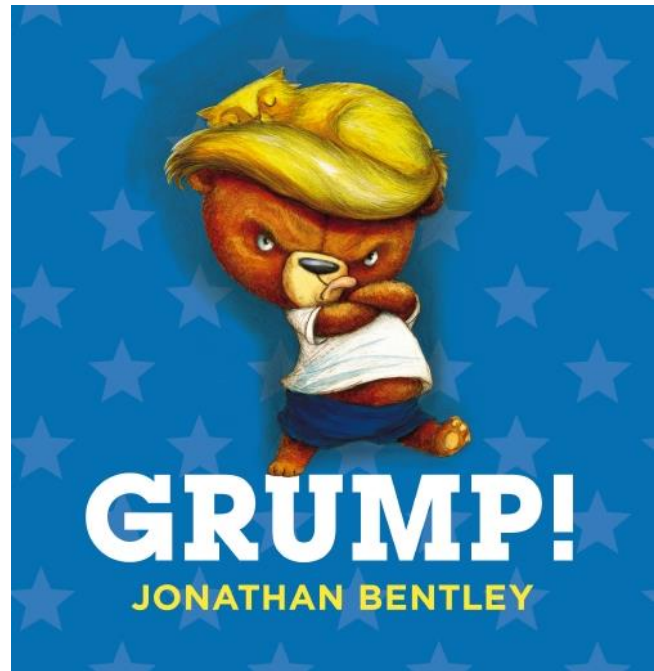


# Grump!

Author/Illustrator  
**Jonathan Bentley**



## Synopsis

Donald the Grump is a very cranky teddy bear. With a nice yellow cat living on his head for some unknown reason, he stomps around screaming at people and throwing tantrums constantly. He yells, he accuses, and he demands that they all recognise his clear superiority. But even the most placid of head-dwelling cats can only take so much, and in the middle of an absolutely epic tantrum, Cat decides that it is time to make a change. She warns Donald that she's had enough and that he must choose between continuing to throw tantrums, or continuing to have her live on his head. Donald continues to throw tantrums, and Cat moves away. But Donald misses his nice warm cat as headgear, and no other animals can or will take on the role. So eventually Donald the Grump concedes defeat and agrees to behave just a little bit better in future, and once again he can face the world with a warm, soft, yellow cat asleep on his head. And if he ever forgets to behave, well, a cat's tail can make an excellent muffler to stop the sounds of the crankiest of bears. A clearly presented lesson in learning to self-manage upsetting situations, and to not throw tantrums, this book is ideally suited for reading aloud to the very young, and contains enough humour to ensure the adult reader is equally well entertained.

## About the Author/Illustrator

**Jonathan Bentley** is an author and award-winning illustrator who has illustrated over 20 books, including books for Margaret Wild, The Wiggles, and Andrew Daddo. When illustrating, he likes to work with a range of materials, including acrylics, oils, and line and watercolour. Jonathan is currently living in the UK.

## Themes

Self-control; temper; consideration for others; self-opinion; self-aggrandisement; boastfulness; learning from consequences; poor behaviour and how it affects others; behaviour management; selfishness; and kindness.

### Writing Style

Written completely in rhyme, the story uses the third person throughout and follows the viewpoint of Donald the Grump. The majority of the text contains a combination of Donald's ranting utterances, authorial explanation of events, and a small amount of dialogue between Donald and Cat. The rhymes are clear and simple, the plot is chronologically uncomplicated, and Donald's language is typical of an angrily self-centred small child (or teddy-bear). The rhythmic cadence of the text makes the story ideal for reading aloud to the very young.

### Illustration Style

Created using pencil and watercolour, with scanned textures giving added depth and visual interest, the artwork consists of a combination of double page spreads, single pages, and vignettes. The consistent use of white backgrounds throughout leads to the different illustration formats retaining a central homogeneity that strengthens the visual narrative. The palette chosen is filled with bright hues and strongly features primary and secondary colours, with a subtle use of shading and gradation of tone to create form and depth. The visual narrative parallels the textual narrative throughout, and adds detail and emotional intensity to the story overall.

## TEACHER NOTES

- 1) Before reading the story, as a class look closely at the cover and title, and discuss what you can learn about the story from it. Some things to include in your discussion might be:
  - When and where do you think this story is set?
  - What can you see happening on the cover?
  - What is a grump? What does it mean when we say someone is grumpy?
  - Who do you think this story is about?
  - What do you think might happen in this story?
- 2) If you could have an animal living on your head, what animal would you choose and why? Draw a picture of yourself with an animal living on your head, and caption your picture with a description of the animal and an explanation of why you chose it.
- 3) Make a paper hat animal to wear. Hold a class hat parade so that everyone can show off their animal hats.
- 4) Why do you think Donald is always so grumpy? As a class discuss the reasons why people often get grumpy and cranky. Think about what some of the things are that we can do or say to help people calm down and control their behaviour when they are behaving badly like Donald is.
- 5) What is it about the way Donald is behaving that makes the cat finally decide to stop living on his head? Reread the story, and as a class identify and discuss the different behaviours he has that are unpleasant to be around. What are some other things he could have done instead?
- 6) What do you do or say when you are frustrated or upset and feel grumpy? What are some things that you can do to help yourself calm down, and keep yourself from making poor choices when you are feeling bad? As a class brainstorm and come up with a list of things we can do or say to help ourselves when we are feeling grumpy. In pairs or small groups use the class list to help you make inspirational and helpful posters about this. Display your posters around the school for everyone to see.

- 7) Can you think of any other characters from books, songs, movies or tv shows who are always grumpy? As a class discuss who the other grumpy characters are, what they are named, and how they behave.
- 8) Donald the Grump keeps telling everyone how wonderful he is, and insisting that he is better than everyone else. As a class discuss this behaviour of his. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - How would it make you feel if someone spent a lot of time talking about how great they are?
  - Would you like to spend time around Donald the Grump? Why/why not?
  - Why do you think Donald wants to constantly insist he is better than everyone else?
  - How do you think always talking about how great he is makes Donald feel?
  - What do you think that Donald is hoping other people will say to him when he shouts about how wonderful he is?
  - What are some other things Donald could say or do to share his feelings, or to get the response from others that he is hoping for?
- 9) What does it feel like to be around someone who is always grumpy, angry, and rude? How do you think the other characters in the story feel about Donald and the way he behaves? How can we tell? Write a description of one of the scenes from the point of view of another character in the story, and focus on describing how they feel when Donald acts this way.
- 10) What are some positive behaviours that we can practice every day, that make it pleasant for others to be around us?
  - In small groups think of at least one general behaviour, and three specific examples of it, that help create positive social interactions.
  - For example your general behaviour might be 'Respect personal space', while your specific behaviours could include: 'Don't push in the hallway'; 'Keep your belongings on your own side of the desk or table'; and 'Always say "excuse me" when you want to get past someone else'.
  - Collate everyone's ideas to help create a set of positive interaction guidelines for your class.
  - As a class make an illustrated poster or wall display showcasing your new positive interaction guidelines.
- 11) As a class discuss Cat. Why do you think that the cat gets sick of living on Donald's head? What convinces it to move back onto his head? How does the cat help Donald remember to behave well in future?
- 12) Do you think this story is funny? Why/why not? Draw a picture of the funniest event in the story, and write an explanation of what you find funny about it and why.
- 13) Create a class dance routine inspired by this story. You will want to stomp round the room crankily, throw yourselves on the ground, and wave your arms angrily! How many other actions can you think of that show grumpiness? Include them in your dance, and practice it to music that has a strong percussive beat. You can even compose your own percussion piece to go with your Grumpy dance routine if you want!