



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

For children 3 and up.
Preschool to lower primary

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Creative Arts; Humanities & Social Science
- **General capabilities:** Ethical understanding; literacy; critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; visual literacy

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.

- To use and experiment with different materials, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience.
- To use the text as a springboard for general discussion and exploration of major themes.

THEMES

- Friendship
- Feelings
- Listening
- Understanding

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

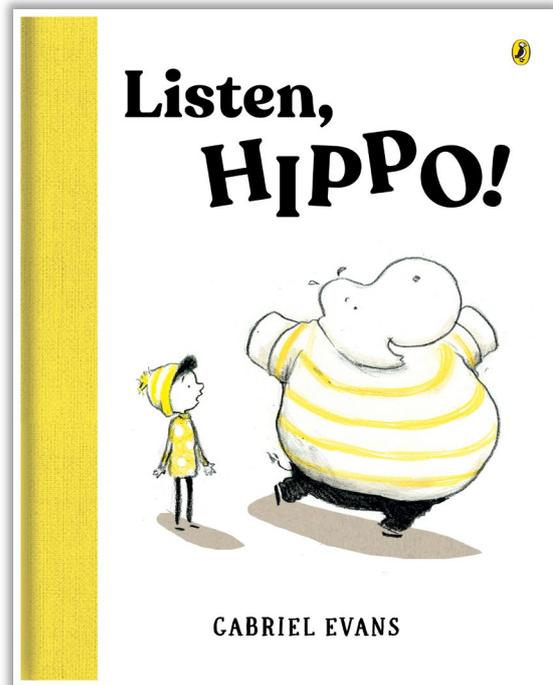
PUBLICATION DETAILS

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Listen, Hippo!

Gabriel Evans

PLOT SUMMARY

When Billy is feeling sad, he wishes he had someone to talk to. He thinks what he needs is someone to listen. But his best friend, Hippo, believes he knows exactly what Billy needs!

Playing dress-ups will cheer Billy up, and dancing in the cherry blossoms, or maybe a pirate adventure? No? Then how about a magic carpet race?

**What fun!
Ready, set, GO!**

Hippo just wants to make Billy happy, but it's only when he finally listens to what Billy wants that he can help his friend.

A wise and beautiful picture book that explores with gentle warmth and humour the nature of feelings and the importance of being heard.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gabriel Evans is a Western Australian children's book author and illustrator. Working primarily in watercolour and pencil, he creates books from a small studio on a big hill. Gabriel's books are

published internationally in more than twelve countries, have been reviewed in *The New York Times*, shortlisted in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards, translated into ten languages and read on ABC-TV's *Play School*.

Blue Flower by Sonya Hartnett, his first picture book with Penguin Random House, was shortlisted for the CBCA Picture Book of the Year in 2022. His second picture book with Penguin, *A Friend for George*, was published in 2023, followed by *Listen, Hippo!* released in 2024.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Gabriel says:

Listen, Hippo is a story about listening. There are times when we're sad and we want a friend to be there for us. Not to make us happy, to distract us or to share their opinions, but just to listen.

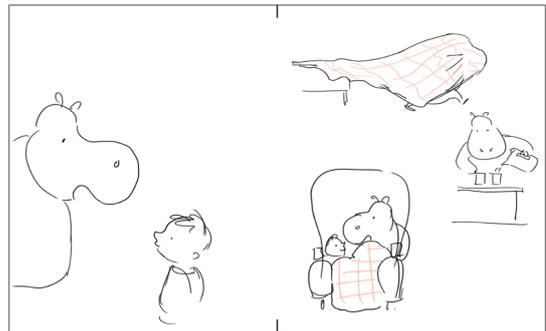
The sense of well-being when someone takes the time to listen can alleviate the sadness. Hippo learns to be that friend.

The illustrations were created using a mix of watercolour and pencil on paper.

Colour themes are used throughout relating to Billy and the Hippo's perspective.



Sketch



Final drawing



Final art



THEMES

Feelings: Looking at the book's illustrations and text, identify how Billy is feeling. Using the illustrations in the book, children can identify parts of the story to link to their own experiences of expressing their feelings. They can talk about the use of different colours, techniques and other things of interest in the art and also talk about the artist and his techniques.

Friendship: Hippo is a special friend and does his best to cheer Billy up. What things do students do for their friends when their friends are feeling the way Billy does?

Listening: Using the illustrations in the book, children can identify parts of the story to link to their own experiences of listening and being listened to.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Look at the front cover of the book. Read the title together. Can you see what the title is referring to? What do you think the story will be about?
- Open the book flat and explore the front and back cover as one large image. How does the choice of colours and the scene that is illustrated make you feel?
- Read the blurb at the back of the book. What do you feel about it? What kind of things are you now expecting to see inside the book? What questions do you have?
- Just inside the cover, before the title pages and the start of the story, are some illustrated pages. These are called 'endpapers'. What do the endpapers in the front of the book show you? What do they add to what you've already guessed about the story?
- Read the story aloud as a group, pausing to take in Gabriel Evans's artwork and observe all the detail and difference you can find on each page.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Literacy, language and storytelling

Questions

- How many characters are in this story? Do you think creatures other than people can be characters in a story? Can you think of other stories that have non-human characters?

Activity

- **New Words:** Can you find three words in the book that are new to you? Try to work out what they mean from the context (the way they are used and what surrounds them).

Friendship, feelings and listening

Activity

- Write a story about your own experience of friendship. Include a time you listened to your friend and something you did to help them. Include a time you were feeling sad and happy.
- What do you think is the most important message in this book? What does it teach us about friendship and feelings?

Questions

- What do you notice about the very first page of the story? (Hint: what can you see?) What does it tell you about the characters in this book?
- What does it take to listen well?
- In what ways does Hippo listen to Billy?

Activities

- Write a sentence about a time someone listened to you on a piece of paper. Place all of the pieces of paper inside a box anonymously. Your teacher will share with the class the experiences that have been listed and ask the students to write a story about the importance of listening to our friends.

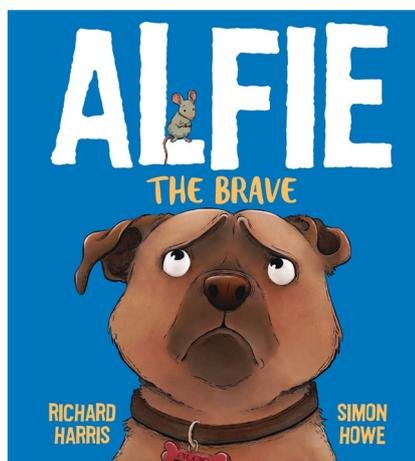
Visual literacy

Questions

- How much of the story is told through the text and how much through the illustrations?
- How do the illustrations help to establish the setting and mood of the story?
- Consider the amount of detail in every illustration. How does the detail help to add to the story?
- How does the illustrator manage to include emotion in his illustrations?
- Choose your favourite illustration and explain to the class what it is that you like about that page. How did you react to that page as a reader?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Alfie the Brave
by Richard Harris & Simon Howe

Why this story? A delightful picture book about a dog called Alfie who longs to be bold and brave like other dogs. From Australian of the Year Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris, a key member of the cave-diving team that rescued the Wild Boar soccer team in Thailand. Illustrated by the talented Simon Howe, who perfectly captures the emotional ups and downs of the adorable and expressive Alfie.

Alfie was a fine-looking dog. His coat was sleek and shiny like an otter. He was the son of champions.

But Alfie didn't feel like a champion.

Alfie was scared of . . . everything!

Could Alfie ever be bold and brave like other dogs?

A charming picture book about how bravery doesn't always come naturally.



Blue Flower
by Sonya Hartnett & Gabriel Evans

Why this story? A wonderful picture book by Sonya Hartnett with glorious illustrations by Gabriel Evans about finding beauty and difference in individuality. A story about self-esteem, resilience and the discovery that being different can be something wonderful.

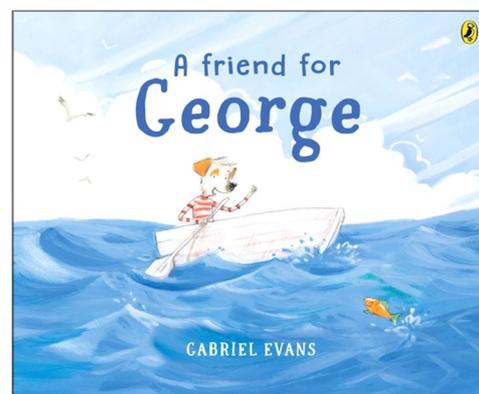
I lay down and put my nose in the grass. The grass was dotted with yellow flowers, but blue ones grew there too. I rolled over and looked at the trees and the clouds, and thought about things for a while.

'Not all clouds are white,' I said, and Piccolo looked at me.

'Not all trees are tall. Not all birds are brown. Not all cats are tabby like you, Piccolo. Some are black. Some are orange. Some are calico.'

Piccolo swished his stripy tail. I plucked a flower and showed it to him. 'This flower isn't yellow, but it isn't wrong. It is what it's supposed to be. No one would want it to be yellow. Everyone would say it's lovely just the way it is.'

Teachers' resources available.



A Friend for George
by Gabriel Evans

Why this story? A charming and heartwarming story about finding a friend and discovering what friendship and being a truly good friend is all about.

George likes living by the sea, but he often feels lonely. He'd like to have a friend – someone to talk to, someone to share stories with and someone to laugh with. As that's what friends do!

When he meets Claude the fish, George finally discovers the joys of having a special friend, as well as learning what it means to be a good friend to someone . . . for if you are, the rewards are bountiful!

Teachers' resources available.



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Listen, Hippo!	Gabriel Evans	9781761341700	Pre-1	\$24.99		
A Friend for George	Gabriel Evans	9781761046506	Pre-1	\$24.99		
Blue Flower	Sonya Hartnett & Gabriel Evans	9781760894450	K-2	\$24.99		
Alfie the Brave	Richard Harris & Simon Howe	9781761041358	Pre-1	\$19.99		
Alfie the Kind	Richard Harris & Simon Howe	9781761341328	Pre-1	\$19.99		
TOTAL						

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