

KATHERINE BATTERSBY

CRANKY CHICKEN



TEACHERS RESOURCES

CRANKY CHICKEN

KATHERINE BATTERSBY

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
Study of History, Society & Environment	
English Language & Literacy	
Visual Literacy	
Creative Arts	
Science	
Learning Technologies	
Mathematics	
Further Topics for Discussion and Research	7
Conclusion	7
Author/Illustrator's Notes	8
About the Author/Illustrator	9
Worksheets	10
Bibliography	16
About the Author of the Notes	19

INTRODUCTION

‘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!

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

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

STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT

FRIENDSHIP

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.

ACTIVITY: What qualities make a good friend?

ACTIVITY: 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?

LONELINESS

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?

EMOTIONS

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?

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

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.

ACTIVITY: 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 lovable duo.

ACTIVITY: Create a Chicken Alphabet. [See **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.**]

VISUAL LITERACY

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:

DISCUSSION POINT: The author has described this work 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 this book. 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 **Worksheet 4** below.]

ACTIVITY: The **medium or style** employed is drawing, and on the imprint page the author explains that: 'The illustrations in this book were rendered digitally using custom chalk, pastel, and watercolor 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. This one 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 this book 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?

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

- 1. Make a list of all the dishes and recipes you know which relate to eggs**, eg. Omelette. Make one of these recipes at school or home and share with the class.
- 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 **Worksheet 5.**]
- 5. Create a poster** to advertise this book.
- 6. Create a Book Trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

SCIENCE

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.**]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

ACTIVITY: Research the topics above online.

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

MATHEMATICS

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

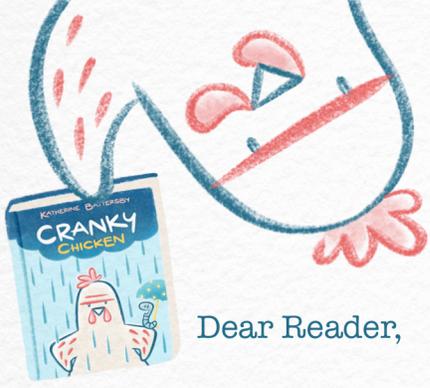
ACTIVITY: See **Worksheet 3** below for mathematics activities.

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 work for young readers. Katherine Battersby has created two memorable characters in these unlikely friends and the result is a witty, beguiling graphic novel 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.



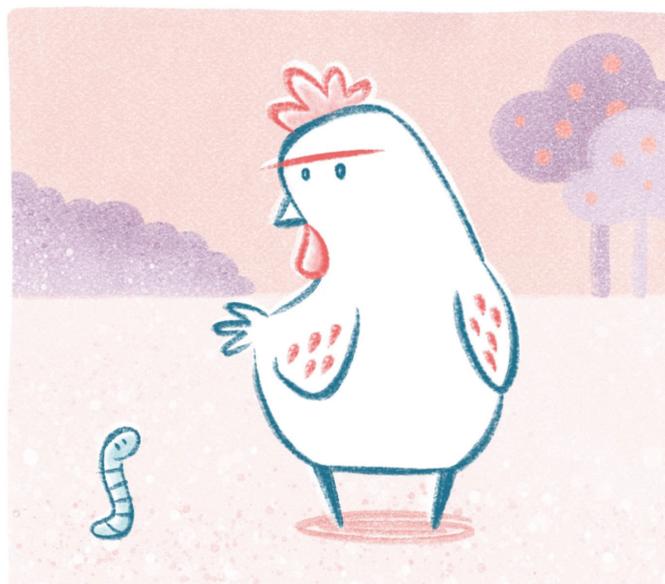
ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Katherine Battersby is a critically acclaimed Australian children's author and illustrator of eleven 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* 21 April 2021

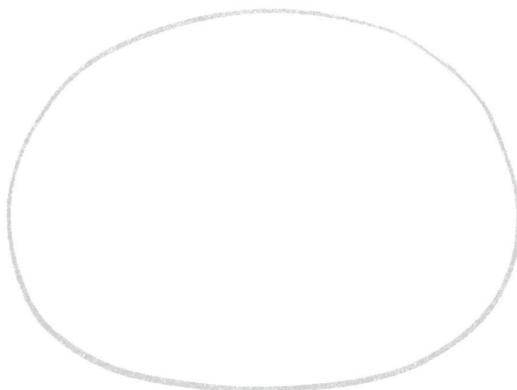
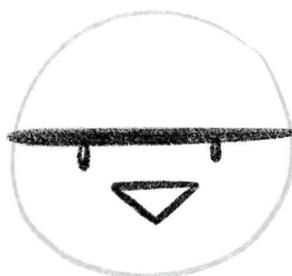
<<https://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2021/04/21/petulant-poultry-alert-the-cranky-chicken-cover-reveal-and-interview-with-katherine-battersby/>>



WORKSHEETS

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.



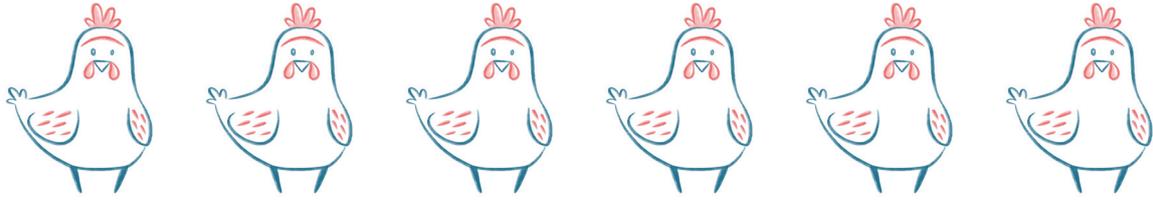
WORKSHEET 2. CHICKEN ALPHABET

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		

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?



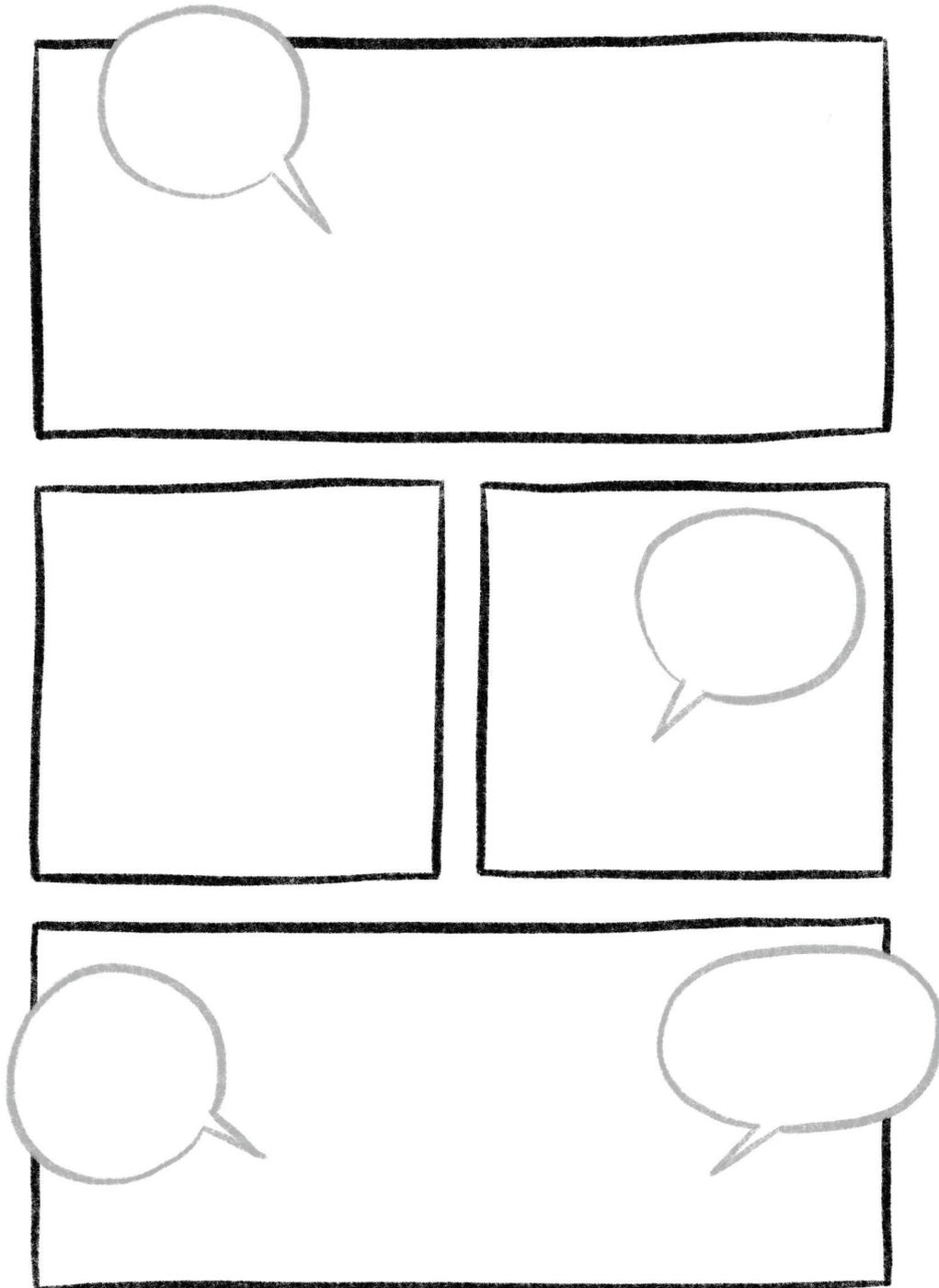
9. How many spiders can you see above?

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.

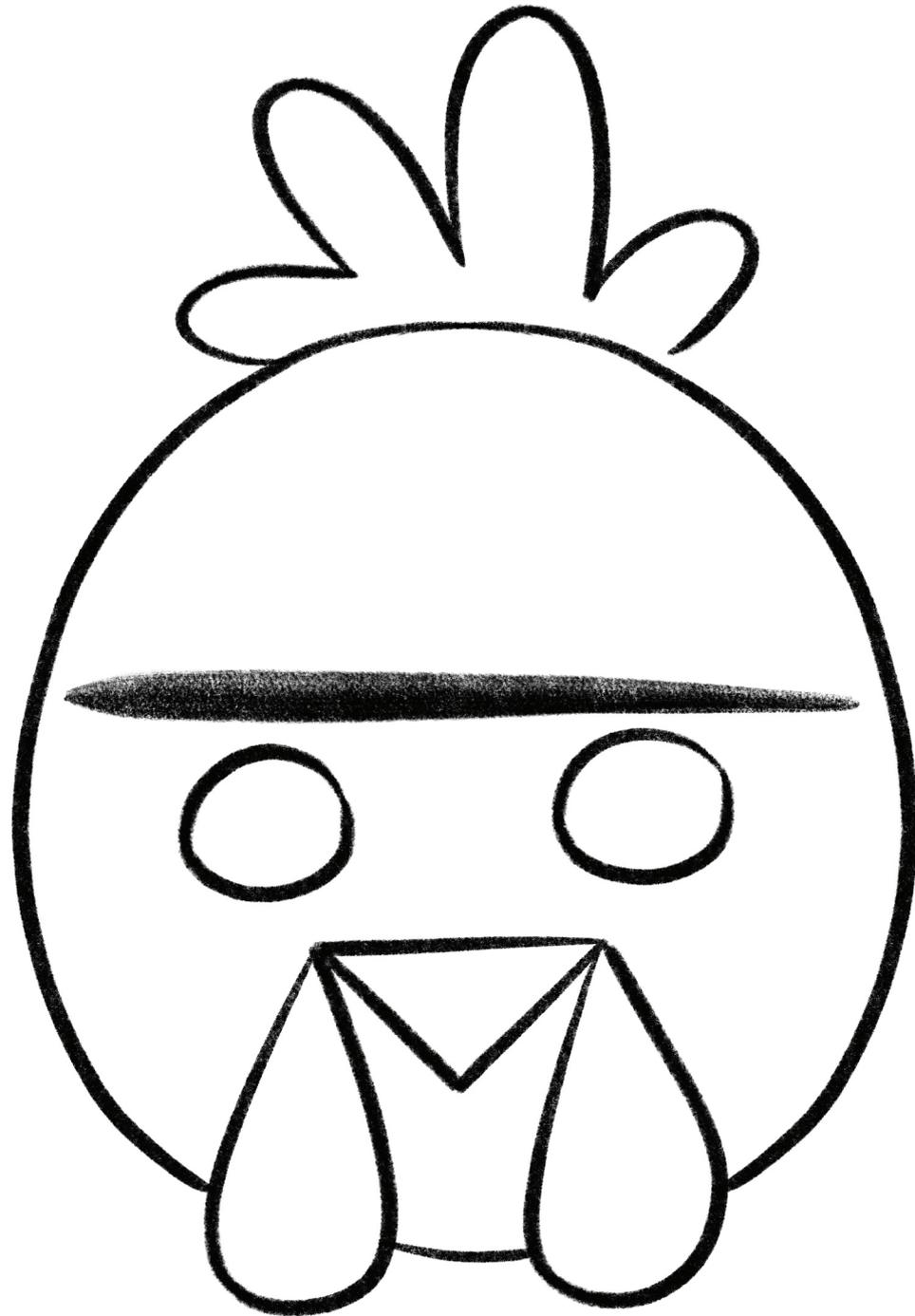
WORKSHEET 4. GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

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.



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.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

PICTURE BOOKS - CHICKENS

- Allen, Pamela *Fancy That!* Picture Puffin, 1989.
- Bland, Nick *The Fabulous Friend Machine* Scholastic Press, 2016.
- Booth, Christina *Are These Hen's Eggs?* Allen & Unwin, 2020.
- Faber, Polly *Chicken Come Home!* Ill. by Briony May Smith. Pavilion Children's, 2021.
- Fox, Mem *Hattie and the Fox*. Ill. by Patricia Mullins. Ashton Scholastic, 1986.
- Galdone, Paul *Henny Penny* Clarion Books, 1984.
- Galdone, Paul *The Little Red Hen* Clarion Books, 1985.
- Gleeson, Libby *Shutting the Chooks In* Ill. by Ann James. Scholastic, 2004.
- Gordon, Gus *Wendy* Picture Puffin, 2011.
- Ho, Jannie *Bear and Chicken* Hachette, 2018.
- Hobbs, Leigh *Mr Chicken All Over Australia* Allen & Unwin, 2019.
- Hobbs, Leigh *Mr Chicken Arriva a Roma* Allen & Unwin, 2018.
- Hobbs, Leigh *Mr Chicken Lands on London* Allen & Unwin, 2014.
- Hutchins, Pat *Rosie's Walk* Penguin Books, 2018; Simon & Schuster, 1968.
- Kurtz, Jane *Chickens on the Loose* Ill. by John Joseph. West Margin Press, 2021.
- Marshall, James *Wings: A Tale of Two Chickens* HMH Books, 2003, 1986.
- Ormerod, Jan *The Story of Chicken Licken* Walker Books, 1985.
- Scieszka, Jon *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* Ill. by Lane Smith. Viking, 1992.
- Shanahan, Lisa *Bear and Chook* Ill. by Emma Quay. Lothian Children's Books (Hachette), 2017, 2002.
- Shanahan, Lisa *Bear and Chook by the Sea* Ill. by Emma Quay. Lothian Children's Books (Hachette), 2009.
- Stein, David Ezra *Interrupting Chicken* Walker Books, 2013.
- Walker, Anna *Peggy, a Brave Chicken on a Big Adventure* Scholastic, 2014.
- Williams, Brenda *Millie's Chickens* Ill. by Valeria Cis. Barefoot Books, 2015.
- Wright, Maureen *Super Rooster Saves the Day* Ill. by Rob McGlurkan. Two Lions, 2020.

See also:

'Chickens Books' *BookRoo*

<<https://bookroo.com/explore/books/topics/chickens>>

'Children's Chicken Library' *The Chicken Chick*

<<https://the-chicken-chick.com/childrens-chicken-library-with-happy/>>

'Chicken Books for Children' *Good Reads*

<https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/76053.Chicken_Books_for_Kids>

FICTION - CHICKENS

- Cowley, Joy *Chicken Feathers* Ill. by David Elliott. Philomel Books, 2008.
- Crawford, Leslie *Gwen the Rescue Hen* Ill. by Sonya Stangl. Stone Pier Press, 2018.
- Cronin, Doreen *Complete Chicken Squad Misadventures* Atheneum Books, 2019.
- Lehrhaupt, Adam *Chicken in Charge* Ill. by Shahar Kober. HarperCollins US, 2019.
- Lehrhaupt, Adam *Chicken in Space* Ill. by Shahar Kober. HarperCollins US, 2016.
- Lehrhaupt, Adam *Chicken on a Broom* Ill. by Shahar Kober. HarperCollins US, 2019.
- Lehrhaupt, Adam *Chicken on Vacation* Ill. by Shahar Kober. HarperCollins US, 2018.

NON-FICTION - CHICKENS

- Caughey, Melissa *How To Speak Chicken Why Do Your Chickens Do What They Do & Say What They Say* Storey Publishing, 2017.
- Merrell, Patrick and Hovanec, Helen *Chicken Games & Puzzles: 100 Word Games, Picture Puzzles, Fun Mazes, Silly Jokes, Codes, and Activities for Kids (Storey's Games & Puzzles)* Storey Publishing, 2012.
- Sandri, Barbara and Giubbilini, Francesco *Chickenology The Ultimate Encyclopedia* Ill. by Camilla Pintonato. Princeton Architectural Press, 2021.

PICTURE BOOKS - WORMS

- Cronin, Doreen *Diary of a Worm* Ill. by Harry Bliss. HarperCollins, 2012, 1996.
- Frank, Jennifer *The Worm Family Has Its Picture Taken* Ill. by David Ezra Stein. Penguin Random House, 2021.
- Friedman, Joe *Boobela and Worm* Ill. by Sam Childs. Hachette, 2009.
- Ross, Mandy *The Wiggly Worms* Ill. by Caroline Jayne Church. Penguin Random House, 1999.
- Scarry, Richard *The Adventures of Lowly Worm* Sterling, 2010.

NON-FICTION - WORMS

- Ahlberg, Janet and Allan *The Worm Book* Puffin Books, 2000.
- French, Vivian *Yucky Worms* Ill. by Jessica Ahlberg. Walker Books, 2015.
- Gravel, Eloise *The Worm* Tundra Books, 2014.
- Wheeler-Toppen, Jodi *This is a Book to Read with a Worm* Ill. by Margaret McCartney. Charlesbridge, 2020.
- Williams, Susie *Worms (Mucky Minibeasts)* Hachette, 2020, 2019.

WEBSITES & OTHER TEACHING RESOURCES

'All About Chickens for Kids and Teachers' *kiddyhouse.com*
<<https://kiddyhouse.com/themes/farm-animals/chickens/>>

'Chicken Dance' *Wikipedia*
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken_Dance>

'Chicken Facts' *Cool Kid Facts*
<<https://www.coolkidfacts.com/chicken-facts-for-kids/>>

'Chicken Facts: Lesson for Kids' *Study.com*
<<https://study.com/academy/lesson/chicken-facts-lesson-for-kids.html>>

'Chickens (Hens and Roosters) Crafts and Activities' *DLTK's Sites for Kids*
<<https://www.dltk-kids.com/ANIMALS/chickens.htm>>

Chinn, Mike, *Writing and Illustrating the Graphic Novel: everything you need to know to Create Great Graphic Works*. London, New Burlington Books, 2004, 2006.

'Earthworm' *National Geographic Kids*
<<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/earthworm>>

'Earthworm facts for kids' *Kiddle Encyclopedia*
<<https://kids.kiddle.co/Earthworm>>

'Earthworm facts for kids' *Science Sparks*
< <https://www.science-sparks.com/worms/>>

Elliott, Laura 'Poultry Particulars - 8 Amazing Chicken Facts' *The Poultry Site*
<<https://www.thepoultrysite.com/news/2016/12/poultry-particulars-8-amazing-chicken-facts>>

Gabriel, Michelle '50 Facts about Chickens That Will Ruffle Your Feathers!' *The #Fact Site*
<<https://www.thefactsite.com/chicken-facts/>>

'How to Do the Chicken Dance in PE Class' *The PE Specialist*
<<https://www.thepespecialist.com/chickendance/>>

'How to Make a Book Trailer' *Tristan Bancks*
<<https://www.tristanbancks.com/2015/05/how-to-make-book-trailer.html>>

'Leigh Draws Mr Chicken' *Vimeo*
<<https://vimeo.com/555040622>>

National Dance Like a Chicken Day
<<https://nationaltoday.com/national-dance-like-chicken-day-2/>>

'Primary School Worksheets' *Poultry Hub Australia*
<<https://www.poultryhub.org/education/resources/primary-school-worksheets>>

'27 Chicken Jokes Which Really are Egg-cellent' *Beano*
<<https://www.beano.com/posts/chicken-jokes>>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.

