

Teacher's Notes



A Human for Kingsley

GABRIEL EVANS

A Human for Kingsley

Written and Illustrated by Gabriel Evans

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary-aged readers (ages 4-6, grades 1+)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - Creating characters using languages and images (ACELT1581)
 - Innovate on familiar texts (ACELT1833)
 - Discuss the characters and settings of different texts (ACELT1591)

THEMES

- Friendship
- Fitting in
- Responsibility
- Mannerisms
- Choices

SYNOPSIS

Kingsley knows that owning a human is a big responsibility. So when he decides it's time to get one for himself, Kingsley puts a lot of thought into making sure they're going to be a good fit.

But with so many humans in the world, Kingsley struggles to find the right one. The first one is very hairy, and far too concerned about work.

The second one moves too fast (even for Kingsley), and the third isn't very grateful for Kingsley's thoughtful gift. It turns out it's even harder to find a good human than Kingsley had originally thought.

Finally, Kingsley discovers a small, crotchety human in a red beret. Kingsley likes her, although she is very demanding. But is she the right human for Kingsley? He isn't sure. Until he leaves, and his human comes looking for him to bring him home.

Maybe what Kingsley needed in a human was someone ... who needed him. And that made all the difference.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Gabriel Evans is an author and illustrator of picture books. He illustrates his own books as well as illustrating for several acclaimed authors. His books have been sold in Australia and the USA.

Gabriel travels around Australia visiting schools in capital cities and remote communities in the Pilbara and the Kimberley, where he offers creative illustration and picture book workshops.

He creates his stories in a messy studio near a river where he drinks tea and grows oak trees.

THEMES

A Human for Kingsley is a simple and relatable story that contains complex themes for readers to discuss. Kingsley is faced with a difficult choice when it comes to finding a human, and to make a decision he has to consider what he is really looking for in a friend. Readers starting to navigate their own friendships, and make decisions about the characteristics and personalities that they are drawn to, will enjoy being able to have conversations about these challenges within the safe, non-threatening confines of the story. In addition to this, *A Human for Kingsley* is a good place to start for conversations around pet ownership and responsibility, and what it really means to invite a person or pet into your life.

Useful discussion topics might include:

- What we look for in a friend
- How we find friends
- Our responsibilities to our friends and family (including pets!)
- How to make difficult decisions

WRITING STYLE

Gabriel Evans flips the usual human-adopts-a-pet narrative by telling the story from Kingsley's perspective. This narrative choice not only makes the story more interesting and accessible for its readers, but also provides an avenue to examine the way that narrative point of view (POV) influences the way readers understand and engage with a story.

As the story follows Kingsley on his journey to discover the perfect human companion to adopt, the writer makes use of adjectives to describe the various habits and personality traits of the humans Kingsley encounters. Readers will be able to think about the way that adjectives might be used to describe their own lives, and to articulate the things they value in their own friendships.

COMPREHENSION

- What do you learn about Kingsley in the story? What does he like?
- Kingsley knows that owning a human is a BIG responsibility (p1). Why is it such a big responsibility? What do you have to think about when you make the decision to adopt a human (or pet)?



- Find five adjectives in the story that describe the humans Kingsley meets. Write them out in your book. Now think of five adjectives that describe humans you know.
- How is the human Kingsley follows home different to the other humans he meets? Why does he decide to keep her?
- Who is the main character in the book? How would the story be different if the main character was the little girl?
- Kingsley's human has a lot of hobbies. What are they? Make a list of your hobbies. What kind of pet would you get along best with?
- What does Kingsley really want from a human? How is this similar to what we want from a friend or a pet?

WRITING EXERCISE

Kingsley tries a lot of humans out before he finds the one that's right for him. Write a scene where Kingsley meets a new human. What are they doing? Why does Kingsley think they might be the right human for him? Does it work out? Why/why not?

ILLUSTRATION STYLE

The illustrations in *A Human for Kingsley* are realistic and detailed, with a touch of whimsy that recalls well-known picture books such as *Hairy Maclary* and *Harry the Dirty Dog*. Readers are introduced to Kingsley on the first page, with humans only pictured as illustrations on the brick wall. This positions him as the main character in the story, indicating to readers that they will follow him through the story, and can find him on all of the subsequent pages of the book.

Evans captures the facial expressions and hobbies of the humans in detail, which offers readers a way to visualise the experiences of Kingsley as he searches for a human to adopt. These details enhance understanding, and encourage empathy through seeing the way the characters respond to and interact with each other.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Choose a scene from the book where Kingsley interacts with one of his potential humans. What is happening in the scene? How is each of the characters feeling? How do you know? Choose an emotion that you feel often, and draw a picture of yourself feeling that way.
- Draw illustrations to go with the scene you wrote for Kingsley. Where would you put the words on the page? Are any words unnecessary? (Or perhaps some are spoken by the characters, as they are in the book). Collect all of the scenes in a classroom version of the book.
- Make a list of five things you would want from your perfect pet. Draw a pet to match your description.
- Share a story about a time you had to make a difficult decision. What helped you make it?



RELATED READING

I Want a Pet by Lauren Child

Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy by Lynley Dodd

Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion

Ollie and Augustus by Gabriel Evans

Mutt Dog by Stephen Michael King

