



Pigs Might Fly

By Emily Rodda

Book Summary:

Pigs can't fly. Can they?

'I wish something would happen!' said Rachel. 'Something interesting!'

Afterwards, she would remember what she'd said and how she'd felt, that rainy Saturday morning, and she would think, 'That was really the beginning,' and her stomach would give a little jolt, and the tips of her fingers would tingle. But at the time she didn't know what was in store. All she knew was that she was bored. Bored with having a cold and having to stay in bed. Bored with the rain drumming on the roof. If only something unlikely or unexpected would happen for a change. Something exciting - something wonderful.

'Maybe it will!' her father said, 'And pigs might fly!'

Key Learning Outcomes:

English, Arts, Design and technology

Themes

Fantasy, Courage/Risk Taking, Imagination
Persistence

Australian Curriculum

English

ACELT1594, ACELT1596, ACELT1599
ACELT1602, ACELT1603, ACELT1605, ACELT1606, ACELT1607,
ACELT1794, ACELT1612, ACELT1798
ACELT1617, ACELT1800

The Arts (Drama; Visual Arts)

ACADRM031, ACADRM033; ACAVAM111
ACADRM037; ACAVAM115

Technologies (Design and Technologies)

ACTDEP015, ACTDEP018
ACTDEP028

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Notes by: Christina Wheeler

Recommended Age 10+

CONTENTS

- Book Summary
- About the author
- About the Illustrator
- Questions for Reading and Discussion

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'Maybe it will!' her father said, 'And pigs might fly!'

Questions for reading and discussion

In the first paragraph of Chapter 1, how does the author foreshadow that something unusual or exciting may be about to happen to Rachel?

Sandy always says, 'Nothing you can imagine is totally impossible. It might be unlikely, but that's as far as I go.' Share a time when something you imagined became possible. Alternatively, share some of your unlikely imaginings with a friend and brainstorm ways in which this could be made possible.

Why does Enid say, 'Well, it never rains but it pours!' (p25)? What is this saying based on? What other clichés and sayings are slightly altered to suit the world of the 'Inside', particularly during a grunter?

Discuss the detail that Emily Rodda has included to make the 'Inside' so quirky, such as the cuckoo clock that has a pig coming out of it.

Reflect on Sandy's role in *Pigs Might Fly*. How important is his outlook to not 'rule out the apparently impossible'. Why did he change careers from a bank teller to a sign writer? How would the story be different without Sandy and his adventurous ways?

In what ways is *Pigs Might Fly* similar to classics such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*? How does it differ?

What role does humour play in the success of *Pigs Might Fly*?

Unusual weather can have an effect on people, particularly on the 'Inside'. Rachel comments that wind has a similar effect on the 'Outside'.

Discuss the way in which authors explain ordinary, everyday observations about human behaviour in imaginative ways.

Discuss the causes and effects of Dr Pimplebottom's 'Containment of Pigs' policy on p39-41.

What effective measures did the government make to help the citizens of the 'Inside' cope better with UEFs?

Why do households have tanks to capture UEFs? Why is it significant that both Sandy and Rachel have captured some UEFs to bring back to the 'Outside'? What message is the author giving us about the importance of imagination and experiencing the unlikely?

How do different characters react to grunTERS? What does this tell us about viewing things from a variety of perspectives? Use De Bono's Six Thinking Hats to unpack UEFs from all viewpoints.

What role do nursery rhymes and playground chants play in *Pigs Might Fly*?

In what ways has Rachel grown and changed as a result of her adventure? What has she learnt about herself?

Discuss the importance of persistence as explored through *Pigs Might Fly*.

Discuss the comment that 'history's full of people who seem to have had a stronger belief in the unlikely event'. Research such people, from inventors to medical researchers, explorers to humanitarians. How important is to ask 'what if...'?

Analyse the way in which Emily Rodda has added tension and excitement to the plot of *Pigs Might Fly*.

Why the book is called *Pigs Might Fly*? How does this title and the saying upon which it is based reflect the themes of the book?

How important is the setting to *Pigs Might Fly*? How does the setting shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative?

Consider comparing *Pigs Might Fly* with films such as Walt Disney's *Cool Runnings*, in which the unlikely becomes possible through courage, persistence and risk-taking.

Activities

Have each student write three questions they'd like to ask Rachel about her adventure. Take turns answering some of these questions in the role of Rachel in a game Hot Seat. Repeat for different characters in the text.

Write a journal entry in the role of Rachel from the time you climbed onto the unicorn until spending the evening at Enid's and Bertie's house.

With a partner, plan a sequence of steps required to a practice UEF Safety Drill. Design and create a digital A3 poster to communicate these steps.

Compare this plan with the safety drills you practise at school.

Make up your own nonsense titles for famous children's books that could be found alongside *The Cricket of Oz*, *Maisie Poppies* and *Grime's Piggy Tales*. What are the original titles of these books?

In small groups, write a script and perform a TV news broadcast from the 'Inside' during a UEF Factor 10. Include a weather report in your broadcast.

As a class, brainstorm ideas for a different version of 'Inside', including a range of possible 'Unlikely Events', transportation methods from the Outside to the Inside and warning signs that an event is about to occur. Draw a simple picture of 2 or 3 of these ideas onto paper and place into a class container. Have each student select one of these drawings and write a story based on this selection.

Create a digital infographic that shares what happens during a UEF.

Create a cover suitable for *The Child's Complete Book of Knowledge: All About the World We Live in*.

Create a class blog using a site such as www.wordpress.com on which students can respond to various elements of *Pigs Might Fly*.

Write a short chapter that could be inserted into *Pigs Might Fly*.

Create your own original fantasy setting on which to base a narrative. Write this story, using the themes of persistence, courage, risk-taking and imagination.

As a class, create an illustrated banner to hang on your classroom's wall with the following saying:

'Nothing you can imagine is impossible. Anything you can imagine is possible.'

WORDSEARCH

Pigs Might Fly!

O K J Z K F W S A N D Y W X X L U F S B
S X V C L H E S G H B T N H J E U A Q Y
Z M Q W I W A W L O S L F Z F O H F B G
R A K E B L T R E T N U R G H S J O K T
L W A S R E H T A E F S K C U D V Y X K
O Q F L A Y E E S G E A E D I S N I O M
W X S N R D R I B M F N R O C I N U F Z
K S W P Y S Q T R O P U M D B F T K V W
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D M O T T O B E L P M I P M I N P F P I
O N W I Q E J B P C T A T D C N J J Z M
F X G M Q N V M C U H I E J A F C X J A
N A W J E Y F N G S T U N L I K E L Y G
H Q U J N X R Q F T E G K Y X B T K U I
I W E V V A X L E D O L F J X N Y A N N
A F F D D L G R O C E O T J M O U D P E
R O B H R S T F C I U R K B Q D A K F Y
O B G K C O J N R A X I E C A W P Y F S
D R P L N J I O O G S A U X U X T N B E
N Z H G M L K T K I K S T B K C V Y Y X

PIMPLEBOTTOM

GLORIA

BERTIE

UNLIKELY

LIBRARY

OUTSIDE

GRUNTER

IMAGINE

ENID

UEF

DORA

DUCKSFEATHERS

CUCKOO

SANDY

UNICORN

WEATHER

INSIDE

TITTERTON

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Bookmarks

Print onto cardboard and decorate. Write something that you hope will be possible on the back of your bookmark.

Miniature Book Cover

Create your own mini-covers. Recolour the front cover with your own colour design. Write your own blurb for *Pigs Might Fly* on the back cover. Include a quote about the book from a classmate. Display around the classroom or make the class set into bunting to string across the room.

About the author of the notes

Christina Wheeler is a Brisbane-based Teacher Librarian who works with primary and lower-secondary students. One of her favourite aspects of her job is listening to students' insights and experiences of texts. She also loves sharing her passion of for reading and bringing non-readers to books.