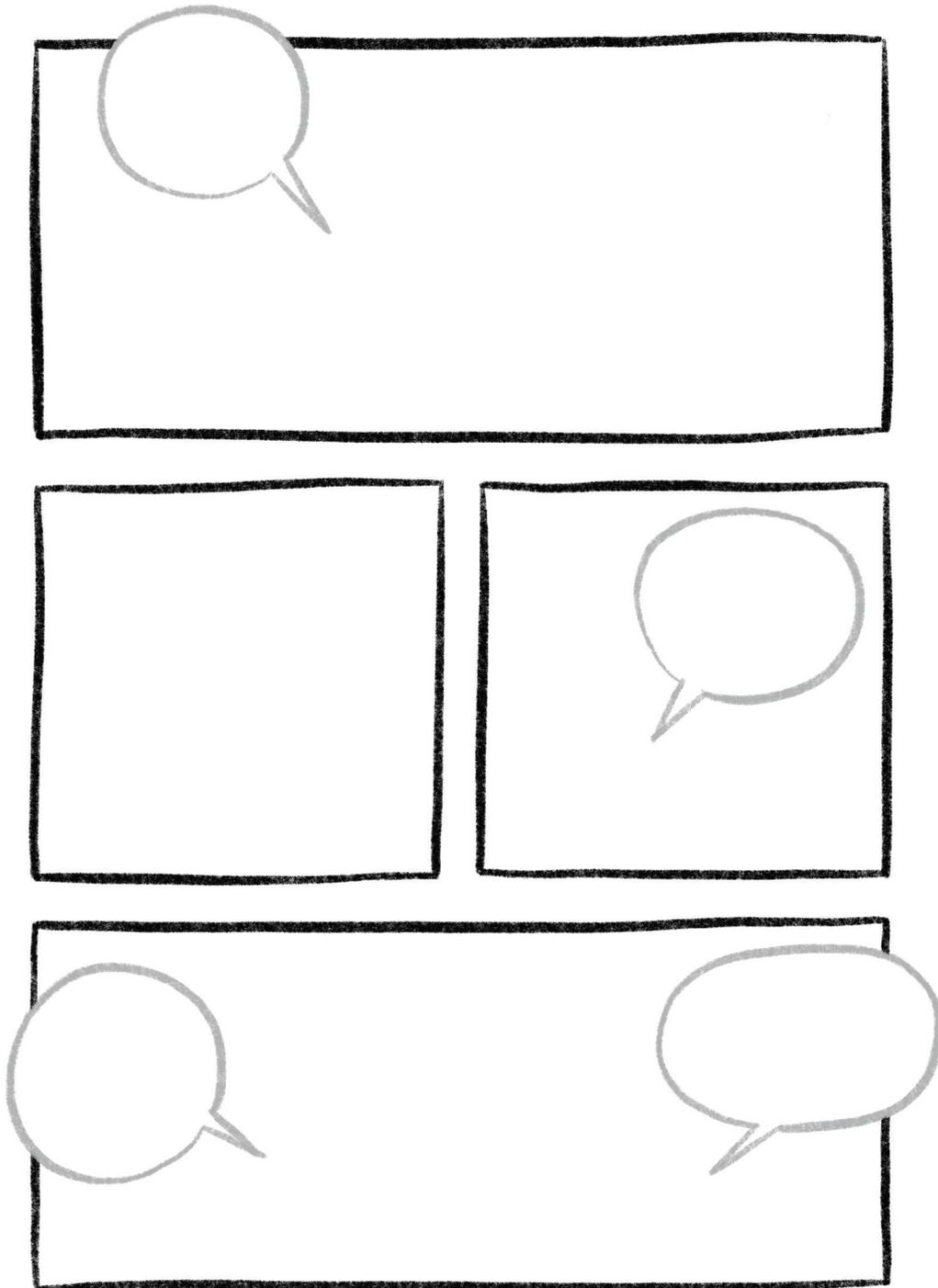


10. There are eight frisbees above. If you added another twenty-five, how many would you have?

ANSWERS: 1. Nine. 2. Fifteen. 3. Forty. 4. Seven. 5. Five. 6. Twelve. 7. Two. 8. Fifty. 9. Six. 10. Thirty-three.

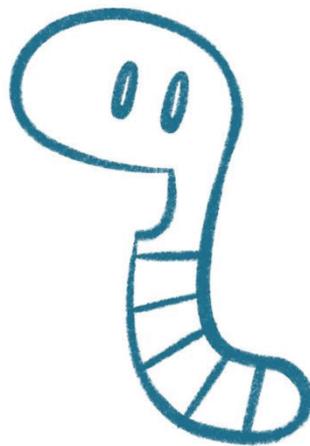
BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 5. WORM BOOKMARK

Make your own bookworm bookmark! Choose a large envelope and cut off the corner. Take a piece of coloured cardboard or craft paper and trace the worm shape below onto the craft paper. Cut it out and draw a face and a happy expression on it. (This worm loves reading!) Glue the worm to the envelope corner and this can be placed over a page's top corner as a bookmark.



BOOK 2. WORKSHEET 6. CRANKY OR UNCRANKY?

Think of things which make you cranky or 'uncranky' and draw a simple image in each box with the description below it. (You can enlarge this on a photocopier to give you more space.)



Things that make
you cranky

From CRANKY CHICKEN



Things that DON'T
make you cranky

www.KatherineBattersby.com

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