



FLOOF

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Recommended for: 3–6 years

Themes: Playfulness, mischief, contradiction, pets, cats, cat memes

Applicable to learning areas: English language, literacy and literature, visual literacy

Summary

This is Floof.

Floof is floofy.

Floof is VERY floofy.

Floof is the FLOOFIEST!

Floof is going to have a very busy day...

A book to delight anyone who has ever loved a ridiculous furball.

About the Author

Heidi McKinnon is an author / illustrator who lives in sunny Melbourne. Heidi has a background in art and design. Her books are mostly based on true stories, except for one.

Heidi's books, *I Just Ate My Friend*, *Baz & Benz*, *There's No Such Thing*, *It's a Long Way to the Shop*, and *We Found a Cat* have been shortlisted for numerous awards, including the Children's Book Council Book of the Year Awards, and have been published around the world, including in the USA, France, Japan, China and Korea.

Heidi has recently acquired a kitten. It has been very restful.

Suggestions for Classroom Discussion and Application

Before Reading

Before opening *Floof* look at the title and cover design and ask questions such as:

- What sort of animal is Floof?
- What were some of the things on the cover that helped you guess Floof was a cat?
- Hands up if you have or have had a cat.
- Hands up if you have a friend or neighbour with a cat.
- Describe how the cats you have known behaved.
- Why do you think Floof might be called that?
- Can you see anything fur-like in the font used for the title?
- Do you think this will be a funny or sad story? Why?



Responding to the text

- Read the story through once and then put the book down and ask students:
 - Would you describe Floof's day as very busy?
 - What did Floof do more than anything else during the day?
 - Did Floof go to bed at night?
 - If Floof didn't go to sleep, what did Floof do?
 - What do you think Floof will end up doing the next day and why?
 - What did you find funny or not funny about the story?
- Look at the page describing Floof, as the '*floofiest!*'. If you had to replace the word Floof for another similar sounding word to describe a furry cat what might that word be? [Hint: fluff]. How has the word '*floofiest!*' been shown on the page to emphasise it?

Telling stories with images

- Turn the page to the two images of Floof with a bowl and two images at a kitchen table. Point out how the pictures on the page tell us a lot more about what Floof is feeling and thinking than the words. Explain that illustrators are very good at drawing feelings using simple techniques.
- Look closely at the four images of Floof and talk about how Heidi McKinnon has shown Floof going from happily awaiting food to disappointment with the cat biscuits, and then Floof hungrily eyeing a plate of pancakes and scurrying away with the food, while spilling maple syrup. Note how Floof's smile becomes a frown by simply changing the direction of the mouth from upturned to downturned.
- Discuss how moving the irises in picture 1 and 2 and making them larger in picture 3 tell us what Floof is thinking. Compare this page with the similar one showing Floof at dinnertime, later in the book. What are the similarities and what is the main difference between the two pages?

Visual literacy

- Floof spends much of the book fast asleep. How has Heidi McKinnon drawn simple lines to show this?
- Now turn to the image of the dog and see how simple lines around the mouth, eyes and eyebrows can tell us a lot about its very different character. Encourage students to practise drawing faces awake and asleep, and with lots of different emotions.

Irony

- Irony is a word that means saying one thing when the opposite to that thing is true. Turn to the page where the words say Floof *reads, gardens* and *has many hobbies* but the images say something very different. Does Floof sleeping seem funnier when it is compared with all the things Floof could be doing?
- Find other examples where this happens in the story and explain if you found them funny, and why?

Emphasis

- Turn to the pages where Floof is fast asleep on the computer and jumps up, spilling a cup of coffee over the keyboard. Why do you think Heidi McKinnon repeats the words on both pages but breaks them apart on the second page? Did this make the scene funnier for you? Why?
- Turn the page to see Floof with the mice. Why do you think the mice like Floof? How is the word '*lots*' emphasised on the page and why do you think Heidi McKinnon emphasised this word here? Turn the page and see how the words and images are showing the same thing, and that the dog is really, really **not** Floof's friend.
- Turn to the page with the words '*Lights out.*' What do you think Floof is thinking at this precise moment? How did the close-up of the whites of Floof's eyes help you guess that?

Cat character

- Which do you think Floof prefers, daytime or night-time? Why do you think Floof feels that way? What can Floof play with at that particular time and why is it only possible then?
- Did you think that the ending was funny? Explain what you found funny about it.

