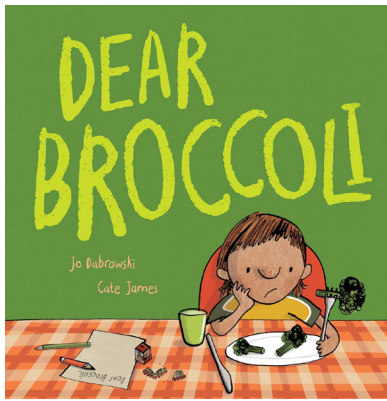




Teacher Notes

Dear Broccoli

by Jo Dabrowski and illustrated by Cate James

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh

Publication details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781923022102
Size/format: 250 x 250mm, 32 pages, HB
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Reader ages: 3 – 8

Themes

- fruits and vegetables
- taste
- letter writing
- persuasion

About the book

Frank *really* doesn't like broccoli, but it keeps ending up on his plate! So, Frank decides to take matters into his own hands, and writes a letter to broccoli trying to convince it not to come back. Unfortunately, things don't quite work out as planned. Broccoli presents quite a convincing argument – in fact, broccoli even seems to enjoy their debate! Will broccoli convince Frank to give it another shot? Or will Frank's letters see broccoli removed from his plate once and for all?

Dear Broccoli is a playful, entertaining story that can be used to explore themes of healthy eating or persuasive writing.

About the author and illustrator

Jo Dabrowski is a children's author and illustrator whose debut middle-grade novel, *Get Your Act Together, Doris Kozlowski*, was shortlisted for the 2024 Readings Children's Prize. She loves readings adult and kids books in all genres, but gets most excited about the books she can see a bit of herself in, and hopes that her readers find a bit of themselves in her books too. She lives in Melbourne, Australia, and loves rock climbing, marathon running, learning French and lying about her interests.

Cate James is an award-winning illustrator and printmaker from Sydney and Edinburgh. When she's not working in her Northern Beaches studio she will be most likely be in a print workshop, a school or a swimming pool. Cate likes to stay artistically active and to encourage and inspire new generations of artists. She works as a mentor to emerging illustrators, a lecturer, a print technician and visits schools to talk about illustration.

Before Reading

- Examine the cover of the book – how would you describe the look on Frank's face? Do you think this will be a book about how much he enjoys broccoli?
- Discuss the title – Dear Broccoli – what does this tell you about the type of writing the author is using to tell the story?

Comprehension questions

- How does Frank feel about broccoli?
- How does broccoli respond to Frank's letter? Who does it tell Frank he should raise his concerns with?

Comprehension questions cont.

- What are some of the arguments that broccoli makes against Frank's dislike of broccoli?
- Where do you notice broccoli popping up in the pictures?
- Do Frank's opinions of broccoli change during the story? If so, how?
- What's the difference between a fruit and a vegetable? What are some of the things that Frank thinks are a vegetable that broccoli tells him are actually fruit?
- What does Frank say to finally win his argument with broccoli?
- Why do you think Frank's brother is writing to carrot at the end of the story?

Literacy

Epistolary stories

An epistolary story is a story told through the exchange of letters (or other similar forms such as emails, diary entries, blog posts etc). In this case, the story is told through letters exchanged between Frank and broccoli. Discuss the 'clues' in the book that tell the reader this is the form that's being used (consider the salutation and sign off, as well as the use of second person 'you' alongside the visual clues such as the handwritten text and the illustrations of pages).

- Have you encountered this form anywhere before?
- Is it something that you'd like to try as a writer?
- What are some of the different ways that you can begin or end a letter? What do these choices tell you about the relationship between the letter writer and the recipient?

Persuasive writing

Persuasive writing (or speech) attempts to influence a reader's viewpoint. In order to persuade someone to do or believe something that they don't initially agree with, writers use a variety of techniques to build an argument, including:

- experience
- logic
- emotion

Which of these techniques does Frank use to convince broccoli to leave him alone? Which does broccoli use to try to convince Frank of the opposite? What kind of argument ends up 'winning'?

Look up and discuss the definitions of the following words: experience, logic, emotion, compelling.

Final reflections

- Did you enjoy the story? Which words would you use to describe your response to it?
- Who would you recommend this book to? Why?
- Were your own opinions challenged or changed as a result of reading this book? Why/why not?

Creative activities

- Frank writes a letter to broccoli, asking it not to come back. Using Frank's letter as inspiration, write a letter to something you don't like. What tone will you use (friendly, calm, angry etc)? How will you begin and end the letter?
- Broccoli makes some good points about why Frank should give it another go. Imagine that you're trying to convince someone that they should eat broccoli. Choose one compelling reason and create a poster that could be used to demonstrate to someone why they should eat broccoli.
- Imagine that you want to convince your parents or teachers to do something that they don't think is a good idea (eg. to let you eat cake for breakfast, or take a whole day off school). Come up with reasons why they should change their mind – one emotional reason, one logical reason and one unique to your own experience.
- Frank sees broccoli everywhere! Draw a picture of Frank's house that shows broccoli hiding somewhere.