

Teacher's Notes



School of Monsters (series)

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary aged readers (ages 4-5+, grades prep/kindy/transition/reception/pre-primary+)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English
- General capabilities:
 - Know that spoken sounds and words can be written down using letters of the alphabet and how to write some high-frequency sight words and known words (ACELA1758)

- Recognise that texts are made up of words and groups of words that make meaning (ACELA1434)
- Recognise rhymes, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (ACELA1439)

THEMES

- Monsters
- School
- Feelings
- Friendship
- Difference

SYNOPSIS

School of Monsters is a new series, with six titles to be released initially. In each of the books, students at the School of Monsters encounter problems which are eventually resolved. And have a lot of fun in the process! But the fun doesn't stop there, because each of these titles is designed to encourage young readers to engage with the text and the images in entertaining and informative ways.

- 1 *Mary Has the Best Pet*
- 2 *Hairy Sam Loves Bread and Jam*
- 3 *Deb and Dot and the Mix-Up Plot*
- 4 *Pete's Big Feet*
- 5 *Jamie Lee's Birthday Treat*
- 6 *Bat-Boy Tim Says Boo!*

These notes contain series notes and individual title notes.

The PERFECT series for beginner readers! Start by reading only the last word on every line, and work your way up to the whole story!

Visit: www.schoolofmonsters.com



SERIES NOTES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Rippin is one of Australia's best-selling and most-loved children's authors. She has written over 50 books for children and young adults, and her mantle holds numerous awards for her writing. Best known for her *Billie B Brown*, *Hey Jack!* and *Polly and Buster* series, Sally loves to write stories with heart, as well as characters that resonate with children, parents and teachers alike. Visit Sally's website for more information: <https://www.sallyrippin.com>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Chris Kennett has been drawing ever since he could hold a pencil (or so his mum says). But professionally, Chris has been creating quirky characters for just over 20 years. He's best known for drawing weird and wonderful creatures from the Star Wars universe, but he also loves drawing cute and cuddly monsters – and he hopes you do too! Visit Chris's website for more information: <https://chriskennett.com>

THEMES

- Monsters
- School
- Feelings
- Friendship
- Difference

WRITING STYLE

Rhyming: Use the rhyming words in each book as triggers to make lists of other words which rhyme with them.

Spelling: Which words in the series begin with e? Which words begin with g?

Repetition: Each story relies on the sort of repetition which is found in cumulative folk tales. Identify examples of repetition in this series.

What other aspects of style did you observe or appreciate in this series?

COMPREHENSION

Who is the monsters' teacher? (*Answer:* Teacher Ted.)

None of the monsters have very 'scary' names. Why do you think the author has given them such ordinary names?

WRITING EXERCISE

Imagine a title for a further book in the series, about Jess, one of the other monsters who appears in this series. Write a short summary of what might happen in that book. Then give it a title.



ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Chris Kennett's drawing is vibrant and alive. Exaggerated features give his characters real impact. Humour is evident in each image of these crazy monster children. Chris has given very useful instructions on how to draw in this style, in each of these books.

COMPREHENSION

- Each book begins with the same three pages introducing readers to the School of Monsters. Examine the features of the school in this series. The gates, for instance, have figures sitting on pillars on either side. What are those figures called? (*Answer: Gargoyles.*) In front of the gate a sign Keep Out! is written by whose hand? (*Answer: A skeleton.*) The school itself looks a little like a spooky castle. Can you name any of its features? (*Answers: Spire, Belltower, weathervane, balcony.*) What shape are most of the windows? (*Answer: Arched.*) One of them is quite unusual (*Answer: Shaped like a cat.*) What spooky creatures are hovering above the image of the school on p 2? (*Answer: Bats.*)

ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

- Each monster in the series has a distinctive look and name. Invite students to make a list of the monsters who appear, and then to draw their own pictures of each one.
- Imagine and draw your own imagined monster character. Then create a gallery of your class's monsters. It's almost certain that no two monsters will look alike!
- What would your School of Monsters building look like? Draw a picture of it.
- Create a graphic novel interpretation of any incident in any of the books in the series [See **Worksheet 3.**]
- Create a cover for the book about Jess which you summarised under **Writing Exercise** above.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Make a **Monster Mask** using a large paper bag, texta pens, cut out shapes from chart paper, and a glue stick.

Create a **Monster Sock Puppet**. You will need an old sock, pieces of felt and fabric, stick on eyes, and fabric glue. Give your monster a face by gluing on shapes. Add a scarf, or a tie and collar, or a hat, or whatever you imagine your monster would wear on his or her head. Make him or her as ugly as you dare!

Create a **Book Trailer** for this series. Be as creative as you can be!



RELATED READING

Picture Books:

- Austin, Mike *Monsters Love School* HarperCollins, 2014.
Bland, Nick *Monster Chef* Scholastic, 2014.
Bright, Rachel *Love Monster* HarperCollins, 2012.
Czajak, Paul *Monster Needs a Costume* Ill. by Wendy Grieb. Mighty Media Kids, 2013.
Daddo, Andrew *Monster* Ill. by Bruce Whatley. ABC Books, 2010.
Donaldson, Julia *The Gruffalo* Ill. by Axel Scheffler. Macmillan, 1999.
Emberley Rebecca and Emberley, Ed *If You're a Monster and You Know It* Orchard Books, 2010.
Fletcher, Tom *There's a Monster in Your Book* Ill. By Greg Abbott. Puffin, 2017.
Howe, James *There's a Monster Under My Bed* Ill. by David Rose. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1986.
Mayer, Mercer *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* Puffin 1992, 1968.
Mayer, Mercer *There are Monsters Everywhere* Dial Books, 2005.
McKee, David *Two Monsters* Red Fox, 1986.
Rosoff, Meg *Jumpy Jack and Googily* Ill. by Sophie Blackall. Henry Holt and Company, 2008.
Sendak, Maurice *Where the Wild Things Are* Harper & Row, 1963.
Vestergaard, Hope *What Do You Do When a Monster Says Boo* Ill. by Maggie Smith. Dutton Juvenile, 2006.
Willems, Mo *Leonardo the Terrible Monster* Hyperion, 2005.

Junior Fiction:

- Blabey, Aaron *The Bad Guys* (Series) Scholastic
Gray, Nigel *Doctor Frankenstein's Other Monster* Ill. by Craig Smith. CSI Books, 2012.
McGee, Joe *Junior Monster Scouts* (Series) Simon & Schuster.
Saddlewick, A.B. *Monstrous Maud* (Series) Michael O'Mara.
Wilkinson, Lili *How To Make a Pet Monster* (Series) Allen & Unwin, 2020.



WORKSHEET 1: NAME THESE SCHOOL OF MONSTERS CHARACTERS



Answers: Teacher Ted, Jamie Lee, Mary, Hairy Sam, Deb and Dot, Pete, Bat-Boy Tim, William, Luna Boo, Frankenboy, Jess, Mrs Black.

Then write their names in the left-hand column and write a one sentence description of something unique about each of them, in the right-hand column.

Name	Description



WORKSHEET 2: CREATE AND NAME YOUR OWN MONSTERS!

Draw your monsters in the left-hand column and give them a name and write a one sentence description of something unique about each of them, in the right-hand column.

Illustration	Name and description



WORKSHEET 3: CREATE A COMIC

Create a comic interpretation of a scene in one of the books in the series.



MARY HAS THE BEST PET



INTRODUCTION

Mary brings her pet to school and things become chaotic when the pet eats everything in sight and grows enormous. He breaks a wall and escapes the school but the gardener catches him in a pit and Mary manages to return him to a normal size again.

THEMES

- **Pets**

Mary's pet has several features which are a combination of various creatures: octopus tentacles; a rounded furry body, popping-out eyes, and ears like a rabbit.

Does your pet eat strange things like Mary's pet does?

What is the strangest thing your pet has eaten?

Is it a good idea to bring pets to school?

Does your school have a day where students can bring their pets to show their classmates?

- **Magic**

What elements of this story involve magic?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

- Pages 34-5: New words to learn and match the words that rhyme.
- Pages 36-7: How to use this book.
- Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Mary.

COMPREHENSION

Apart from Teacher Ted, which other teacher appears in this book? (*Answer: Mrs Black.*)

What does Mary's dress and hat suggest that she might be? (*Answer: A witch.*)

When Mary waves her wand, what happens? (*Answer: Her pet returns to its normal size.*)

Where does Mary hide her pet? (*Answer: In her hat.*)

What is dangling from Mary's hat? (*Answer: A spider.*)



WRITING EXERCISE

Write a poem about Mary's pet in haiku form.

ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Draw a picture of Mary's pet.

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Ashman, Linda *Take Your Pet To School Day* Ill. by Suzanne Kaufman. Penguin Random House, 2019.

Dubosarsky, Ursula *Rex* Ill. by David Mackintosh. Penguin, 2005.

Shanahan, Lisa *Big Pet Day* Ill. by Gus Gordon. Lothian Books, Hachette Australia, 2014.

Junior Fiction:

Brown, Marc *Arthur and the School Pet* (Step into Reading Series)

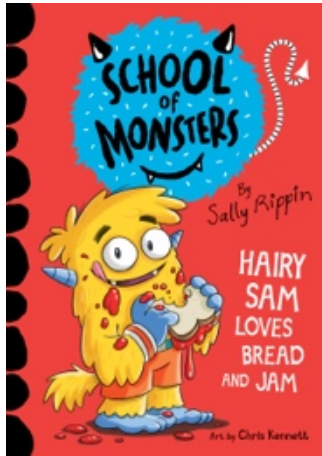
Fleming, Candace *The Fabled Fifth Graders of Aesop Elementary School*

McKinlay, Meg *Duck for a Day*. Ill. by Leila Rudge. Walker Books, 2010.

Vander Velde, Vivian *8 Class Pets + 1 Squirrel ÷ 1 Dog = Chaos* Ill. by Steve Björkmann. Holiday House, 2011.



HAIRY SAM LOVES BREAD AND JAM



INTRODUCTION

Hairy Sam loves his bread and jam but what a sticky mess he makes! How on earth can he tidy things up? Then he has a brainwave. Bob, their pet is waiting to be fed. And Bob loves bread and jam as well!

THEMES

- **Cleaning up a Mess/Problem Solving**

Have you ever made a big mess like Hairy Sam does in this book?
How did you make up for, or correct your mistake?

- **Food**

Hairy Sam loves bread and jam. What food do you most like to eat?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

Pages 34-5 New words to learn and point to words that start with s.

Pages 36-7 How to use this book.

Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Hairy Sam.

COMPREHENSION

Bob their pet has something unique hanging above the roof of the shelter built inside his pen. What is it?
(Answer: A cow's skull.)

WRITING EXERCISE

How else might Hairy Sam have resolved the mess? Write an alternative plot summary for the book.



ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Draw Bob the pet.

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Breen, Steve *A Perfect Mess* Dial Books, 2016.

Brian, Janeen *I'm a Dirty Dinosaur* Ill. by Ann James. Penguin Random House, 2013.

Dr Seuss *The Cat in the Hat* Penguin Random House, 1957.

Mayer, Mercer *Just a Mess* (Little Critter Series) Random House, 2000.

Riley, Linnea *Mouse Mess* Blue Sky Press, 1997.

Junior Fiction:

Hoban, Russell *Bread and Jam for Frances*. Ill. by Lillian Hoban. Harper Collins, 2009, 1964.

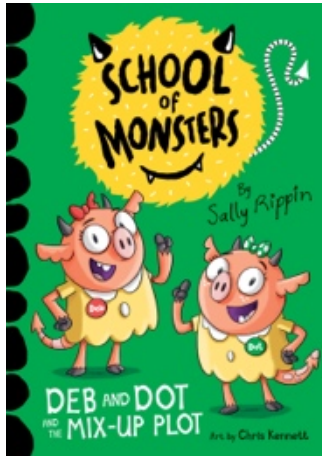
Krensky, Steve *What a Mess!* Random House Books, 2001.

Modan, Ritu *Maya Makes a Mess* Toon Books, 2012.

Szpirglas, Jeff *Messy Miranda* Ill. by Danielle Saint-Onge and Dave Whamond. Orca Book Publishers, 2013.



DEB AND DOT AND THE MIX-UP PLOT



INTRODUCTION

Deb and Dot are identical twins but they couldn't be more different. Dot plays well and Deb is does not. But Deb is also sad because no one wants to make friends with her. Teacher Ted comes up with a cunning plan and now both Deb and Dot have lots of friends.

THEMES

- **Twins and Opposites**

Deb and Dot are opposites. How common is it for members of the same family to be completely different?

- **Good and Bad**

The story indicates that just because you sometimes do something naughty it doesn't mean you are bad. Is everyone capable of doing things which are both bad and good?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

Pages 34-5 New words to learn and how many words have three letters.

Pages 36-7 How to use this book.

Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Deb and Dot.

COMPREHENSION

Which twin is presented as not playing well and which is presented as playing well? (*Answer:* Deb doesn't play well and Dot is playing well.)

WRITING EXERCISE

Write a story beginning: 'The naughtiest things I ever did was ...'



ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Draw a picture of Deb and Dot making them slightly different from each other in what they are wearing.

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Ciccotello, Mike *Twins* Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2019.

Haworth, Katy *Fearless Mirabelle and Meg* Ill. by Nila Aye. Templar Books, 2019.

Weidner, Teri *Always Twins* Holiday House, 2015.

Yolen, Jane and Lewis, J. Patrick *A Celebration of Twins* Ill. by Sophie Blackall. CWP, 2012.

Junior Fiction:

Kastner, Erich *Lisa and Lottie* Lizzie Skurnick Books, Reissue edition, 2015.

Lin, Grace, *Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same!* Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010.

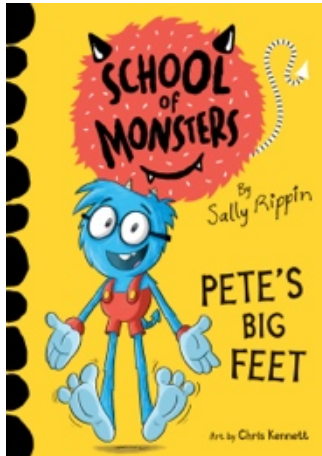
Lin, Grace, *Ling & Ting Share a Birthday*, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Lin, Grace, *Ling & Ting: Together in All Weather* Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Lin, Grace, *Ling & Ting: Twice as Silly* Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2015.



PETE'S BIG FEET



INTRODUCTION

Pete's big feet aren't very useful on school sports day as they make him very ungainly. But when Jamie Lee falls down a well, Pete's big feet prove very useful. This is a story about discovering that everyone has a feature which is unique. If you're not good at certain things you will certainly win a competition at something!

THEMES

- **Not Fitting in**

Body image or being insecure about yourself can make 'fitting in' at school difficult. Is 'fitting in' something to be aspired to, or is it better to be an individual and to stand out sometimes?

- **Sports and Sports Days**

Competition on sports days can be a worry for some children as not everyone is good at sport. How should sports days be organised so that everyone enjoys them?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

Pages 34-5 New words to learn and what rhymes with **ball**.

Pages 36-7 How to use this book.

Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Pete.

COMPREHENSION

Who else in these images has a body feature which stands out? *Answer:* Everyone!

WRITING EXERCISE

Write a short paragraph beginning: 'The feature I most like about myself...'



ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Draw a funny picture of a Monster Sports Day and what might take place there.

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Cousins, Lucy *Maisy's Sports Day* Walker Books, 2016.

Butterworth Nick, and Ingpen, Mick *The Sports Day* Hodder, 2014.

Ross, Tony *I Want to Win!* (A Little Princess Story) Andersen Press, 2012.

Junior Fiction:

Grey, Kes *Daisy and the Trouble with Sports Day* Penguin Random House, 2014.

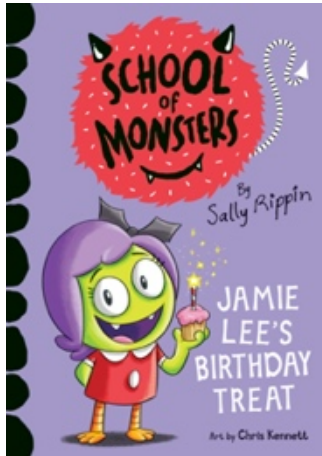
Lawes, Jane *Sports Day* Ill. by Sarah Jennings (A Bloomsbury Young Reader) Bloomsbury, 2018.

Saddlewick, A.B. *Spooky Sports Day* (Monstrous Maud #2) Michael O'Mara, 2012.

Simon, Francesca *Horrid Henry's Sports Day* Ill. by Tony Ross. (Horrid Henry Early Reader #18) Orion, 2012.



JAMIE LEE'S BIRTHDAY TREAT



INTRODUCTION

Jamie Lee is so excited that her birthday is coming up that she bakes some special treats for her classmates to enjoy. But these are not ordinary sweets. They are crazy treats! Teacher Ted pretends to be stern but the class has such fun that Jamie Lee's birthday was a huge success.

THEMES

- **Birthdays**

Celebrating a birthday is always fun and sharing it with your class can be even better. Jamie Lee is so excited that she makes some treats that may just be too much. What wacky birthday treats would you like to receive on your birthday? What is the best birthday you've ever had, and why?

- **Cooking**

Baking, creating or assembling food is an excellent classroom activity. Have fun creating wacky food fits for Jamie Lee's party!

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

Pages 34-5 New words to learn and did you know **that tr + eat = treat?** Yum.

Pages 36-7 How to use this book.

Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Jamie Lee.

COMPREHENSION

What sort of person is Jamie Lee? Is she shy or out-going? How did you decide that? From the text or the pictures or a combination of both?

WRITING EXERCISE

Jamie Lee makes some very surprising food for her birthday: 'Jumping beans and corn that pops! Fizzing fruit and cake that hops!' Invent names for your own wacky foods and make up a rhyming sequence like this one.



ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Create a picture of your class members eating the wacky foods that you have invented.

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Brown, Mark *Arthur's Birthday Surprise* LB Kids, 2004.

Child, Lauren *This Is Actually My Party (Charlie & Lola)* Grosset & Dunlop, 2007.

Daly, Niki *Happy Birthday, Jamela!* Frances Lincoln, 2007.

Graham, Bob *Oscar's Half-Birthday* Walker Books, 2008, 2005.

Kasza, Keiko *My Lucky Birthday* G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2013.

Ross, Tony *I Want Two Birthdays (A Little Princess Story)* Andersen Press, 2010.

Junior Fiction:

Dubosarsky, Ursula *Fairy Bread* Ill. by Mitch Vane. (Aussie Nibbles) Penguin Books, 2019.

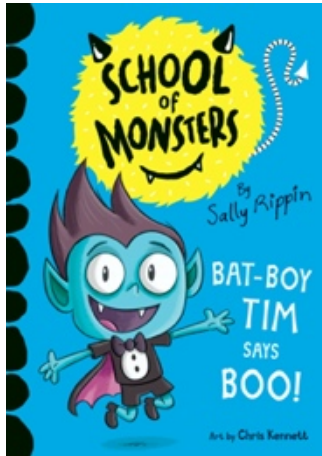
Kane, Kim *Ginger Green is Absolutely MAD for Birthdays (Mostly)* Ill. by Jon Davis. Hardie Grant, 2018.

Rippin, Sally *Jack's Birthday Stories: Three Favourites from Hey Jack!* Ill. by Stephanie Spartels. Hardie Grant, 2018.

Temple, Kate and Jol *The Birthday Wars* Ill. by Grace West. Allen & Unwin, 2019.



BAT-BOY TIM SAYS BOO!



INTRODUCTION

Bat-Boy Tim has lots of skills but some of them really annoy his classmates. For Tim is able to move so quickly and silently that he turns up when they least expect him to. They are all fed-up with Tim's efforts to become their friend, until Tim writes them each a note which explains his feelings. Now everyone wants to be friends with Tim!

THEMES

- **Bats**

Bats have special powers, like Bat-Boy Time does. They have amazing hearing abilities. Vampire bats have teeth which are so sharp that a human doesn't feel it when they are bitten by one. They can see in the dark. They can sleep hanging upside down. What other skills do bats have?

- **Making Friends**

Sometimes people try too hard to make friends and wind up, like Tim does, driving people away. What is the best way to make friends?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND VISUAL LITERACY

Pages 34-5 New words to learn and did you know **oo** can sound long like **boo** or short like **book**?

Pages 36-7 How to use this book.

Pages 38-9 Chris shows readers how to draw Bat-Boy Tim.

COMPREHENSION

Which monster characters appeared in this book? Name each of them.

WRITING EXERCISE

Write a short story featuring Bat-Boy Tim getting up to new forms of mischief.



ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

Create an entirely new image in which Bat-Boy Tim gets up to these new tricks!

RELATED READING

Picture Books:

Collandro, Lucille *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Bat* Ill. by Jared Lee. Scholastic, 2005.

Earle, Ann *Ziping, Zapping, Zooming Bats* Ill. by Henry Cole. HarperCollins. 1995.

Lies, Brian *Bats at the Beach* HMH Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Lies, Brian *Bats in the Band* HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Lies, Brian *Bats at the Library* HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Moses, Alexa *Bat vs. Poss* Ill. by Anil Tortop. Hachette, 2019.

Junior Fiction:

Black, Jess *Kitty is Not a Cat* (Series) Hachette.

Gudsnuk, Kristen *Making Friends* (Making Friends #1) Scholastic, 2018.

Bobel, Arnold *Frog and Toad: A Complete Reading Collection: Frog and Toad Are Friends, Frog and Toad Together, Days with Frog and Toad, Frog and Toad All Year (I Can Read Level 2)* Harper Collins, 2020.

Willems, Mo *My New Friend is So Fun!* (An Elephant and Piggie Book) Hyperion Books for Children, 2014.

