



Teacher Notes

Your Holiday Was the BEST!

by Maggie Hutchings, illustrated by Felicita Sala

Teacher notes prepared by Bec Kavanagh.

Publication details

Publisher: Affirm Press
ISBN: 9781922863683
Size/format: 280 x 240mm, 32 pages, HB
RRP: \$24.99
Pub Date: 27 February 2024
Reader ages: 3-7 years (Years F-6)

Themes

- Camping
- Perceptions
- Families
- Understanding difference
- Celebrations

About the Book

Everyone's favourite cockroach is back, and this time he's going camping! Charming, hilarious and just a tiny bit disgusting, this is a holiday tale with a twist from the all-star team behind *Your Birthday Was the BEST!* and *Your School is the BEST!*

This story explores a family camping adventure from a slightly unusual perspective – a cockroach! Using humour and a little bit of silliness, Maggie Hutchings invites readers to see themselves from a different perspective, as well as celebrating family adventures.

About the Author and Illustrator

Maggie Hutchings is a counsellor, family-dispute mediator, writer and artist who spends her weekends covered in paint and scribbling lists that are never completed. She is a famously mad aunt, nanna and mother who talks to herself out loud and falls over a lot in the garden at her house in northern New South Wales. Maggie writes stories with heart and soul for children and adults that encourage kindness, hope and resilience.

Felicita Sala is a self-taught illustrator. She graduated in Philosophy from the University of Western Australia. She has worked on several animation projects along with her husband, Gianluca, but her passion is making picture books. She lives in Rome with Gianluca and their daughter, Nina.

Before Reading

- The title of the book is *Your Holiday Was the BEST!* What do you think this means? Who is the book about?
- Explore the cover of the book – does this give you any clues as to who the 'you' in the title is?
- Read the blurb of the book aloud. What information does it give you about the following –
 - Who the book is about (character)
 - What happens in the book (plot)
 - Where the story takes place (setting)

Comprehension questions

- There's a lot of humour in this book – write down the parts of the story that made you laugh. What was funny about them?
- Who is telling the story? What's surprising or interesting about them?
- What kind of creature is Gary? Which part of the holiday does Gary love the most?
- What does the cockroach think the baby sister's shriek means? What does it really mean?
- How does the cockroach feel about getting sprayed with bug spray? Is this what's meant to happen?
- How does the main character react when he sees the cockroach in his sandwich? How would you react?
- What does Dad do when he sees Gary on the marshmallow?
- Why does the cockroach think that this holiday was the best? What were some of the things they enjoyed?
- What time of year do you think the book is set? How can you tell?
- What are some of the activities you might do while you're camping? Which of these can you see in the book?
- What are some of the things you need to take camping? You might use the pictures in the story as clues, or you might have to ask people you know who have been camping before.
- Take a look at the last picture in the book and describe what's happening. What do you think the kid peeping through the window is thinking?

Literacy

- Writers use sense words to bring a story to life for the reader. Sense words are words that use the five senses (sound, sight, smell, taste, touch) to tell a story. Read aloud the cockroach's description of getting sprayed:
It was like a shower of glorious sunshine and it tasted just like your earwax.
- Underline the sense words in this description. Which senses does the writer use here? Can you find any other sense words in the book?
- Come up with your own list of sense words to describe camping, or another activity that you enjoy doing with your family and friends.
- **Adjectives** are describing words – for example, we can use adjectives to describe how we're feeling. In the book, some of the feelings are captured in the images instead. Look closely at the expressions some of the human characters make whenever they see one of the cockroaches. Some adjectives that you might use to describe their expressions are shocked, or horrified, or afraid. Make a list of other adjectives that describe their expressions in these moments. Complete the following sentences using emotional adjectives.
 - When I am feeling _____, I smile.
 - I saw you crying. Are you _____?
 - I shout because I'm so _____.
- When we talk about who is telling the story, we're talking about the **point of view**. First person point of view uses I/me/we to tell the story, while second person point of view uses you, and third person point of view uses him/her/they.
 - Which point of view does the writer of this story use?
 - Why do you think they've chosen that point of view?
 - How would the story be different if they had used first person point of view instead?

Final reflections

- Did you like the story? Why/why not? Compare your responses with other people in the class.
- Compare the book to other books you've read. How is it similar or different? Why would you choose one more than the other?
- Does this book make you want to go on a camping trip? Why/why not?
- Who would enjoy this book? Write a short sentence explaining why they would enjoy it.

Creative Activities

- The story is told from the point of view of the cockroach, who enjoyed their holidays very much! But how might someone else have experienced it? Rewrite one of the scenes from the book from another character's point of view. Maybe you'll be Dad, or one of the kids, or even Gary from the outside toilet! Draw a picture to accompany your new scene.
- When everyone sees that Gary from the outside toilet has survived the campfire, they scream and run away! What else could they have done though? Come up with an alternative ending for the story, and either write or draw it to share with the class.
- Draw a picture of some of the other creatures you might come across when you go camping. Turn them into a character for the next book by giving them a name and a favourite activity.
- How would you describe the setting of the book? What kind of place has the family gone on their camping adventure? Where would you like to go camping? Use the internet to research good camping spots near you and draw a picture of the one you'd like to visit the most. Write a list of some of the things you could do while you're there.
- We know what people need to take camping with them, but what about cockroaches? Pretend you're one of the cockroaches in the book and make a list of the things you need to take camping with you.