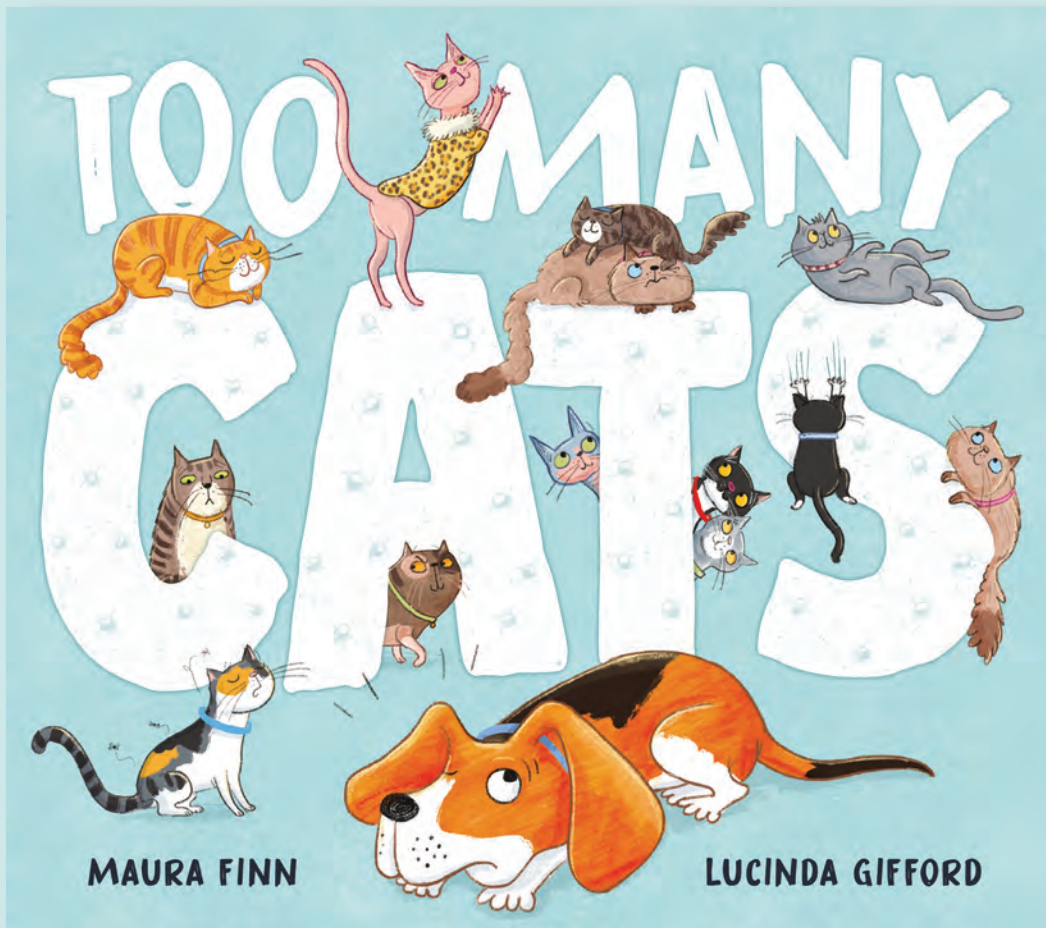




# Classroom Resources



**Written by**  
Maura Finn

**Illustrated by**  
Lucinda Gifford

**Suitable for**  
Ages 3-7

**Themes**  
Friendship  
Acceptance  
Humour



## Contents of this pack

- Overview of *Too Many Cats*
- Key themes
- Questions to ask before we begin reading
- While we are reading: discussion in key curriculum areas
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## Description

Percy is a dog with a bone to pick: there are just too many cats in his house! They scratch the armchairs. They hog the heater. They blame Percy for their mess. This just can't go on! There are TOO MANY CATS!

But when Percy finally manages to get some peace and quiet, he realises that he might have made a tiny mistake ...

With rollicking rhyme by Maura Finn and hilarious illustrations by Lucinda Gifford, *Too Many Cats* is the perfect gift for dog-lovers and cat-lovers alike.

## About the author

Born and raised in New Zealand, Maura Finn now lives in Melbourne with her husband and two young daughters. In her early writing days, she ran a rather lucrative playground business, swapping tailor-made poems for lunchbox leftovers. Now, many years later, she has rediscovered the joy and value of picture books through sharing them with her own children, and is delighted to think that her stories may contribute to other children's love of reading.

## About the illustrator

Lucinda Gifford is a children's book author and illustrator based in Melbourne Australia. She has illustrated more than 30 books, including seven that she has written. Lucinda spends a lot of time drawing in front of an audience. She draws in notebooks, on digital screens, on easels and on huge bits of cartridge paper stuck to the walls and windows. When she's not drawing in front of people, she writes and illustrates books in her studio in Melbourne.

Find this book at our website:

<https://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/too-many-cats>

Find drawing activities for Lucinda Gifford's books at her website:

<https://www.lucindagiffordbooks.com/fun-activities>



## Key themes

### Friendship

Percy may not realise it, but he lives in a house full of friends – even if they take all his favourite places to sit! This book can be used as a tool to discuss the many types of friends we all have.

### Acceptance

Percy may not always see eye to eye with the cats in his household, but he certainly misses them when they are gone. Use this book to talk about accepting people who are different from us, and judging people before we get to know them.

### Humour

This book is filled with humour, from the idea of Percy the dog living in a house overrun with cats, to the mischievous things that the cats are doing throughout. You could see how much laughter each page receives, and talk to the class about all the funny things that they noticed in the artwork.



## Questions to ask before we begin reading

- Have a look at the front cover; what do you think this book will be about?
- What is the dog doing? Can you guess what he might be feeling in this moment? What clues give this away?
- Can you describe what each of the cats is doing? Are any cats doing the same thing as each other or are they all different from one another?
- What does the illustration of the title look like it is made of? Why do you think the illustrator did this?
- Do you prefer cats or dogs? Do you like both equally? (You could do a class poll, or use Activity One for more on this question!)
- Do you have a cat at home? If so, do any of the cats on the cover look like yours?
- How many cats do you think is too many?
- What sorts of mischief do you think too many cats might get up to? (You could put this list up somewhere and see if any of them happen in the book once you've read it!)

# Questions to ask while we are reading

## Curriculum areas:

### Comprehension

### Social and Emotional Development

- Have a look at the illustration pages before the story starts and after the story ends. Why are there more cats on the back pages compared to the front pages? How does this relate to the story?
- Flip through the book and describe the things the cats do that poor Percy gets blamed for. Do you think it's fair that Percy is blamed for these things?
- List all the different places in which the cats like to sit. Which was the funniest?
- What expression is on Percy's face when the cats are eating out of his bowl? How do you know he is angry?
- Why does Percy use the word 'scat' to get rid of the cats? How can you tell that Percy is shouting in this moment?
- Do you think that shouting is a good way to get people to listen to you? Why/ why not?
- Have you ever apologised for someone after shouting at them? Can we show we're sorry through actions as well as words? Describe a time that this happened for you.
- What other things do you think Percy could have done to get the cats to listen to him instead of yelling and sending them all away?
- When Percy sends all the cats outside, he describes himself as 'the king of the pack'. What do you think this means?
- What do you think Percy means when he says, 'I can hog the heater'? See the illustrations for clues. Can you spot when the heater has been hogged by cats in the past?
- Why does Percy feel worried after sending the cats away?
- Do you think Percy feels lonely when the cats are gone? Why/why not?
- What promises does Percy make to the cats to get them back indoors?
- How do you know that the cats have forgiven Percy?
- What lesson has Percy learned from this experience?
- What might Percy's family say when they come home to find all the new cats in their house? Will they blame Percy for this, too, do you think?



## Curriculum area: Literacy

### Vocabulary

Make a list of these words, which may be unfamiliar to young readers, and find out what they mean:

Romping      Sprawled      Demand      Admire      Serene      Amends

### Onomatopoeia

There are lots of onomatopoeia words in this book, like yeowl, and scritch-scratch.

Can you think of any other words that suggest the sound that they are describing?

### Rhyme

Look at the first page of the story where we first meet Percy. Can you identify any rhyming words on this page? As a class activity, break the class into groups and ask the students to work together on different pages in the book, identifying rhyming words and/or the rhyming pattern of the book once they have grasped this concept.

## Curriculum area: Numeracy

- How many cats are in the book? (If this feels too difficult, ask the students to count the number of cats on the last page with Percy or to count how many are in the front or back cover.)
- Now you have the number, count again: but this time have a look at how many of them are wearing clothing.
- Percy has a favourite teddy. How many times can you spot the teddy?
- Percy's family have other pets besides Percy and the cats: fish! How many fish tanks can you count in the book?
- On the final page, there is a picture of Percy's human family. How many family members are in the photo?

## Final reflections

- What was your favourite part of this book? Why?
- What do you think is the message of this story?
- Which was your favourite cat of the whole book?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why/why not?



## Activity One: Design a poster

Are you **TEAM CAT** or **TEAM DOG**?

Design a poster or draw a picture of your team. Perhaps you'd like to persuade others on why your team is the best?!

Drawing prompts include:

- Illustrations of either cats or dogs
- The words **TEAM CAT** or **TEAM DOG**
- Some reasons why cats are better than dogs, or vice versa.



## Activity Two: Write *Too Many Dogs*

What would happen if this story was called *Too Many Dogs* and featured one cat in a household full of pups. Can you write this story? You could use *Too Many Cats* as a guide to help you, or you could write an entirely different story. To start, think of a name for your cat main character! You might also like to jot down all the funny things that a household of dogs might do that annoy the cat, which you can write about in your story. You can use rhyme, like in this book, or you can choose to write without rhyme.

Here are some tips of what to include:

- A beginning: showing the cat getting annoyed by all the dogs.
- A middle: showing the cat doing something that gets rid of the dogs, or annoys them in return.
- An end: showing the cat feeling sad, guilty and/or lonely without the dogs, and making amends with them.

Extra tip: you can write from the point of view of the cat if that feels easier. If you do that, remember to include words like 'I' and 'me'.

## Activity Three: Draw your 'too many' things

What is something that you have too many of in your house? Too many toys (that your parents make you pick up all the time!)? Too many plants in your garden (which means there's no room for playing soccer!)? Too many pieces of fruit in the kitchen (but no lollies!)?

Draw a picture of what you have too much of in your house. Make sure that the too-many-things are all over your page. Where are they all? Be creative! Perhaps they are hiding under the bushes? Hanging off the banister rail? Or hogging the couch? Use the space below, or find a new sheet of paper for your masterpiece!

